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Drug use monitoring of police detainees in New South Wales: The first two years

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The Drug Use Monitoring Australia project (DUMA) continues to provide valuable information on illicit drug use trends among police detainees and insights into illicit drug markets. This bulletin draws upon data from a sample of police detainees from two Local Area Commands within Sydney, collected over the first two years of DUMA's operation in New South Wales. Both self-report data and urinalysis results were examined. The DUMA results continue to show a high prevalence of illicit drug use among police detainees, with over 70 per cent of the sample indicating illicit drug use in the past 12 months and half of the sample indicating recent use of at least one illicit drug. An examination of urinalysis results over the two-year period provides evidence of a decline in the use of heroin in the first half of 2001 and an increase in cocaine use over the same period. Self-report data on illicit drug transactions suggest that purchasing practices vary according to type of drug being purchased. Purchases of heroin and cocaine were more likely to be conducted in public and occur outside the buyer's own suburb, compared with purchases of cannabis and amphetamines. Opinions on how risky it was to buy illicit drugs were sharply divided, with large proportions of respondents saying that it was either 'not at all risky' or 'very risky' to buy illicit drugs. A similar pattern was found when respondents were asked how risky it was selling illicit drugs.

INTRODUCTION

The supply of, and demand for, illicit drugs is a key area of concern for Australian Law Enforcement, not only because of the direct harm illicit drugs cause, but also due to the strong relationship between illicit drug use and crime. While the Illicit Drugs Reporting Scheme has monitored the price, purity and availability of illicit drugs in New South Wales (NSW) since 1996, the introduction of Drug Use Monitoring Australia (DUMA), in 1999, has allowed for a more focused monitoring of illicit drug use among criminal populations.

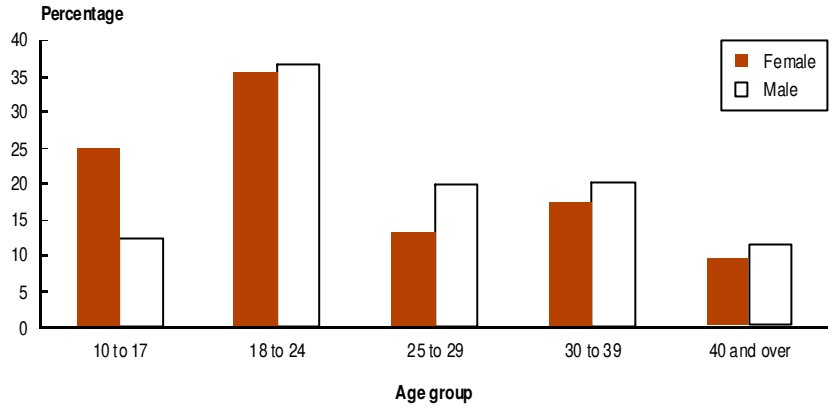
The DUMA project was designed to measure the prevalence of illicit drug use among the criminally active, identify trends in drug markets, identify geographic variations in drug use, and further explore the links between illicit drug use and other criminal activity (Makkai 1999). DUMA involves the systematic collection of data on illicit drug use and drug-related activities from people who have been detained by police for charging, for any offence. The project relies on quarterly collections of information from three sources: in-depth interviews with detainees, urinalysis results and police records on charges against detainees at the time of their detention. DUMA is conducted in several sites across Australia: East Perth (Western Australia), Southport (Queensland), Bankstown (NSW) and Parramatta (NSW).

The purpose of this bulletin is to report on some of the key findings that have emerged from the data collected at the two NSW DUMA sites throughout the project's first two years of operation in NSW (from June 1999 to July 2001). The first section of the bulletin provides a brief overview of the DUMA methodology. This is followed by a summary of the sample characteristics. The bulletin then continues with an exploration of illicit drug use among detainees and illicit drug market trends. It concludes with a summary of the findings.

DUMA METHOD

As details of the methodology used in the DUMA project have been published elsewhere (Makkai 1999), only a brief description will be given. DUMA data is collected quarterly from each site, with the data collection period being approximately three weeks. During the data collection period, eligible detainees

Figure 1: Age distribution of detainees by gender (n=1,693)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

brought to the designated police station are invited to participate in the interviews and are also asked to provide a urine sample. Detainees are ineligible for DUMA if they have been held in custody for longer than 48 hours, if they are unfit for interview due to the influence of alcohol or other drugs, are considered mentally disordered or violent, or are considered ineligible at the discretion of the officer in charge (Makkai, Fitzgerald & Doak 2000). Participation in DUMA is voluntary.

The sample cannot be considered a random sample of people apprehended by police at the DUMA data collection sites for several reasons: some detainees decline to participate or are considered ineligible; interviewers are not present at the designated police station 24 hours a day during the data collection period; and not all persons arrested are brought to the police station (Court Attendance Notices and summons are often issued for minor offences as an alternative to detaining a person in the police station) (Makkai 1999).

Moreover, the NSW DUMA data cannot be considered representative of detainees throughout NSW because of regionally specific characteristics of the data collection areas including geography, ethnicity and drug markets. Parramatta and Bankstown police stations were selected as DUMA sites specifically because they both have a high volume of detainees, which distinguishes them from many other police stations in the State.

NEW SOUTH WALES DUMA SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Over the first two years of operation in NSW, 1695 detainees were interviewed as part of the DUMA project (approximately 100 detainees at each site during each of the eight data collection periods). Unless indicated otherwise, the data presented in this bulletin is drawn from the first two years of data collected at both NSW DUMA sites.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The age of the sample ranges from 12 years to 82 years, with the median age of the sample being 24 years. While both male and female detainees are included in the DUMA sample, approximately 80 per cent of the sample is male. The over-representation of males in the DUMA sample reflects the over-representation of males in the NSW criminal justice system (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics & Research 2001). However, the Bankstown site had a significantly higher proportion of female detainees compared with the Parramatta site (22% and 18% respectively, X^2=5.53, df=1, p=0.019). Figure 1 shows the distribution of the age of DUMA participants by gender. As can be seen in Figure 1, the most common age group for male and female respondents was 18 to 24 years, with over 30 per cent of male and female respondents falling into this age range. Figure 1 also shows that a quarter of female respondents in the sample were juveniles (aged 10 to 17) compared with only 12 per cent of male respondents.

A range of socio-demographic information is collected during the DUMA interview. Table 1 presents the ethnicity, marital status, type of residence in the month prior to the interview and sources of income for the interviewees at the two NSW DUMA sites during the eight data collection periods.

The ethnic backgrounds nominated by detainees have been categorised into broad ethnic groups for analysis. Respondents can specify up to three ethnic backgrounds, however only the first reported ethnicity is included in this report. The most commonly cited ethnic grouping for male and female respondents was Australian or New Zealander, with over 40 per cent of male and female respondents identifying with this grouping. The next most common grouping for males was North African or Middle Eastern (21%), however only 6 per cent of women identified as North African or Middle Eastern. The second most common ethnic grouping for women was European (16%). Table 1 also indicates a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) women in the DUMA sample than men (15% of female respondents identified as ATSI compared with 7% of male respondents).

