

Victorian Drug and Alcohol
Prevention Council

2009 Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey

FINAL REPORT
MAY 2010

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Commissioned by the Victorian Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council for the
Department of Health

May 2010

Conducted by the Social Research Centre

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Executive Summary

Overview

The Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey (VYADS) measures the use of, and attitudes towards, alcohol and drugs among 16-24 year old Victorians. The survey provides an important snapshot of current usage patterns and attitudes to various drug-related issues and behaviours among young people living in Victoria. It also supports the development, implementation and monitoring of alcohol and drug prevention policy and service planning across Victoria.

The 2009 VYADS – the fourth in the series – was conducted by the Social Research Centre between 22 September and 20 November 2009 and consisted of 5,001 telephone interviews with young people resident in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Alcohol use

The results of the 2009 survey indicates there has been slight decreases in self-reported lifetime and recent use of alcohol by young people in Victoria – from 95.7% in 2004 to 92.9% for lifetime use and 90.2% to 87.3% for recent use. The decreases in lifetime and recent alcohol use were most evident among 16-17 year olds (down 8 and 7 points, respectively, since 2004). Recent use was also down five points among 22-24 year old females. Other ages however, were more or less unchanged.

While the overall use of alcohol appears to have decreased slightly, there were some changes in harmful patterns of consumption. More specifically:

- Two-fifths (42%) of young people in 2009 reported engaging in high-level drinking (i.e. 20 or more standard drinks on at least one day) in the past year; representing an increase of five percentage points since 2004 and 16 points since 2002. This increase was evident across all age/gender sub-groups, but was more marked among females than males.
- The slight increase in the overall level of high-level drinking however, was mainly due to an increase in relatively irregular (i.e. less than once a month) drinking to this level.
- The proportion of young people consuming a lower one-day maximum (e.g. 7-10 or 11-19 standard drinks) has slightly fallen.
- Half (52%) of those who had consumed alcohol in the past year also reported having been unable to remember afterwards what happened while drinking in the same period of time. This proportion has steadily increased since 2002 (up 7 points since 2004 and 16 points since 2002).

Young people who regularly consume 20 or more standard drinks in one day were found to be significantly more likely than others to engage in other risky/anti-social behaviours.

The main types of alcohol products young people reported usually consuming in 2009 continued to include pre-mixed drinks in cans (54%) or bottles (49%), bottled spirits (66%) and regular strength beer (52%). However, since the 2004 survey:

- There has been a substantial drop in the usual consumption of pre-mixed spirits in cans (down from 61% in 2004), but no change in pre-mixed bottles.
- Conversely, there have been small increases in the proportion of young people usually consuming bottled spirits, bottled wine, mid-strength beer, low-alcohol beer and cider.

Drug use

There have been substantial reductions in the reported use of drugs since 2004 and, overall, usage is now at its lowest level since VYADS commenced. The main changes found were:

- Self-reported lifetime use of any drug by Victorian young people has substantially decreased from 51.7% in 2004 to 41.3% in 2009. Recent use, by contrast, has fallen 5.8 percentage points since 2004 to 25.6%. The decline in lifetime and recent use is evident across all age groups and among young men and women.
- Cannabis, ecstasy and amphetamines remain the three most commonly used drugs. Lifetime use of these drugs in 2009 was 38.4%, 15.0% and 11.5%, respectively, while recent use was 20.5%, 9.0% and 6.6%. The lifetime and recent use of cannabis, ecstasy and amphetamines in 2009 was significantly lower than in all previous years.
- Lifetime use of inhalants and synthetic hallucinogens also decreased in comparison to all previous years. Heroin use (lifetime and recent) has now fallen to very low levels.
- The frequency of cannabis use among recent users of this drug has fallen. More specifically, the proportion who report using cannabis at least once a week has decreased (down 8 points since 2004), while the proportion reporting occasional use has increased (up 10 points).

Against the overall trend of decreasing drug use by Victorian young people, there were slight increases in the recent use of cocaine (up 0.9% since 2004), and synthetic (up 1.7%) and plant-based hallucinogens (up 0.7%). There also appeared to be a slight increase in the proportion of drug users using larger numbers of different drugs compared to all previous years.

The main reasons for first trying illicit drugs in 2009 remained curiosity (57%) and peer pressure (52%). However, the proportion mentioning peer pressure has substantially increased in comparison to all previous years, while curiosity appears to have fallen.

The most common reasons for never trying illicit drugs were being worried about the potential health consequences (37%), having seen the negative experiences of others (26%) and lack of interest (25%). The impact of drug education programs at schools and social marketing campaigns has continued to increase as reported reasons for never trying drugs.

Factors associated with recent alcohol and drug use

The analysis of the factors associated with the concurrent use of alcohol and drug in the past year suggested a strong relationship with a number of attitudinal and socio-demographic variables. Specifically:

- **Recent users of alcohol and drugs** were strongly associated with positive attitudes to alcohol and drugs and having peers who also use alcohol and drugs. Over-represented in this group were males aged 18-21 years, having higher disposable incomes, being employed or unemployed, being same sex attracted, and living in a share house or metropolitan Melbourne.
- **Past drug users** were most associated with being older (22-24 years, and particularly females of this age), living with a partner and completion of a trade certificate. Their attitudes to drugs were much more positive than non-drug users.
- **Higher level drinkers** were typically associated with being young men aged 16-17 years, living in a household with two parents, having a comparatively moderate weekly disposable income and still attending secondary school.
- **Lower level drinkers** were associated with limited disposable income, young women aged 16-17 years and having a language other than English spoken at home. They also had the most negative attitudes to alcohol and drug use and were the least likely to have peers who used alcohol or drugs.

Attitudes to alcohol and drug use

The proportion of young people (14%) who believed it was 'wrong' for someone their age to regularly drink alcohol in 2009 was not significantly different from previous surveys. Cannabis, however, has continued to lose ground as an 'acceptable' drug to use with 65% now saying it is wrong to use it. The overwhelming majority of young people felt it is wrong for people their age to use other types of drugs.