Differences in ethnic backgrounds of respondents were found between the Bankstown and Parramatta sites. A larger proportion of people detained at Parramatta police station identified as Australian or New Zealanders than did those detained at Bankstown (50% compared with 36%). Bankstown, on the other hand, had a greater proportion of North African or Middle Eastern respondents than Parramatta (26%

Table 1: Demographics of detainees interviewed by gender

	Female (n=338)		*Male* (n=1,355)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Ethnicity				
ATSI	51	15.3	89	6.8
Australian or New Zealander	155	46.5	559	42.4
European	54	16.2	169	12.8
North African or Middle Eastern	19	5.7	275	20.9
Pacific Islander	26	7.8	55	4.2
South East Asian	12	3.6	94	7.1
Other Asian	7	2.1	49	3.7
Other	9	2.7	27	2.1
Marital status				
Single	202	59.9	872	64.4
De facto	73	21.7	174	12.9
Married	22	6.5	163	12.0
Sep/divorced	38	11.3	140	10.3
Widowed	2	0.6	5	0.4
Residence in past month				
Other's house/apartment	177	52.5	721	53.2
Own house/apartment (rented or owned)	136	40.4	494	36.5
Other	5	1.5	28	2.1
Shelter	0	0.0	19	1.4
Prison	5	1.5	15	1.1
No fixed address	14	4.2	78	5.8
Sources of income[a]				
Government benefit	220	65.9	697	52.0
Full-time job	37	11.2	403	30.1
Part-time job	34	10.3	257	19.3
Prostitution	19	5.7	5	0.4
Illegal drugs	14	4.2	76	5.7
Other illegal activities	78	23.5	254	19.1

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Data on gender missing for 2 respondents. Additional missing data: ethnicity, 5 females and 38 males; marital status, 1 female and 1 male; residence in past month, 1 female; government benefits, 4 females and 14 males; full-time job, 9 females and 18 males; part-time job, 8 females and 23 males; prostitution, 5 females and 16 males; illegal drugs, 6 females and 18 males; other illegal activities, 6 females and 24 males.

a Each question relating to income was asked separately allowing respondents to indicate more than one income source.

compared with 11%). Bankstown also had a higher proportion of South East Asian respondents than Parramatta (9% compared with 4%). These differences are may reflect ethnic differences in the populations of each area.

As can be seen in Table 1, over half the sample was single at the time of interview (60% of females and 64% of males). A higher proportion of female respondents indicated that they were in a defacto relationship (22% of female respondents compared with 13% of male respondents), while male respondents were more likely than female respondents to report being married (12% of male respondents compared with 7% of female respondents).

Detainees are asked about their type of residence in the month prior to the interview. While a large proportion of female (40%) and male respondents (37%) indicated that they were living in a house or apartment that they owned or rented, the majority of male and female respondents (53% of both female and male respondents) indicated that they resided in a house or apartment rented or owned by someone else. Approximately 5 per cent of both male and female respondents indicated that they were living in the streets or had no fixed address in the month prior to the interview. A higher proportion of respondents detained at Bankstown police station reside within the same Local Area Command than respondents detained at Parramatta police station (67% and 26% respectively).

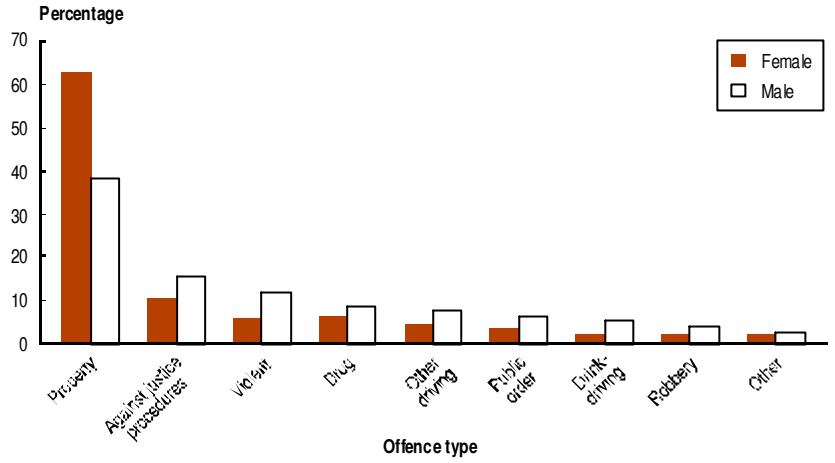
The DUMA survey includes several questions relating to income sources. Many respondents indicated that they received income from multiple sources. The majority of respondents received income from government benefits, with female respondents more likely to receive government benefits than male respondents (66% of female respondents compared with 52% of male respondents). As seen in Table 1, a substantial proportion of respondents indicated that they received income from illegal activities (24% of female and 19% of male respondents received income from 'other illegal activities').

OFFENCE TYPES

Participants in DUMA can be charged with more than one type of offence. Figure 2 shows the person's first-listed charge recorded by police at the time of detention. As seen in Figure 2, the most common offence category for male and female respondents is property, with the majority of female respondents falling into this offence category. Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to be charged with violent offences (12% and 6% respectively).

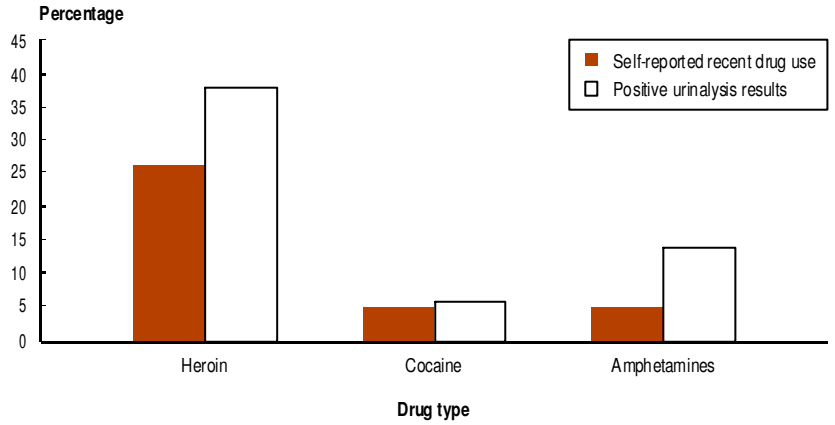
Further examination of the data reveals some difference in the pattern of offending at the DUMA sites. Respondents at Parramatta were more likely to be charged for property offences (50%), compared with respondents at Bankstown

Figure 2: Offence type of detainees by gender (n=1,650)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Figure 3: Comparison between self-reports of recent drug use and positive urinalysis results among detainees who provided a urine sample (n=1,161)



Note: Missing self-report data for 4 persons in relation to heroin, 2 persons for cocaine and 8 persons for amphetamines.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

(34%). Conversely, respondents at Bankstown were more likely to be charged with drug offences (11%) than respondents at Parramatta (5%). In addition, as noted earlier, there is a large disparity between sites in the proportion of respondents who live in the same policing region in which they committed their offence. While 69 per cent of respondents who committed their offence within the Bankstown Local Area Command region resided within the same region, only 29 per cent of respondents who committed their offence within Parramatta Local Area Command were residents of the same region.