There have been large decreases in the proportion of young people who report having one or more friends who use cannabis (down 17 points since 2004), ecstasy (down 21 points), amphetamines (down 17 points) or heroin (down 7 points). These changes were consistent across sub-groups of young people and each is now at its lowest level since the survey commenced in 2002.

Effects of using alcohol and drugs

Since the 2004 survey, there have been slight decreases in the proportion of recent users engaging in some anti-social behaviours while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Declines were found in driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol (down 2 points since 2004) or drugs (down 7 points), attending work or school while under the influence of alcohol (down 4 points) or drugs (down 4 points) and verbally abusing someone else while under the influence of alcohol (down 3 points).

There have also been some changes in the perceived personal impact of drug use since 2004. In particular, there was a decrease in the proportion of young people reporting their drug use had a positive effect on their 'lifestyle' (down 4 points since 2004) and a slight increase in young people reporting their drug use had a negative effect on their relationships with friends (up 3 points since 2004).

1 Background

1.1 Overview

The Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey (VYADS) measures the use of, and attitudes towards, alcohol and drugs among 16-24 year old Victorians. The survey provides an important snapshot of current drug use patterns and attitudes to various drug-related issues and behaviours among young people living in Victoria. It also supports the development, implementation and monitoring of alcohol and drug prevention policy and service planning across Victoria.

The 2009 VYADS is the fourth in the series, with previous survey waves undertaken in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

1.2 Methodology

The 2009 VYADS was conducted by the Social Research Centre in a single fieldwork wave between 22 September and 20 November 2009.

The overall approach for the 2009 VYADS was consistent with previous waves. The survey methodology was Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and involved 5,001 interviews with young people aged 16- 24 years resident in private dwellings in metropolitan and regional Victoria (see Table 1).

Table 1 Achieved sample of the 2009 VYADS

Location	Total interviews
Metropolitan Melbourne	3501
Regional or rural Victoria	1500
Total	5001

A 'list assisted' form of Random Digit Dialling was adopted for the 2009 survey, replacing the Electronic White Pages sample used in previous years. The 'last birthday' method was used to select the respondent when there were multiple in-scope persons in the household. Permission was obtained from parents of 16 and 17 year olds before conducting each interview.

Stringent privacy measures were in place for the survey and no identifying information was ever collected about respondents or their friends. Telephone numbers were stripped from the data set immediately after fieldwork was finished. Staff from the Victorian Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council attended some of the interviewer briefing sessions and monitored some interviews.

The final sample size and fieldwork timing for the 2009 VYADS differed slightly from previous years. The 2002 survey, for example, was conducted in three quarterly waves in March, June and September with a total of 4,500 young Victorians. The 2003 survey by contrast was conducted in two waves each of approximately 3,000 respondents in February/March and November/December 2003, while the 2004 survey was conducted in a single wave of approximately 6,000 interviews between November 2004 and January 2005.

1.3 VYADS questionnaire

The questionnaire for the 2009 VYADS was closely modelled on that used in previous waves. There were, however, a number of questions added to the questionnaire, as well as some minor changes to the wording and code-frames of existing questions (see Technical Report for details). The broad topic areas of the questionnaire included:

- Attitudes and perceptions of alcohol and illicit drug use;
- Detailed questions on patterns and context of use of alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, analgesics and tranquillisers;
- Lifetime and recent use of other illicit drugs;
- Effects of alcohol and illicit drug use including activities under the influence, police contact, personal effect of use and exposure to anti-social behaviour;
- Help seeking relating to alcohol and/or drug use; and
- Socio-demographic information including age, gender, ethnicity, educational and employment status, household type and postcode.

The sections of the 2002-2004 surveys that examined detailed patterns and context of use of cocaine, inhalants and hallucinogens were not included in the 2009 questionnaire.

The questionnaire was pilot tested to identify problems with content and flow. Fifty pilot interviews were undertaken and, given that minimal changes were made to the questionnaire, were incorporated into the final sample. On average the questionnaire took approximately 17.2 minutes to complete and a response rate of 71% was achieved.

1.4 Sample characteristics

Details of the final sample achieved for the 2009 VYADS, as well as the samples from the surveys of 2002, 2003 and 2004, are shown in Table 2. While broadly similar, there are also several areas where the 2009 sample differs from the earlier surveys. Specifically:

- The 2009 survey includes a higher proportion of young people from regional Victoria (30% versus 25% in each of the previous surveys). This variation was a consequence of a change in the survey specification for 2009 which required a minimum of 1,500 regional interviews within a total sample of 5,001 respondents. (Table 2 says 5001)
- The 2009 survey also included fewer young people aged 22-24 years than in previous years (20.7%), a possible reflection of the increasing proportion of young people in this age group who live in households which do not have a 'fixed' telephone line, and slightly more males (49.5%) than in the previous surveys.

Table 2 Sample characteristics of the 2009 VYADS

Year of Survey	2002 (n=4509) %	2003 (n=6052) %	2004 (n=6005) %	2009 (n=5001) %
Age				
16-17 years	24.3	25.0	27.1	28.4
18-21 years	48.7	49.5	46.0	51.0
22-24 years	27.0	25.4	27.0	20.7
Gender				
Male	47.5	45.3	45.9	49.5
Female	52.5	54.7	54.1	50.5
Location				
Melbourne	75.0	75.0	75.0	70.0
Rest of State	25.0	25.0	25.0	30.0
Age by Gender				
M 16-17 years	12.7	12.2	12.3	14.3
M 18-21 years	22.9	22.3	22.0	25.4
M 22-24 years	11.9	10.8	11.6	9.8
F 16-17 years	11.6	12.8	14.8	14.1
F 18-21 years	25.8	27.2	24.0	25.6
F 22-24 years	15.1	14.7	15.3	10.9
Main Language at home				
English	89.7	91.6	91.2	90.4
Household Structure				
Person alone	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.3
Couple alone	4.0	4.4	4.3	5.8
Couple with child/children	61.9	61.3	58.2	59.1
Single parent with child/children	12.8	14.1	14.1	16.1
Non-related adults	11.3	12.2	11.1	6.4
Other	6.5	4.9	9.3	10.2
Refused	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Sexual orientation				
Heterosexual	93.1	93.6	93.3	93.7
Bisexual	3.3	3.8	3.7	3.8
Gay/Lesbian	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.7
Unsure	1.3	0.8	0.6	0.3
Refused	1.0	0.6	0.9	0.7

Note: Data is unweighted. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding. 1,500 interviews were missing values for sexual orientation and region in 2002.