ILLICIT DRUG USE AMONG DETAINEES

Both self-report and urinalysis data are used to examine illicit drug use among the DUMA sample. While urinalysis is a useful way to obtain an objective assessment of drug use it also has limitations. The metabolic process varies for different substances; opiates being detectable for two to four days whereas cannabis is detectable for up to four weeks in chronic users. Therefore a urinalysis result that is positive to both opiates and cannabis is providing information about use of these drugs over different time-periods. However, self-report data also has limitations, most notably, that the reliability and validity of the data are dependent on subjects' honesty, accuracy of recall, and knowledge of what drugs they have used.

The validity of the self-report data can be assessed by comparing the urinalysis results for illicit drugs that can be detected for up to four days with self-reported recent drug use. The time-frame used for defining 'recent use' was initially three days but was changed to 48 hours in the 2001 DUMA surveys.

Figure 3 presents urinalysis results and self-reported recent use data for heroin, cocaine and amphetamines, for detainees who provided a urine sample. Both data sources clearly show that a substantial proportion of detainees had recently used heroin and that recent heroin use was far greater than either recent cocaine or amphetamine use. However, the proportion of detainees with positive urinalysis results was higher than the proportion of detainees admitting to recent drug use for all three drugs. In particular, the proportion of respondents testing positive to amphetamines was almost three times higher than the proportion self-reporting recent use. While some of the difference between the data sources may be due to the period of detection being slightly longer for the urinalysis results than the self-report time-frames, the results suggest a degree of under-reporting of recent heroin and amphetamines use.

Although self-report data may underestimate recent drug use it has several advantages over urinalysis results. The self-report methodology provides more flexibility than urinalysis results, enabling the examination of use of various drugs within a standard time-frame, and the collection of information on drug use history and level of dependence. Furthermore, the DUMA sample size is reduced when relying on urinalysis results (only 68% of the DUMA respondents provided a urine sample), limiting the power of the analyses that can be conducted when exploring factors that may be significantly associated with illicit drug use. For these reasons self-report data is used when examining illicit drug use throughout the rest of this bulletin, unless otherwise specified.

Table 2 presents the relative frequency of use for each drug included in the DUMA questionnaire, over three time-periods: ever used; used in the past 12 months; and used recently. Respondents were also asked if, during the past 12 months, they considered themselves to be dependent on each drug. Where use of prescription drugs is reported, the data refers to the use of such drugs without a prescription.

Table 2 shows a high prevalence of illicit drug use among the DUMA sample. Over 80 per cent of the sample had used an illicit drug at some point during their life, over 70 per cent indicated that they had used at least one illicit drug in the past 12 months, half of the sample reported recent use of an illicit drug and 42 per cent reported being dependent on an illicit drug in the past 12 months.

The vast majority of the sample had tried cannabis in their lifetime (78%) and approximately one third of the sample had used it recently. It appears that cannabis use is problematic for a substantial proportion of respondents, as 14 per cent of the sample reported being dependent on cannabis.

The illicit drug next most commonly reported to have been used recently was heroin. A quarter of the sample reported recent heroin use but an even greater proportion reported being dependent on heroin at some time in the past 12 months (31%). This apparent inconsistency may be due in part to a shortage of heroin in Sydney during the first half of 2001 (Weatherburn, Jones, Freeman & Makkai 2001).

Despite a substantial proportion of the sample having ever used amphetamines (51%), or having used them in the past 12 months (26%), only a small proportion (5%) reported recent use of amphetamines. Four per cent of the sample reported being dependent on amphetamines. However, given the discrepancy between self-reported recent use and urinalysis results presented earlier, the self-report data on recent amphetamine use should be viewed with caution.

The picture for cocaine use is similar to that for amphetamines. While 43 per cent of the sample had tried cocaine at some stage in their life, and 23 per cent reported using it in the past 12 months, only 5 per cent had used it recently. A very small proportion of the sample (2%) reported being dependent on cocaine.

Over a third of the sample reported using hallucinogens in their lifetime, however hallucinogens were the least used illicit drug in the past year (used by 4% of the sample in the past 12 months), suggesting that their hallucinogen use was experimental and desisted.

Table 2 suggests infrequent use of ecstasy among the sample. Approximately a third of respondents had tried ecstasy, and 16 per cent had used the drug in the past 12 months. However, only one per cent of respondents reported recent ecstasy use.

Benzodiazepines had been used without a prescription at some time by 28 per cent of the sample, and in the last 12 months by 16 per cent. While only 5 per cent of the sample reported recent benzodiazepine use, a similar proportion, 4 per cent, reported being dependent on benzodiazepines in the past 12 months.

Respondents were less likely to report ever using street methadone than any other drug in the survey. Recent use of street methadone was also uncommon (2% of respondents).

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ILLICIT DRUG USE

The following section examines the relationship between self-reported recent drug use and gender, age, ethnicity, main residence in previous month and offence group. Only the first five drugs most frequently reported as being used recently were examined,

Table 2: Summary of self-reported illicit drug use (n=1,695)

	Ever used	*Used in past 12 months*	*Recent use*	*Dependent in past 12 months*[a]
Drug type	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Any drug	81.3	71.4	49.5	42.2
Cannabis	78.4	59.3	33.0	14.2
Heroin	51.2	39.2	24.9	31.1
Amphetamines	51.1	26.2	4.8	3.6
Cocaine	42.8	22.7	5.4	2.2
Hallucinogens	34.8	3.9	0.2	0.0
Ecstasy	33.8	15.5	1.4	0.5
Benzodiazepines	28.0	16.2	5.2	3.5
Street methadone	17.7	9.0	1.8	1.4

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data have been excluded in the calculations of percentages in this table.

a Question not asked in the first quarter of 2001.

that is: cannabis; heroin; cocaine; amphetamines; and benzodiazepines. The patterns identified in this section are based on self-reported drug use data from June 1999 to July 2001. Recent DUMA data suggest changing trends in drug use among detainees during 2001, particularly a decline in heroin use and increase in cocaine use (Makkai & McGregor 2002). As such, the patterns of self-reported illicit drug use reported in the following section may have changed in the second half of 2001.

Recent drug use by gender

The relationship between gender and illicit drug use among detainees was examined. Table 3 shows the percentage of detainees of each gender who reported recent drug use, by each of the illicit drugs examined. Note that in this section, table percentages do not add up to 100 as detainees provided multiple responses when they reported recent use of more than one drug.

Although a similar proportion of female and male respondents indicated that they had not recently used any of the drugs included in the questionnaire, (52% and 50% respectively), there were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents in their recent use of some illicit drugs. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to report recent use of heroin (31% and 23% respectively), a difference that is statistically significant (X^2=7.32, df=1, p=0.007). Similarly, a significantly greater proportion of female respondents reported recent use of cocaine (10% and 4% respectively; X^2=20.53, df=1, p=0.000). Comparable proportions of male and female respondents reported recent cannabis use (34% and 29% respectively), amphetamine use (5% for both male and female respondents) and benzodiazepines (5% and 7% respectively).