Weighting of the survey data

When the 2009 survey sample was compared with Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates of the Victorian population of 16-24 year olds, some discrepancies were evident. In particular, the disproportionate geographic design used in 2009 resulted in over-representation of regional residents (who comprised 30% of the sample compared with 24% of the population of 16-24 year olds) and under-representation of 22-24 year olds (who comprised 20.7% of the sample versus 34.7% of the 16-24 year old Victorian population). Male respondents were also slightly under-represented (49.5% versus 51.0% of the relevant population) in the 2009 sample.

Given these differences, it was considered appropriate to post-weight the 2009 data in line with the ABS estimates of the age, sex and geographic distribution of the 16-24 year olds Victorian population. To ensure comparability with the earlier surveys, it was decided to post-weight the 2002, 2003 and 2004 survey data using the relevant ABS population parameters. As a result of this weighting, it should be noted that the statistics presented in this document may differ slightly from those previously reported.

1.5 About this report

This report presents key findings from the 2009 VYADS in relation to the use of alcohol and other drugs among young Victorians aged 16-24 years. It is intended to be read by anyone with an interest in patterns of drug use in the community.

This report primarily focuses on findings from the 2009 survey data; however, where appropriate, comparisons are drawn with the 2002, 2003 and 2004 surveys.

Statistical tests were conducted to establish whether differences between the estimates for different time periods and different sub-groups were statistically significant. The differences described in this report imply that a statistically significant difference at a 95% confidence level has been established. The confidence intervals for comparisons made between survey years, as well as gender and age in 2009 are shown in Appendix 1. The unweighted bases for these comparisons are shown in Appendix 2.

In the report, reference to 'lifetime use' of a drug means a person has reported 'ever' having tried the drug, while 'recent use' means the person reported having used the drug in the 12 months prior to the interview.

2 Alcohol use

This section of the report describes current patterns of alcohol use reported by young Victorians, as well as exploring some of the contexts in which they drink alcohol.

Attention is given specifically to young Victorians' lifetime and recent use of alcohol, the age at which they begin drinking, the incidence of drinking at potentially harmful levels, types of alcoholic beverages consumed and the types of location where alcohol is drunk.

2.1 Patterns of use

2.1.1 Lifetime and recent use of alcohol

As shown in Table 3, there has been a slight decrease since 2004 in the reported use of alcohol by 16-24 year old Victorians – from 95.7% to 92.9% for lifetime use and from 90.2% to 87.3% for recent use (i.e. for those who have drunk alcohol in the last 12 months).

There have been statistically significant falls in both lifetime and recent use of alcohol by 16-17 year olds (down 8 points and 7 points respectively since 2004) and in the incidence of recent use by 22-24 year old females (down 5 points since 2004). By contrast, both lifetime and recent use of alcohol have remained more or less unchanged among males and females aged 18-21 years and among 22-24 year old males.

Table 3 Lifetime and recent alcohol use by age and gender

Lifetime and Recent Use	Lifetime Use				Recent Use			
	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2009 %	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2009 %
TOTAL SAMPLE	94.0	95.9	95.7	92.9 [#]	89.5	91.1	90.2	87.3 [#]
SEX								
Male	94	96	96	93 [#]	90	91	91	88 [#]
Female	94	96	96	93 [#]	89	91	90	87 [#]
AGE								
16-17 years	90	93	92	84 [#]	84	87	86	79 [#]
18-21 years	95	96	96	96	91	92	92	91
22-24 years	96	97	97	95 [#]	91	92	91	88 [#]
AGE BY SEX								
Males ...								
16-17 years	90	91	93	84 [#]	83	86	87	78 [#]
18-21 years	95	97	96	95	91	93	93	91
22-24 years	96	98	97	95	92	93	91	90
Females ...								
16-17 years	90	94	92	85 [#]	85	88	85	80 [#]
18-21 years	94	96	97	96	91	92	91	91
22-24 years	96	97	97	95 [#]	91	91	91	86 [#]

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

2.1.2 Age at which alcohol is first used

There has been no change in the age at which respondents consumed their first serve of alcohol – the median age for doing this remained at 15 years, as has been the case in the three previous surveys.

However, those who consumed their first serve of alcohol before turning 15 years of age (25% of all 16-24 year olds) are of interest, as they appear to engage in higher levels of alcohol consumption and illegal drug use than do those young people who did not use alcohol for the first time until they were at least 15 years old.

Compared to the group who began using alcohol when they were slightly older, those who first drank alcohol before the age of 15 were more likely to report single-day consumption of 20 or more standard drinks on at least one occasion per month (31% versus 12%), to have been unable to remember what happened while drinking alcohol at least once in the last 12 months (66% versus 47%) and to feel their personal alcohol consumption is having a negative effect on their health (37% versus 22%).

In addition, 72% of those who began drinking alcohol before the age of 15 had used illegal drugs, with 51% having done so in the last 12 months. This compares with 37% and 21% respectively for those who did not begin using alcohol until they were at least 15 years of age.

2.1.3 Levels of alcohol consumption

Table 4 shows respondents' highest reported daily alcohol consumption during the last 12 months. In 2009, 42% of respondents reported consuming 20 or more standard drinks in one day at least once during the last 12 months. Similarly, for 15% of 2009 respondents, the highest number of standard drinks consumed on one day during the last 12 months was between 11 and 19 standard drinks.

Table 4 shows a steady increase (from 26% in 2002 to 42% in 2009) in the proportion of young Victorians who have engaged in very high alcohol consumption (involving the consumption of 20 standard drinks or more in one day) at least once in the last 12 months. Interestingly, while the proportion consuming 20 or more standard drinks in one day has increased, the proportion of young people consuming a slightly lower one-day maximum of 11- 19 standard drinks has fallen by six percentage points since 2002. There has also been a seven point fall in the proportion whose maximum single-day consumption was in the range of 7-10 standard drinks.