Recent drug use by age

The relationship between age and illicit drug use among detainees is presented in Table 4. The relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for each of the categories presented in Table 4, indicating that the prevalence of recent drug use among detainees varied across age groups for all drugs examined (no recent drug use: X^2=89.39, df=4, p<0.000; cannabis: X^2=41.17, df=4, p<0.000; heroin: X^2=8.76, df=4, p<0.000; cocaine: X^2=15.83, df=4, p=0.003; amphetamines: X^2=11.99, df=4, p=0.017; benzodiazepines: X^2=12.13, df=4, p=0.016).

The age group least likely to report no recent drug use and most likely to report recent use of each drug was the 25 to 29 year group, closely followed by the 18 to 24 year group. It can be seen in Table 4 that the oldest group, 40 years and over, were least likely to report recent drug use for each drug type except for benzodiazepines. The youngest age

Table 3: Recent illicit drug use by gender

	No recent use	*Cannabis*	*Heroin*	*Cocaine*	*Amphetamines*	*Benzodiazepines*
Gender	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Female (n=338)	51.8	29.4	30.6	10.4	4.8	7.2
Male (n=1,355)	50.4	33.9	23.4	4.2	4.7	4.8

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Two respondents excluded due to missing data on gender. Percentages may be based on smaller sample sizes than indicated in the table as missing drug use data were excluded from the calculations.

Table 4: Recent illicit drug use by age group

	No recent use	*Cannabis*	*Heroin*	*Cocaine*	*Amphetamines*	*Benzodiazepines*
Age group	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
10 to 17 years (n=249)	65.5	24.7	11.7	2.4	3.6	1.6
18 to 24 years (n=614)	41.9	37.2	32.5	7.0	4.1	6.6
25 to 29 years (n=315)	40.3	38.7	32.6	7.0	7.7	6.4
30 to 39 years (n=332)	47.0	35.3	22.4	5.4	5.8	5.8
40 years and over (n=184)	72.3	16.3	8.7	1.1	1.6	2.7

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: One detainee excluded due to missing data on age. Percentages may be based on smaller sample sizes than indicated in the table as missing drug use data were excluded from the calculations.

Table 5: Recent illicit drug use by ethnicity

Ethnicity	No recent use	Cannabis	Heroin	Cocaine	Amphetamines	Benzodiazepines
	%	%	%	%	%	%
ATSI (n=140)	30.0	44.3	35.7	10.7	6.5	10.7
Australian or New Zealander (n=716)	45.1	41.2	25.0	4.1	6.6	6.2
European (n=223)	48.4	32.3	22.9	5.8	5.0	5.0
North African or Middle Eastern (n=294)	65.0	20.5	16.1	4.8	0.7	2.1
Pacific Islander (n=81)	63.0	24.7	16.0	4.9	4.9	6.2
South East Asian (n=106)	49.1	13.2	39.6	6.6	0.9	1.9
Other Asian (n=56)	71.4	8.9	23.3	5.4	3.6	1.8
Other (n=36)	44.4	27.4	30.5	11.1	5.6	5.7

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Forty-three respondents excluded due to missing data on ethnicity. Percentages may be based on smaller sample sizes than indicated in the table as missing drug use data were excluded from the calculations.

group, 10 to 17 years, was the next least likely to report recent drug use for each drug type, with the exception of benzodiazepines, for which they were least likely to report recent use.

While there was a significant difference in the proportions of each age group reporting recent use of each drug, there appears to be some consistency across age groups in the type of drugs being used recently. Across all age groups, the proportion of respondents reporting recent use of cannabis was greater than for any other drug. Heroin was the drug second most commonly reported as being used recently across all age groups. However, the proportion of respondents within each age group reporting recent heroin use ranged from 33 per cent for the 25 to 29 and 18 to 24 year groups, to 9 per cent of the 40 year and over group.

Recent drug use by ethnicity

The relationship between recent illicit drug use and the ethnicity of detainees was also examined. Table 5 shows the percentage of detainees within each ethnic classification reporting recent use of each illicit drug. The ethnicity data in the table refers to the first ethnic background the detainee identified. It can be seen in Table 5 that there are substantial differences in illicit drug use between the ethnic groups. The difference between ethnic groups in the percentage of respondents reporting recent drug use was significant for all categories examined in Table 5, except cocaine (no recent drug use: X^2=72.00, df=7, p<0.000; cannabis: X^2=86.76, df=7, p<0.000; heroin: X^2=37.96, df=7, p<0.000; amphetamines: X^2=20.65, df=7, p=0.004; benzodiazepines: X^2=19.66, df=7, p=0.006).

Table 5 suggests that while recent illicit drug use is prevalent among respondents of all ethnic backgrounds, it is particularly widespread among respondents identifying as ATSI. ATSI respondents were the most likely to report some form of recent drug use (70% of ATSI respondents). Respondents in the 'Other Asian' category were least likely to report an incident of recent drug use (29% of Other Asian respondents).

Recent cannabis use was highest among respondents who identified as ATSI (44%) and by Australian or New Zealander respondents (41%). Less than 15 per cent of respondents in the South East Asian or Other Asian ethnic group reported recent cannabis use.

The highest levels of recent heroin use were found among South East Asian respondents (40%). Respondents who identified as ATSI had the next highest proportion of people reporting recent heroin use (36%). Respondents in the Pacific Islander and North African or Middle Eastern ethnic groups reported the lowest proportion of recent heroin use (16%).

There were relatively few reports of recent use of amphetamines, benzodiazepines or cocaine. Respondents who identified as North African or Middle Eastern, or South East Asian were least likely to report recent use of amphetamines (0.7% and 0.9% respectively). Persons who identified as ATSI were most likely to report recent use of benzodiazepines (11%). There was no statistically significant relationship between recent cocaine use and ethnicity (X^2=13.11, df=7, p=0.69).

Recent drug use by residence

The relationship between self-reported recent drug use and type of residence is presented in Table 6. The type of residence in the past month was significantly associated with the drug use categories examined (no recent drug use: X^2=64.74, df=5, p<0.000; cannabis: X^2=18.79, df=5, p=0.002; heroin: X^2=95.34, df=5, p<0.000; cocaine: X^2=16.49, df=5, p=0.006; amphetamines: X^2=11.54, df=5, p=0.042; benzodiazepines: X^2=39.63, df=5, p<0.000).

Table 6: Recent illicit drug use by primary residence in past month

Primary residence	No recent use %	Cannabis %	Heroin %	Cocaine %	Amphetamines %	Benzodiazepines %
Own house/apartment (rented or owned) (n=631)	58.3	28.7	15.9	4.4	3.2	3.3
Other's house/apartment (n=898)	46.7	34.2	27.7	5.3	5.4	5.0
Other (n=33)	54.5	30.3	15.2	3.0	3.1	6.3
Shelter (n=19)	47.4	36.8	31.6	0.0	0.0	10.5
Prison (n=20)	30.0	60.0	30.0	15.0	10.0	5.0
No fixed address (n=93)	17.2	45.2	60.2	12.9	9.8	18.9

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: One detainee excluded due to missing data on residence in past month. Percentages may be based on smaller sample sizes than indicated in the table as missing drug use data were excluded from the calculations.

Respondents who lived predominantly in a house or unit owned or rented by themselves were most likely to report not having recently used any illicit drug included in the DUMA survey (58%). Respondents who were most likely to report recently using a drug were those who had been predominantly homeless (no fixed address) in the month prior to the interview or in prison (83% and 70% respectively). A high proportion of recent drug use by persons citing prison as their main residence in the past month is likely to have occurred since the person's release, as persons who have been in custody for longer than 48 hours are excluded from participation in DUMA.

Respondents who had predominantly spent their last month in prison were more likely to have recently used cannabis (60%) than respondents residing elsewhere, followed by respondents who had no fixed address (45%). Those who lived in their own (rented or owed) place were least likely to report recent cannabis use (29%).

Respondents who had the least secure accommodation, those with no fixed address, were the most likely to report recent heroin use (60%). This is substantially higher than the proportion of recent heroin users in the next three highest accommodation categories, shelter, prison, and other's house/apartment, each of which had approximately 30 per cent of respondents reporting recent heroin use.

Cocaine was most likely to be recently used among respondents who nominated prison as their main residence in the previous month (15%), while none of the 19 respondents who reported living predominantly in a shelter in the past month reported recent cocaine use.

Amphetamines were most commonly used recently by respondents who nominated prison or no fixed address as their main residence in the past month (10% of respondents in both categories). Again, no respondent living predominantly in a shelter in the past month reported recent amphetamine use.

Benzodiazepine use was most common among respondents reporting no fixed address over the past month (19%), and least common among respondents living predominately in their own accommodation (3%). The high use of benzodiazepines amongst those reporting the highest use of heroin may indicate these heroin users are supplementing their heroin use with benzodiazepines.

Recent drug use by offence

Finally, the relationship between illicit drug use and offence type was examined. A statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level was found between offence type and four of the six drug use categories examined (no recent drug use: X^2=103.95, df=8, p<0.000; cannabis: X^2=38.09, df=8, p<0.000; heroin: X^2=121.17, df=8, p<0.000 and benzodiazepines: X^2=23.94, df=8, p=0.002). Table 7 shows, for each offence type, the proportion of respondents who reported recent drug use.

As expected, a disproportionately high percentage of offenders charged with a drug offence engaged in recent illicit drug use; only 25 per cent of respondents charged with a drug offence indicated that they had not recently used any of the drugs referred to in the DUMA survey. Respondents charged with drink-driving offences or an offence categorised as 'Other' were least likely to have used an illicit drug recently (74% of respondents in both offence groups).

Respondents charged with drug offences were the most likely to report recent cannabis use (51%). Respondents charged with drink-driving offences were the least likely to report recent cannabis use (20%).

Heroin was used recently by a greater percentage of respondents charged with a property offence compared with all other offence types (37% of detainees charged with a property offence). This result is consistent with the proposition that many property offenders engage in

acquisitive crime, at least in part, to fund their heroin use (Stevenson & Forsythe 1998). Note, however, that the people arrested for one offence type may have previously committed other types of offences, for example detainees in the sample that were arrested for a property offence may have previously committed robbery offences.

The numbers of people reporting recent use of cocaine and amphetamines were low, making it difficult to detect statistically significant relationships between recent use and offending type. No statistically significant relationships, at the 0.05 level, were found between either recent cocaine use or recent amphetamine use, and offence type.

Respondents charged with property offences were more likely to report recent benzodiazepine use than offenders in any other offence category (8% of respondents charge with property offences).

DRUG ACTIVITY AT TIME OF ARREST

Respondents were asked whether they were under the influence of any drugs (excluding alcohol) at the time of their arrest and if they were seeking to buy or sell illicit drugs immediately prior to their arrest. Of those respondents who indicated drug use prior to their arrest (36% of all respondents), the most common drug used was heroin (38% of detainees who used a drug prior to their

Table 7: Recent illicit drug use by offence type

Offence group	No recent use %	Cannabis %	Heroin %	Cocaine %	Amphetamines %	Benzodiazepines %
Violent (n=178)	67.4	25.8	10.7	2.2	5.1	2.2
Robbery (n=54)	48.1	37.0	16.7	7.4	5.6	5.6
Property (n=716)	42.3	33.9	37.0	6.8	4.8	7.9
Drug (n=134)	25.4	51.1	27.8	6.1	6.8	3.8
Public order (n=92)	57.6	29.3	19.6	5.4	3.3	0.0
Drink-driving (n=78)	74.4	19.5	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other driving (n=117)	58.1	25.0	14.7	7.0	5.2	3.4
Against justice procedures (n=241)	48.5	37.3	18.8	4.6	5.0	5.0
Other (n=42)	73.8	24.4	4.9	0.0	0.0	4.9

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Forty-three respondents excluded due to missing data on offence group. Percentages may be based on smaller sample sizes than indicated in the table as missing drug use data were excluded from the calculations.

Table 8: Respondents who used or were seeking heroin prior to their arrest by offence type

	Used heroin prior to arrest				Seeking heroin prior to arrest			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Offence group	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Violent	7	4.0	167	96.0	5	2.9	170	97.1
Robbery	1	1.9	53	98.1	2	3.7	52	96.3
Property	136	19.5	563	80.5	51	7.3	651	92.7
Drug	17	12.8	116	87.2	7	5.5	121	94.5
Public order	9	9.9	82	90.1	2	2.2	88	97.8
Drink-driving	0	0.0	73	100.0	0	0.0	76	100.0
Other driving	10	8.8	103	91.2	3	2.6	113	97.4
Against justice procedures	34	14.3	204	85.7	13	5.5	224	94.5
Other	1	2.6	37	97.4	1	2.4	40	97.6
Total	**215**	**13.3**	**1,398**	**86.7**	**84**	**5.2**	**1,535**	**94.8**

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data and persons who could not remember if heroin was used or sought prior to arrest were excluded from the table.

Table 9: Urinalysis results over the first two years of DUMA

Drug type	Q3 1999 %	Q4 1999 %	Q1 2000 %	Q2 2000 %	Q3 2000 %	Q4 2000 %	Q1 2001 %	Q2 2001 %
No positive test	20.7	27.8	30.0	26.8	34.3	34.9	39.0	31.5
Cannabis	55.2	50.8	43.3	45.9	44.8	41.1	39.0	48.5
Opiate	41.4	44.4	40.7	45.0	41.9	41.1	22.0	26.2
Cocaine	3.4	1.6	4.0	3.3	6.4	4.8	13.5	11.5
Amphetamine	11.5	6.3	13.3	20.6	12.8	15.8	14.2	13.8
Benzodiazepines	26.4	20.6	20.0	26.3	22.1	21.2	18.4	21.5

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Columns do not add to 100 per cent as persons could test positive to more than one drug.

arrest). Similarly, of the people who indicated they were buying or selling a drug prior to arrest (8%), the drug most frequently being bought or sold was heroin (70% of detainees who were buying or selling a drug prior to their arrest).