At the same time, the proportion whose highest single-day consumption fell into the more moderate range of one to six standard drinks has remained relatively stable. After falling from 23% in 2002 to 19% in 2003 there has been no further significant change.

Thus, the increased incidence of consumption at a level of 20 or more standard drinks appears to have resulted largely from higher consumption by those who were already drinking alcohol at a risky level of seven or more standard drinks in one day. That is, those who classified as drinking seven or more standard drinks in one day are now more likely to actually be consuming 20 or more standard drinks than was the case in 2002.

Table 4 Highest number of standard drinks consumed on any one day in the last 12 months

Highest one day consumption in the last 12 months	2002	2003	2004	2009
	(n=4509) %	(n=6052) %	(n=6005) %	(n=5001) %
TOTAL SAMPLE				
20 or more std drinks	26	33	37	42 [#]
11 to 19 std drinks	21	21	18	15 [#]
7 to 10 std drinks	19	18	16	12 [#]
Net: 7 or more std drinks	66	71	71	69[#]
5 or 6 std drinks	11	9	8	7 [#]
3 or 4 std drinks	7	6	5	6
1 or 2 std drinks	5	5	5	6
Net: 1 to 6 std drinks	23	19	18	18
Unable to say	1	<1	1	<1
None/Don't drink	11	9	10	13 [#]

Base: Total sample. Note: Sub-totals may not add exactly due to rounding. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

2.1.4 High levels of alcohol consumption

Table 5 shows the proportion of young Victorians who have engaged in a high level of alcohol consumption (that is consumed 20 or more standard drinks in one day) at least once during the last 12 months. The following are noteworthy:

- Insofar as age and gender based sub-groups are concerned, in 2009:
 - Males (51%) were much more likely than females (32%) to report consuming alcohol at this level.
 - The incidence of consuming 20 or more standard drinks at least once in the last 12 months is much lower among 16-17 year olds (31%) than it is amongst those aged 18-21 years (47%) and 22-24 years (43%).
 - Interestingly, while the incidence among 22-24 year olds is lower than amongst 18-21 year olds, this difference is really only evident among females. During the last 12 months 37% of females aged 18-21 years had consumed 20 or more standard drinks in a single day compared with 30% of females aged 22-24 years. For males, there was no significant difference between these two age groups in the incidence of consumption at this level.

- While not shown in the accompanying table, it is noteworthy that the proportion consuming 20 or more standard drinks in a day is lower among those living in Melbourne (41% in 2009) than it is among young people living outside the metropolitan area (46% in 2009).
- In terms of changes over time, since 2002 there have been significant increases in the incidence of high-level consumption of 20 or more standard drinks in one day for all age/gender sub-groups. However, it is noteworthy that the increased incidence among females (which has more than doubled from 15% to 32%) is more marked than among males (up from 37% to 51%).

Table 5 High levels of alcohol consumption by age and gender

20+ std drinks on one or more days in the last 12 months	2002	2003	2004	2009
	%	%	%	%
TOTAL SAMPLE	26	33	37	42 [#]
SEX				
Male	37	45	47	51 [#]
Female	15	21	27	32 [#]
AGE				
16-17 years	16	24	29	31
18-21 years	30	36	41	47 [#]
22-24 years	28	34	37	43 [#]
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	22	32	35	34
18-21 years	42	49	52	56 [#]
22-24 years	41	48	49	55
Females ...				
16-17 years	10	16	23	27
18-21 years	18	23	30	37 [#]
22-24 years	14	20	25	30 [#]

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

Table 6 shows the frequency young people reported drinking 20 or more standard drinks in the past year. As can be seen, the majority of those who engaged in high-level drinking had done so less than once a month in the past year. Only a small proportion (5% of the total sample) had engaged in high-level drinking on a weekly or 'more-often' basis.

It is also apparent that the overall increase since 2004 in the proportion of young people engaging in high-level drinking was mainly due to an increase in relatively irregular (i.e. less than once a month) drinking to this level. The prevalence of more frequent consumption of 20 or more standard drinks, by contrast, has not significantly increased since the slight increase noted between 2002 and 2003.

Table 6 Frequency of drinking 20 or more standard drinks

Frequency of consuming 20+ std drinks in the last 12 months	2002	2003	2004	2009
	(n=4509) %	(n=6052) %	(n=6005) %	(n=5001) %
NET: At least once a year	26	33	37	42 [#]
Less than once a month	19	20	24	27 [#]
NET: At least once a month	7	13	14	15
Fortnightly or monthly	5	9	10	10
Weekly or more often	2	4	4	5

Base: Total sample. Note: Sub-totals may not add exactly due to rounding. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

Table 7 shows that relatively few 16-24 year olds consume 20 or more standard drinks on one or more days per week. In 2009, five percent of all respondents reported doing this with the incidence ranging from a high of nine percent among 22-24 year old males to a low of one percent among 16-17 year old females.

Consumption of 20 or more standard drinks on a fortnightly or monthly basis was more common. Ten percent of respondents reported consumption at this frequency, with the highest incidence at 15% amongst 18-21 year olds and 22-24 year old males.

It is also evident that consumption at the level of 20 or more standard drinks per day generally occurs less often than once a month. For 27% of all respondents, single-day drinking sessions of 20 or more standard drinks occurred less than once a month.

Table 7 Frequency of drinking 20 or more standard drinks by age and gender

Frequency of consuming 20+ std drinks in the last 12 months	Weekly or more often	Fort-nightly or monthly	NET: At least once a month	Less than once a month	NET: At least once a year
	%	%	%	%	%
2009 Data					
TOTAL SAMPLE	5	10	15	27	42
SEX					
Male	7	14	20	31	51
Female	2	7	9	23	32
AGE					
16-17 years	2	7	9	22	31
18-21 years	5	12	17	30	47
22-24 years	6	10	16	27	43
AGE BY SEX					
Males ...					
16-17 years	2	8	10	24	34
18-21 years	7	15	23	34	56
22-24 years	9	15	23	31	55
Females ...					
16-17 years	1	6	7	20	27
18-21 years	3	8	10	26	37
22-24 years	2	6	8	22	30

Base: Total sample. Note: Row sub-totals (NETs) may not add exactly due to rounding.