Table 8 shows the proportion of respondents charged with each offence type who reported using heroin prior to their arrest, and the proportion seeking to buy or sell heroin prior to their arrest. As seen in Table 8, 13 per cent of respondents reported using heroin immediately prior to their arrest. This proportion is somewhat lower than the 31 per cent of respondents who reported being dependent on heroin in the past 12 months. This difference suggests that a substantial proportion of offences commented by heroin-dependent persons occur while they are not under the influence of heroin, however these results should be used with caution due to the under-reporting of recent heroin use shown previously in Figure 3.

Respondents charged with a property offence were more likely to report using heroin immediately prior to arrest (20%), followed by respondents charged with against justice procedure offences (14%).

Respondents charged with property offences were also more likely to have been seeking to buy or sell heroin immediately prior to their arrest, compared with respondents charged with other offence types.

TRENDS IN ILLICIT DRUG USE

Urinalysis results are an alternative source of information on illicit drug use among detainees participating in NSW DUMA. As the reference period relating to self-reported recent use differed in the last two surveys from earlier surveys, urinalysis results must be used to assess trends in drug use of detainees over time.

Table 9 shows urinalysis results over the first two years of the DUMA project. Reading across the rows it can be seen that the proportion of the sample that did not test positive to any of the drugs examined generally increased over the two-year period. This increase was statistically significant (kendall's t=0.64, n=8, p=0.031). As seen in Table 9, in the first data collection of the project (the third quarter of 1999) 21 per cent of the sample had urine test results clear of all drugs. In the first quarter of 2001, 39 per cent of the sample did not test positive to any drug. This was followed by a decline in the second quarter of 2001 to 32 per cent of the sample not testing positive to any drug.

While there was no statistically significant trend in the percentage of detainees testing positive to heroin across the entire period being examined, a large sharp fall can be seen in Table 9 from the last quarter in 2000 to the first quarter in 2001 (from 41% to 22% testing positive to opiates). This finding is consistent with reports of a substantial heroin shortage commencing around Christmas 2000 (Weatherburn et al. 2001).

Table 9 indicates that amphetamine use remained largely stable throughout the period examined, with the highest proportion of tests positive to amphetamines observed in the second quarter of 2000.

Likewise, no statistically significant trend was seen for cannabis across the time period. However, Table 9 shows a small but steady decline in cannabis use from the third quarter of 1999 to the first quarter of 2001 (from 55% to 39%), which was followed by a substantial increase in the second quarter of 2001 to 48 per cent. The increase in cannabis use in the last quarter may reflect a tendency for heroin users to 'top up' with cannabis as a result of the heroin shortage (Weatherburn, et al. 2001).

The only statistically significant trend in drug use was for cocaine, which increased significantly over the time period. Three percent of the sample tested positive to cocaine in the first quarter of 1999, while 12 per cent tested positive to cocaine in the second quarter of 2001. Inspection of Table 9 shows positive results for cocaine use rose in the first quarter of 2001 and was largely maintained during the second quarter of 2001. Further analysis of the data by DUMA site indicates a sharp increase (16 percentage points) in cocaine use in the first quarter of 2001 in Bankstown, falling somewhat in the second quarter of 2001, whereas the

increase in cocaine use at the Parramatta site was more modest. The increased cocaine use in the last two quarters may have been substantially driven by the heroin shortage during this period. Heroin users who compensated for the lack of heroin during this period by increased use of other drugs were most likely to compensate with cocaine (Weatherburn, et al. 2001).

As it is not possible, using urinalysis, to differentiate between illicit benzodiazepine use and use for legitimate medical purposes, Table 9 shows the trend in any benzodiazepine use during the first two years of DUMA. Benzodiazepine use remained stable over the period examined with approximately 20 per cent of the sample testing positive throughout the period.

METHADONE USE

Urine samples provided by detainees are also tested for the presence of methadone. As with urinalysis results for benzodiazepines, urinalysis results for methadone cannot differentiate between legal and illicit use of methadone. However, as the proportion of respondents who reported recent use of street methadone was very low (less than 2%), it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of the sample testing positive to methadone were using it as a treatment. We can therefore use the urinalysis results to explore respondents' involvement in methadone treatment for heroin dependence.

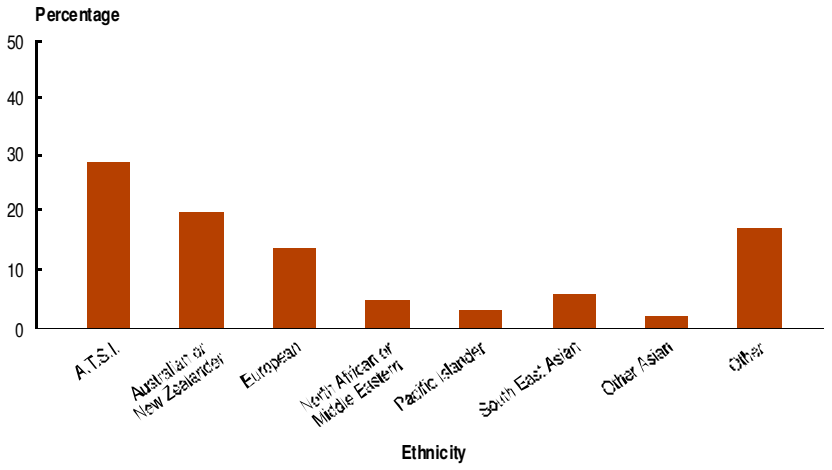
Figure 4 shows, by ethnicity, the percentage of respondents testing positive to methadone. Methadone use was greatest among ATSI respondents (29%) and Australian or New Zealanders (20%). Methadone use was very low among South East Asian respondents with only 6 per cent testing positive. This result is unexpected as heroin use among South East Asian detainees was found to be particularly high (as seen in Table 5). This may be an indication that methadone maintenance treatment for heroin dependence may not be appealing or accessible to South East Asian persons.

Figure 5 shows the trend in methadone use during the first two years of DUMA data collection in NSW. There were no statistically significant trends, with methadone use fluctuating between approximately 8 per cent and 22 per cent of the sample. While there was a small increase in the proportion of people testing positive to methadone from the end of 2000 to mid 2001 there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the heroin shortage resulted in a significant increase in persons seeking treatment.