Table 8 indicates that young people who regularly consume 20 or more standard drinks in one day are significantly more likely to engage in other risky/anti-social behaviour than those who seldom consume 20 or more standard drinks. Both of these groups are in turn more likely to engage in other risky/anti-social behaviour than those whose highest single-day consumption in the past 12 months was between one and four standard drinks.

In particular, those who regularly consume 20 or more standard drinks were much more likely to have verbally abused someone (41% cf. 22% of infrequent 20+ drinkers and 2% of those whose highest consumption was 1-4 standard drinks), been injured (40% cf. 20% and 3%) and created a public disturbance or nuisance (28% cf. 10% and 1%) while under the influence of alcohol.

They were also much more likely to say their use of alcohol has a **negative** effect on their health (39% cf. 29% and 8%) and on their education or employment (19% cf. 10% and 2%). At the same time, they were much more likely to report that using alcohol has a **positive** effect on their relationships with their friends (34% cf. 27% and 10%) and on their lifestyle (28% cf. 20% and 6%).

Finally, those who regularly consume 20 or more standard drinks reported considerably higher lifetime (75% cf. 51% and 15%) and recent (57% cf. 31% and 5%) use of drugs.

Table 8 Behaviour and beliefs of high and low/moderate alcohol consumers

	Highest number of std drinks consumed on one day in last 12 months		
	20+ monthly or more	20+ less than monthly	1-4 std drinks
	(n=716) %	(n=1346) %	(n=567) %
Behaviour under the influence of alcohol in the last 12 months			
Verbally abused someone	41	22	2
Been injured	40	20	3
Created a public disturbance or nuisance	28	10	1
Caused damage to property	19	7	<1
Physically abused someone	13	3	<1
Stolen something	10	3	<1
Alcohol use has a negative effect on ...			
Your health	39	29	8
Your education or employment	19	10	2
Relationship with family	14	6	3
Alcohol use has a positive effect on ...			
Your relationship with friends	34	27	10
Your lifestyle	28	20	6
Use of drugs			
Lifetime use of any drugs	75	51	15
Recent use of any drugs	57	31	5

Base: Drank alcohol in the past 12 months

2.1.5 Drinking with the intention of getting drunk

All those who had drunk alcohol in the last 12 months were asked how often they intended to get drunk on occasions when alcohol was consumed.

As shown in Table 9:

- Around one in five of these respondents said they intend to get drunk on all or most of the occasions that they drink alcohol.
- Overall, almost three in every four of these young people intend getting drunk when they consume alcohol on at least a few occasions.
- Among those who have consumed 20 or more standard drinks in the last 12 months, these figures rise to 29% for all or most of the time and 88% for those who 'ever' drink alcohol with the intention of getting drunk.

Table 9 How often intend to 'get drunk' on occasions when alcohol is consumed

How often intend to 'get drunk' on occasions when alcohol is consumed	2003	2004	2009
	(n=5504) %	(n=5402) %	(n=4349) %
Frequency			
Every time	6	4	4
Most times	15	16	16
Sometimes	27	27	28
A few times	24	27	25
Net: Ever	71	73	73
Never	29	26	27
Can't say/Refused	<1	<1	<1

Base: Drank alcohol in the past 12 months. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

Amongst age and gender sub-groups (see Table 10):

- Males were significantly more likely than females to have 'ever' intended getting drunk when they consume alcohol (e.g. 76% of males versus 69% of females in 2009).
- Those aged 16-17 years are less likely to do so (66% in 2009) as are females aged 22-24 years (65% in 2009).

Table 10 'Ever' intend to 'get drunk' when consuming alcohol by age and gender

Ever intend getting drunk when consuming alcohol	2003	2004	2009
	%	%	%
TOTAL SAMPLE	71	73	73
SEX			
Male	75	78	76
Female	67	69	69
AGE			
16-17 years	65	67	66
18-21 years	74	77	75
22-24 years	70	73	73
AGE BY SEX			
Males ...			
16-17 years	69	69	65
18-21 years	78	81	78
22-24 years	75	80	80
Females ...			
16-17 years	60	64	67
18-21 years	71	72	72
22-24 years	64	67	65

Base: Drank alcohol in the past 12 months. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

2.1.6 Types of alcohol consumed

Table 11 presents the types of alcoholic beverages respondents nominated as ones that they 'usually drink'. Mentioned most often in the 2009 survey were pre-mixed drinks in cans (54%) or bottles (49%), bottled spirits (66%) and beers or cider, particularly regular strength beer (52%).

Statistically significant changes evident since the 2004 survey include the following:

- Possibly reflecting higher taxes on pre-mixed drinks, there has been a substantial drop in the proportion of young people who say they usually drink cans of pre-mixed spirits (down from 61% in 2004 to 54% in 2009). At the same time, however, there has been no change in the proportion who say they usually drink pre-mixed bottles
- Conversely, there have been small increases in the proportion of young people who say they usually drink bottled spirits (up from 64% to 66%), bottled wine (up from 37% to 39%), mid-strength beer (up from 20% to 24%), low-alcohol beer (up from 14% to 16%) and cider (up from 9% to 14%).

Table 11 Type of alcohol products usually consumed

	2002	2003	2004	2009
	(n=4027) %	(n=5504) %	(n=5402) %	(n=4349) %
Usually drinks more than one type	85	79	84	82 [#]
Pre-mixed drinks in bottles/cans				
Pre-mixed spirits (cans)	59	57	61	54 [#]
Pre-mixed bottles	50	48	50	49
Bottled spirits	66	63	64	66 [#]
Beer and cider				
Regular beer	50	52	52	52
Mid-strength beer	16	16	20	24 [#]
Low alcohol beer	13	14	14	16 [#]
Home brewed beer	8	8	9	8
Cider	9	9	9	14 [#]
Wine/Fortified wines				
Bottled wine	35	35	37	39 [#]
Cask wine	12	11	13	14
Fortified wine	9	9	9	9

Base: Drank alcohol in the past 12 months. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

As might be expected, there were variations between age and gender sub-groups insofar as the types of alcoholic beverage usually consumed are concerned. Thus, among female respondents (see Table 12):

- Pre-mixed cans are most often mentioned by 16-17 year old females as their usual drink (67%).

- Females were much more likely than males to nominate pre-mixed bottles (61% versus 38% of males). In particular, females aged 16-17 years and, to a slightly lesser extent 18-21 years, were those most likely to nominate pre-mixed bottles as their usual drink (72% and 67% respectively).
- By contrast, 22-24 year old females most often mention bottled spirits (69%) and bottled wine (68%) as the alcoholic beverages they usually drink. Compared to 16-17 year old females, those aged 22-24 years are also significantly more likely to nominate regular beer (30% versus 21% of 16-17 year old females) and cider (17% versus 7%) as the type of alcoholic product they usually drink.

Among males:

- Nomination of beer as a type of alcohol usually drunk was substantially higher than among females for regular, mid-strength and low-alcohol beer. Males aged 16-17 years were slightly more likely than older males to nominate mid-strength beer (37% versus 31% among males aged 22-24 years) and low-alcohol beer (24% versus 20% among 22-24 year old males) and slightly less likely to mention regular beer (67% versus 76% of 22-24 year old males) as beverages they usually drink.
- Bottled spirits were mentioned least often by 16-17 year old males (46%). This was much lower than for all other male and female sub-groups.
- While bottled wine receives less mention overall among males as a usual drink (28% versus 51% of females), 22-24 year old males were markedly more likely to nominate bottled wine as a usual drink than 16-17 year olds (41% versus 13%).

It is also worth noting that older males appear to have a more extensive repertoire of usual drinks than do the younger group. Thus, on average 22-24 year old males mention 3.8 types of alcoholic beverage from the list in Table 12, 18-21 year old males mention 3.6 and 16-17 year old males mention 3.1. A similar pattern is evident among females with 16-17 year olds nominating 3.0 different types of alcoholic beverage, 18-21 year olds 3.5 and 22-24 year olds 3.3.

Table 12 Type of alcohol products usually consumed by age and gender

Proportion reporting alcohol type as their usual drink in 2009 survey	All	Males aged ...			All	Females aged ...		
	Males	16-17	18-21	22-24	Fe- males	16-17	18-21	22-24
	n=2153 %	n=559 %	n=1153 %	n=441 %	n=2196 %	n=562 %	n=1168 %	n=466 %
Usually drinks more than one type	83	75	85	85	82	77	83	83
Pre-mixed drinks in bottles/cans								
Pre-mixed spirits (cans)	54	57	53	54	54	67	59	42
Pre-mixed bottles	38	36	40	36	61	72	67	48
Bottled spirits	63	46	68	66	68	59	72	69
Beer and cider								
Regular beer	75	67	77	76	28	21	28	30
Mid-strength beer	33	37	32	31	15	13	16	16
Low alcohol beer	20	24	19	20	12	12	13	11
Home brewed beer	12	7	12	14	4	2	3	5
Cider	15	9	16	16	13	7	12	17
Wine/Fortified wines								
Bottled wine	28	13	25	41	51	25	49	68
Cask wine	12	10	12	13	17	14	18	16
Fortified wine	10	5	10	14	8	6	9	8

Base: Drank alcohol in the past 12 months (2009 sample only)

Insofar as changes since 2004 are concerned (see Table 13), there has been:

- A moderate decrease in the nomination of cans of pre-mixed spirits as a usual drink. This was evident amongst all male and female sub-groups with the exception of 22-24 year old males. There has also been a moderate decrease in mention of pre-mixed bottles among 22-24 year old females (down 7 points since 2004).
- Compared to 2004, males were slightly more likely to mention bottled spirits (up 3 points) and mid-strength beer (up 5 points), particularly 16-17 year old males among whom mention of mid-strength beer was up 9 points since 2004. Males aged 16-17 years were also more likely to mention regular beer as a usual drink (up 7 points since 2004).
- Females are more likely to mention bottled wine (up 5 points since 2004). They were also slightly more likely to mention mid-strength and low-alcohol beer as a usual drink (both up 3 points since 2004) but slightly less likely to mention regular beer (down 3 points).
- Mention of cider has increased among both males and females aged 18-21 years (up 5 points among males and 3 points among females) and 22-24 years (up 6 points among males and 9 points among females).

Table 13 Type of alcohol products usually consumed by age and gender
(change between 2004 and 2009)

Change since 2004 in proportion using each type as their usual drink	All	Males aged ...			All	Females aged ...		
	Males	16-17	18-21	22-24	Females	16-17	18-21	22-24
	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Pre-mixed drinks in bottles/cans								
Pre-mixed spirits (cans)	-7	-7	-11	+1	-7	-7	-4	-8
Pre-mixed bottles	+1	-1	-1	+4	-3	-1	-	-7
Bottled spirits	+3	-	+3	+2	+1	-1	+2	+1
Beer and cider								
Regular beer	+3	+7	+3	-1	-3	+2	-5	-6
Mid-strength beer	+5	+9	+4	+5	+3	+2	+2	+4
Low-alcohol beer	+1	+3	+4	-1	+3	+3	+4	+1
Home brewed beer	+1	-3	-3	-	-	-	-2	+1
Cider	+4	-3	+5	+6	+5	+1	+3	+9
Wine/Fortified wines								
Bottled wine	-1	-3	+2	-4	+5	+4	+5	+3
Cask wine	+2	-	+2	+4	-	+1	-	-2
Fortified wine	-1	-2	-	-2	-	+2	+1	-2

Base: Drank alcohol in the past 12 months. Bold numbers indicate a difference at the 0.05 level of statistical significance.