THE ILLICIT DRUG MARKET

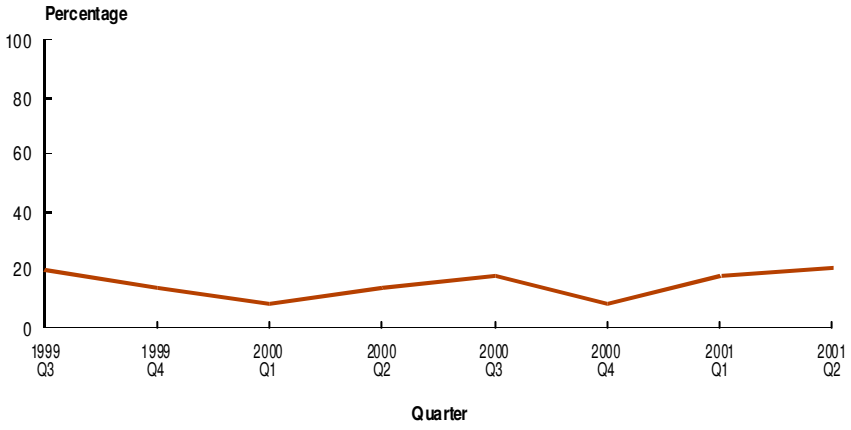
The DUMA interviews are a source of information on a range of aspects of illicit drug markets for cannabis, heroin, cocaine and amphetamines. Respondents are

Figure 4: Urine tests positive to methadone, by ethnicity (n=1,149)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Figure 5: Urinalysis results for methadone throughout the first two years of DUMA



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Table 10: Method of contacting seller on last occasion of drug purchase by drug type, for respondents who purchased the drug in the past month

Drug type	Phone	Visited house or apartment	Approached in public	With them	Other
	%	%	%	%	%
Cannabis (n=464)	46.1	29.7	15.1	6.0	3.0
Heroin (n=426)	46.7	24.6	26.3	0.9	1.4
Cocaine (n=146)	39.7	21.2	26.7	2.1	10.3
Amphetamines (n=137)	45.3	23.4	17.5	8.0	5.8

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data are excluded the calculation of percentages in the table. Question not included in first NSW DUMA data collection period.

Table 11: Place of purchase on last occasion of drug purchase by drug type, for respondents who purchased the drug in the past month

Drug type	House or apartment	Outdoor area	Public building	Abandoned building
	%	%	%	%
Cannabis (n=463)	54.4	35.0	9.9	0.6
Heroin (n=426)	42.0	52.1	4.5	1.4
Cocaine (n=135)	38.5	48.9	10.4	2.2
Amphetamines (n=135)	55.6	26.7	17.0	0.7

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data are excluded the calculation of percentages in the table. Question not included in first NSW DUMA data collection period.

Table 12: Locality of purchase on last occasion of drug purchase by drug type, for respondents who purchased the drug in the past month

Drug type	Within own suburb	Outside own suburb
	%	%
Cannabis (n=462)	58.2	41.8
Heroin (n=424)	33.3	66.7
Cocaine (n=134)	34.3	65.7
Amphetamines (n=135)	48.1	51.9

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data are excluded the calculation of percentages in the table. Question not included in first NSW DUMA data collection period.

asked about their participation in the drug market for each of these four drugs. Questions relate to purchasing practices for cash purchases, types of non-cash transactions for illicit drugs and perceptions about the risks of buying and selling illicit drugs.

PURCHASING PRACTICES

Cash transactions

Respondents who indicate that they have made a cash purchase of a drug in the last month are asked about how they arranged the purchase, where the transaction took place and about their familiarity with the seller. Table 10 shows the method that was used to contact the drug seller on the last occasion of purchase for cannabis, heroin, cocaine and amphetamines. As seen in Table 10, respondents were most likely to contact their dealer by phone (mobile or landline). This was the case for the purchase of each of the four drugs examined. Respondents were more likely to approach their dealer in public when buying cocaine or heroin (27% and 26% respectively) compared with buying cannabis or amphetamines (15% and 18% respectively).

The type of place where the purchase of the illicit drug was made is shown for each drug type in Table 11. For cannabis and amphetamine purchases, the most common place of purchase was in a house or apartment (54% and 56% respectively). However, the most common place for purchasing heroin or cocaine was in an outdoor area (52% and 49% respectively). The second most common place of purchase for these two drugs was a house or apartment. Respondents were more likely to indicate using a public building to conduct a transaction for purchasing amphetamines than for any other drug.

Respondents were asked if they had made their last drug purchase in their own suburb or elsewhere for each of the four illicit drugs examined. The results are shown in Table 12. More than half of the respondents (58%) made their last cannabis purchase within their own

suburb. Almost half (48%) of the respondents who purchased amphetamines indicated that their last purchase of amphetamines occurred within their own suburb. Table 12 suggests that respondents travelled further to purchase heroin and cocaine than they did to purchase the other two illicit drugs, with 67 per cent of respondents' last heroin purchase and 66 per cent of their last cocaine purchase conducted outside their own suburb.

The survey included a question about the level of familiarity the respondent had with the person with whom they conducted their last drug transaction, for each of the four drug types. As seen in Table 13, more than half of the respondents indicated that they had made their last purchase from a regular source for all of the drug types examined.

Table 13: Familiarity with the seller on last occasion of drug purchase by drug type, for respondents who purchased the drug in the past month

	Regular source	*Occasional source*	*New source*
Drug type	*%*	*%*	*%*
Cannabis (n=464)	67.2	21.1	11.6
Heroin (n=423)	68.6	18.2	13.2
Cocaine (n=135)	60.0	25.2	14.8
Amphetamines (n=134)	58.2	25.4	16.4

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data are excluded the calculation of percentages in the table. Question not included in first NSW DUMA data collection period.

Non-cash transactions

Questions regarding non-cash transactions in exchange for illicit drugs were also included in the DUMA survey. Table 14 shows the means by which respondents who obtained drugs without making a cash purchase were able to acquire the drug. Forty per cent of respondents who obtained cannabis without paying for it did so by sharing. The next most common means of acquiring cannabis without purchasing it was receiving it as a gift (38% of respondents who obtained cannabis without cash).

Table 14: Means of obtaining drug by drug type, for respondents who obtained the drug without cash in the past month

	Was shared	*Received as gift*	*Traded property/ merchandise*	*Got it on credit*	*Other*
Drug type	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Cannabis (n=428)	40.0	37.9	4.9	7.7	9.6
Heroin (n=155)	23.2	27.1	23.9	15.5	10.3
Cocaine (n=58)	31.0	46.6	3.4	8.6	10.3
Amphetamines (n=101)	24.8	51.5	9.9	4.0	9.9

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data are excluded the calculation of percentages in the table. Question not included in first NSW DUMA data collection period.

While the most common reason for obtaining heroin without cash was that it had been received as a gift (27% of respondents who obtained heroin without cash), the next most common means was trading property or merchandise for heroin (24% of respondents who obtained heroin without cash). A similar proportion (23%) indicated that the heroin they obtained without cash was shared. Sixteen per cent of respondents who did not pay for heroin obtained it on credit.

Respondents who received cocaine without cash were most likely to have obtained by receiving it as a gift (47% of respondents receiving cocaine without cash). The next most common response was that the cocaine was shared (31%). Only a small percentage (3%) indicated that they obtained the cocaine by trading property or other merchandise.

The majority of respondents who obtained amphetamines without cash received it as a gift (52%). The second most common means of obtaining amphetamines without cash was by sharing it (25% of respondents who obtained amphetamines without cash). Ten per cent of respondents who obtained amphetamines without cash did so by trading property or merchandise.