2.2 Context of alcohol use

Section 2.2 summarises several aspects of the contexts in which young Victorians consume alcohol. Specifically attention is paid to:

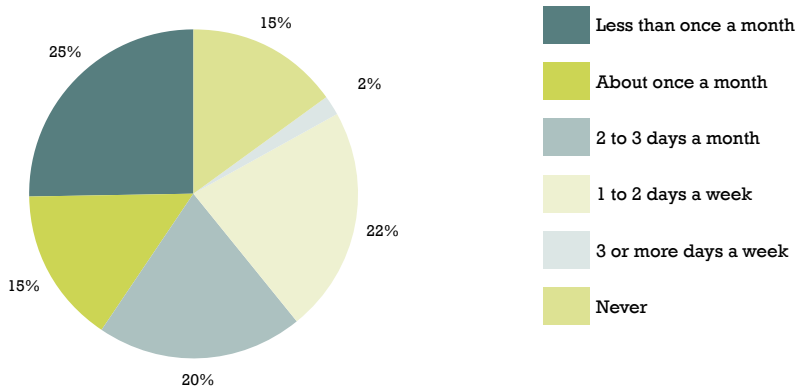
- The frequency of drinking in licensed venues and several issues relating to their use including frequency of drinking before visiting them, frequency of travelling outside the local neighbourhood to visit them, and frequency of visiting licensed venues located in specific 'entertainment districts'.
- Locations where alcohol consumption takes place.
- How alcohol is obtained by those under 18 years of age.

2.2.1 Drinking at licensed venues

Figure 1 shows the frequency of drinking in licensed venues reported by those who had consumed any alcohol in the last 12 months. During this time:

- 24% of this group reported drinking in licensed venues with a frequency of at least once a week.
- 59% did so at least once a month.
- 15%percent said they had not drunk alcohol in a licensed venue at all during the last 12 months.

Figure 1 Frequency of drinking alcohol in licensed venues



Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months (n=4349)

As shown in Table 14:

- Despite being under the legal age for drinking alcohol, 44% of those 16-17 year olds who had consumed alcohol during the last 12 months had done so at least once in a licensed venue such as a pub, club or restaurant. Females aged 16-17 years were more likely to have done so than were males (48% versus 41%).
- Males appeared to be drinking in licensed venues more often than females – 27% of males reported a frequency of once a week or more (versus 20% of females). By contrast, 29% of females drank in licensed venues less frequently than once a month (versus 22% of males).

Gender-based differences in lower frequency of drinking in licensed venues were particularly evident amongst 22-24 year olds. Within this age group 32% of females reported drinking at a licensed venue less than once a month compared with just 17% of males. By contrast, 34% of 22-24 year old males drank at least once a week at a licensed venue (versus 24% of 22-24 year old females).

Table 14 Frequency of drinking alcohol in licensed venues

Drinking alcohol in licensed venues in the last 12 months	NET: At least once a year	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month
	%	%	%	%
2009 Data				
TOTAL SAMPLE	84	24	59	25
SEX				
Male	84	27	62	22
Female	85	20	56	29
AGE				
16-17 years	44	2	12	32
18-21 years	93	28	70	24
22-24 years	94	30	70	24
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	41	2	10	30
18-21 years	93	32	72	22
22-24 years	94	34	76	17
Females ...				
16-17 years	48	2	15	33
18-21 years	93	25	68	25
22-24 years	95	24	63	32

Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months. Note: Row sub-totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

All those who had drunk at a licensed venue in the last 12 months were asked how frequently they engaged in behaviours, such as having some drinks before going to the venue, going to venues located outside their neighbourhood and going to 'entertainment districts with lots of places to drink'. Table 15 summarises the responses for those aged 18- 24 years with results rebased to all respondents in this age group who have consumed alcohol in the last 12 months. It is evident that:

- Most 18-24 year olds (86%) who have consumed alcohol in the last 12 months travel to a licensed venue outside their neighbourhood on at least some occasions. Around one in two (24% every time, 27% most times) do this on all or most occasions when they go out to drink at a licensed venue.
- Similarly, 82% of these respondents have visited an entertainment district when going out to drink at a pub, club or restaurant.
- Finally, 71% of 18-24 year olds who have consumed alcohol in the last 12 months have some drinks on at least some occasions before going out to drink at a licensed venue.

Table 15 Activities associated with drinking alcohol at licensed venues – 18-24 year olds only

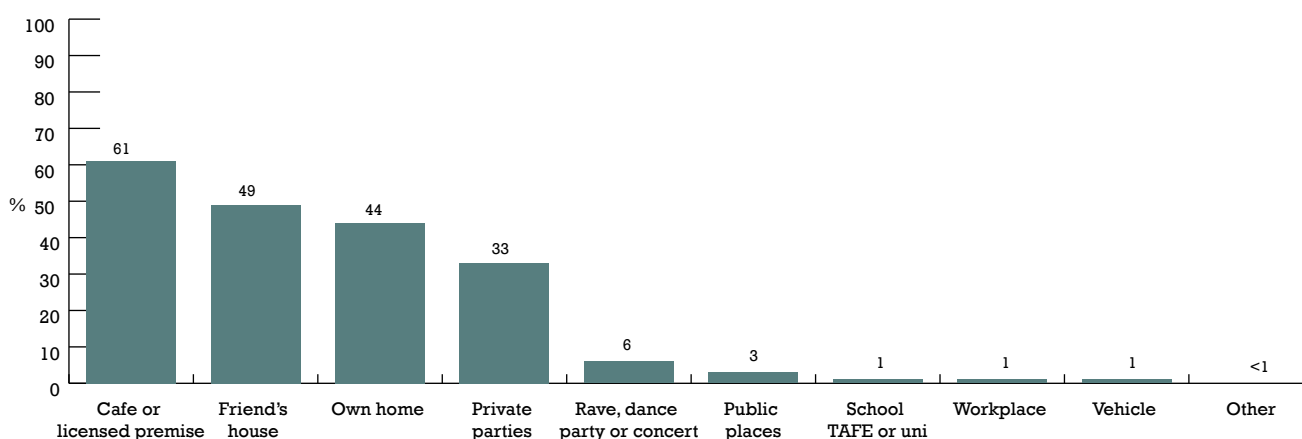
If going out to drink at a licensed venue, frequency of	Having some drinks before going there	Going outside your neighbourhood	Going to an entertainment district
	(n=3228) %	(n=3228) %	(n=3228) %
2009 Data			
Every time	14	24	10
Most times	18	27	24
Sometimes	19	18	23
A few times	20	16	24
Net: Ever	71	86	82
Never	23	8	12
Don't know/Can't say	<1	<1	<1
Haven't drunk at a licensed venue in the last 12 months	6	6	6

Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months, aged 18-24 years. Note: Totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

2.2.2 Alcohol consumption locations

Figure 2 shows, for all those who have consumed alcohol in the last 12 months, the locations where alcohol is 'usually drunk'. Places mentioned most often include licensed venues such as cafes, pubs and clubs (61%), at a friend's house (49%), in own home (44%) and at private parties (33%).