PERCEPTION OF RISK

Respondents participating in DUMA are asked about their perceptions of how risky it is to sell and buy certain illicit drugs. Risk is defined as risk from police activities, and respondents are asked these questions regardless of whether they have personally used or sold drugs. Respondents who indicated that they did not know how risky the behaviour was are excluded from analysis in the following tables.

Table 15: Perceived risk of selling drug by drug type

Drug type	Very risky	Somewhat risky	Not very risky	Not at all risky
	%	%	%	%
Cannabis (n=1136)	32.2	17.7	18.7	31.4
Heroin (n=1031)	56.1	17.7	9.8	16.5
Cocaine (n=958)	50.1	20.3	11.3	18.4
Amphetamines (n=974)	44.7	19.1	14.9	21.4

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data are excluded the calculation of percentages in the table. Question not included in first NSW DUMA data collection period.

Table 16: Perceived risk of buying drug by drug type

Drug type	Very risky	Somewhat risky	Not very risky	Not at all risky
	%	%	%	%
Cannabis (n=1015)	18.0	12.2	19.3	50.4
Heroin (n=894)	36.5	17.9	14.1	31.5
Cocaine (n=851)	31.7	19.0	14.8	34.4
Amphetamines (n=862)	29.8	16.9	16.4	36.9

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, DUMA Collection, 1999, 2000, 2001 [Computer File]

Note: Missing data are excluded the calculation of percentages in the table. Question not included in first NSW DUMA data collection period.

Table 15 presents respondents' perceptions of the level of risk for selling cannabis, heroin, cocaine and amphetamines. Table 15 shows that most respondents considered selling illicit drugs to be associated with some degree of risk, however the level of risk associated with selling illicit drugs varied with the type of drug being sold. In regards to the risk of selling cannabis, respondents were divided in their opinions. Half of the respondents thought that selling cannabis was either 'very' or 'somewhat risky', while the other half thought it was 'not very risky' or 'not risky at all'. For cannabis, 32 per cent selected the highest risk category, 'very risky', while 31 per cent selected the lowest risk category, 'not at all risky'.

Respondents were more likely to perceive selling heroin as 'very risky' compared with selling any other drug. Fifty-six per cent of respondents thought that selling heroin was 'very risky', while only 17 per cent thought that there was no risk attached to selling it.

A large proportion of respondents (70%) indicated that they thought selling cocaine was either 'very' or 'somewhat risky', with 50 per cent indicating that it was 'very risky'.

Selling amphetamines was considered to be 'very risky' by 45 per cent of respondents and 'somewhat risky' by an additional 19 per cent of respondents.

Table 16 shows the perceived level of risk associated with buying cannabis, heroin, cocaine, and amphetamines. It would appear that respondents did not perceive buying illicit drugs to be as risky as selling them. The majority of respondents thought that buying cannabis was 'not risky at all' and only 30 per cent indicated that buying cannabis was 'very' or 'somewhat risky'.

Respondents were more likely to rate buying heroin as 'very risky' than any other drug. While 37 per cent of respondents indicated that buying heroin was 'very risky', a similar but lower proportion (32%) thought that buying heroin was 'not risky at all'.

Approximately half the respondents thought that buying cocaine was 'very' or 'somewhat risky', while the other half thought it was either 'not very risky' or 'not risky at all'.

A greater proportion of respondents thought that buying amphetamines was 'not risky at all' (37%) compared with the proportion that thought it was 'very risky' (30%).

Respondents' perceived level of risk associated with buying and selling illicit drugs appears to be related to their own drug use history. For each of the illicit drugs examined, the perceived level of risk associated with buying and selling the drug was lower for people who had tried the drug at least once compared with respondents who had never tried the drug (Buying: cannabis X^2=88.73, df=3, p=0.000; heroin X^2=16.94, df=3, p<0.001; cocaine: X^2=24.32, df=3, p=0.000; amphetamines: X^2=44.71, df=3, p=0.000. Selling: cannabis X^2=45.81, df=3, p=0.000; heroin X^2=9.72, df=3, p<0.021; cocaine: X^2=11.07, df=3, p=0.011; amphetamines: X^2=37.54, df=3, p=0.000).

SUMMARY

The Drug Use Monitoring Australia project commenced data collection in NSW in June 1999 and is conducted on a quarterly basis at two Sydney sites: Bankstown and Parramatta police stations. The present report examined data collected from the first two years of DUMA's operation at the NSW sites. The main findings are outlined below.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ILLICIT DRUG USE

- Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to have recently used heroin (31% compared with 23%) and cocaine (10% compared with 4%).
- Respondents in the 25 to 29 years and 18 to 24 years age groups were most likely to have recently used an illicit drug. Approximately one-third of respondents in these age groups had recently used heroin.
- Respondents who identified as ATSI were more likely to report an incident of recent illicit drug use than respondents from other ethnic groups. Recent heroin use was highest among respondents identifying as South East Asian.
- A significant relationship was found between illicit drug use and type of residence. Respondents who had the most secure type of accommodation, rented or owned their own house or apartment, were least likely to report recent use of any of the drugs examined. Respondents who reported having no fixed address were most likely to report recent heroin use.
- Respondents charged with property offences were most likely to report recent heroin use (37% of respondents charged with a property offence). Respondents charged with a drink-driving offence were least likely to have recently used an illicit drug.

DRUG ACTIVITY AT TIME OF ARREST

- Thirty-six per cent of respondents indicated that they were under the influence of a drug (either legal or illicit) at the time of their arrest. Of these respondents, the most commonly cited drug taken prior to arrest was heroin.

TRENDS IN ILLICIT DRUG USE

- Urinalysis results showed a sharp decline in the proportion of tests positive to opiates from the last quarter of 2000 to the first quarter of 2001. This decline coincides with reports of a heroin shortage in Sydney. Urinalysis results also showed a significant increase in the proportion of tests positive to cocaine over the two-year period.

METHADONE USE

- The percentage of urine tests positive to methadone was highest among ATSI respondents, with 29% of ATSI respondents testing positive to methadone. The proportion of South East Asian respondents who tested positive to methadone was disproportionately low, given that they were more likely to report recent use of heroin than any other ethnic group.

PURCHASING PRACTICES

- The most common means of contacting a seller of any drug was by telephone. A higher proportion of respondents approached the seller in public when purchasing heroin or cocaine than when purchasing cannabis or amphetamines. Respondents were more likely to have made their last drug purchase in an outdoor area when purchasing heroin or cocaine than when purchasing cannabis or amphetamines.
- The majority of respondents who purchased cannabis in the past month made their last purchase within their own suburb, whereas two-thirds of respondents who purchased heroin or cocaine did so outside their own suburb.
- The majority of respondents who obtained illicit drugs without cash received it as a gift or shared it. A substantial proportion (24%) of respondents who obtained heroin without paying cash, obtained it through trading property or merchandise.

PERCEPTIONS OF RISK

- Respondents were more likely to rate selling illicit drugs as 'very risky' than buying illicit drugs. A greater proportion of respondents rated buying and selling heroin as 'very risky', compared with buying and selling any other drug.

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