Figure 2 Usual places of alcohol consumption



Base: Drank alcohol in the last 12 months (2009 sample, n=4349)

Sub-group analysis shows some differences by gender in that a slightly higher proportion of males than females usually consume alcohol in their own home (45% versus 42% of females), at a friend's house (51% versus 47% of females) or in a public place (4% versus 1% of females). Against this, a slightly higher proportion of females than males say they usually consume alcohol at private parties (35% versus 31% of males).

However, more substantial differences in usual places of consumption are evident for age based sub-groups (see Table 16). From this table it is evident that only seven percent of 16-17 year olds say they usually drink alcohol at a licensed venue compared with 73% of 18-21 year olds and 74% of 22-24 year olds. By contrast, 16-17 year olds are more likely to report usually drinking alcohol at private parties (58% versus 31% of 18-21 year olds and just 23% of those aged 22-24 years) and at a friend's house (53%).

Among older respondents, those aged 22-24 years are the most likely to report usually consuming alcohol in their own home (52%) and the least likely to report doing so at private parties (23%).

Table 16 Usual places of alcohol consumption by age group

Place where usually drink alcohol	All	Respondents aged ...		
	Respondents	16-17	18-21	22-24
	(n=4349) %	(n=1121) %	(n=2321) %	(n=907) %
Licensed premises	61	7	73	74
Friend's house	49	53	49	47
Own home	44	36	41	52
Private parties	33	58	31	23
Rave, dance party or concert	6	2	7	6
Public places	3	4	2	2
School, TAFE or University	1	<1	1	1
Workplace	1	<1	1	2
In a motor vehicle	1	<1	1	1
Other place	<1	<1	<1	<1

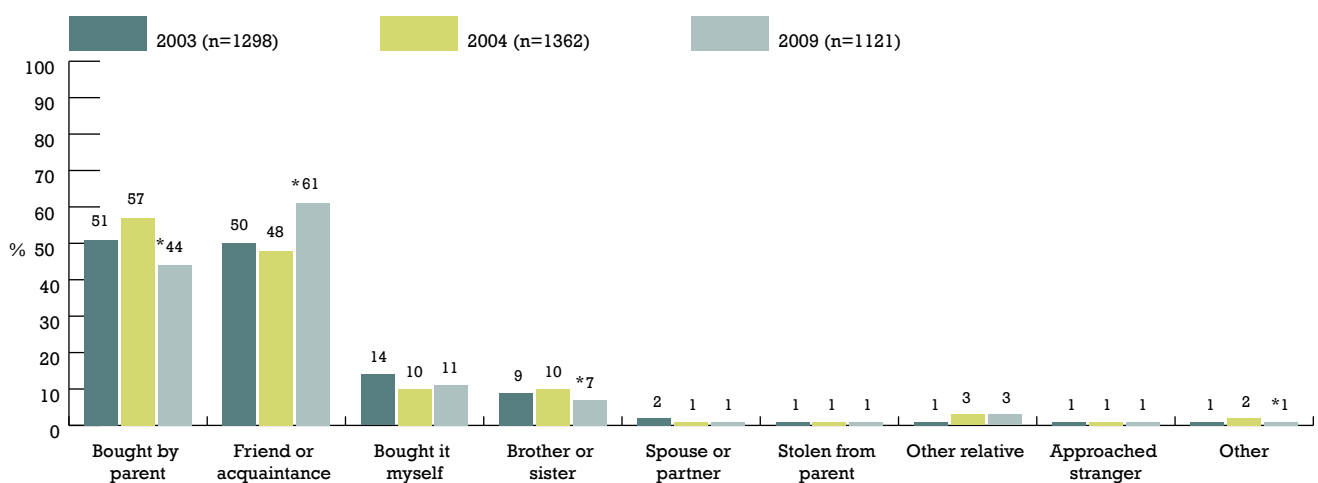
Base: Drank alcohol in the past 12 months (2009 survey only)

2.2.3 Access to alcohol by under 18s

Figure 3 shows, for those respondents aged 16-17 years who had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months, the sources they use to obtain alcohol:

- In 2009 the most frequently mentioned source was a friend or acquaintance (61%). This was mentioned more often in the 2009 survey than was the case in either 2003 or 2004 (50% and 48% respectively).
- The other main source of alcohol for under 18s was purchase by a parent (44% in 2009). Mention of this source was slightly lower in 2009 than in both previous surveys (51% in 2003 and 57% in 2004).
- The only other alcohol sources of note mentioned by 16-17 year olds were self-purchase and alcohol that had been purchased by a brother or sister – these were both mentioned by around one in ten of these respondents.

Figure 3 How those aged under 18 years usually obtain alcohol



Base: Aged 16-17 years and consumed alcohol in the last 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

3 Drug use

This section of the report explores patterns of drug use among young Victorians, as well as the contexts in which drugs are used.

The types of drugs that were assessed in detail in the 2009 VYADS varied from previous years. The drugs that remained consistent included cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, analgesics and tranquillisers. However, a detailed assessment of cocaine, inhalant and hallucinogen use was not continued in the 2009 survey. For each drug type, young people were asked whether they had ever used it, whether they had used it in the past 12 months and whether they had used it in the past month. Young people who reported using cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines and heroin, analgesics or tranquillisers were also asked about the frequency of their use, who they usually obtained the drug from, where they usually used it and how they used it.

In addition to the detailed assessment of these six drugs, lifetime and recent use of cocaine, GHB, inhalants, khat, ketamine, kava, LSD, other synthetic hallucinogens, plant-based hallucinogens, steroids, and other drugs were measured. No other questions were asked about the use of these drugs.

3.1 Lifetime and recent use of drugs

The self-reported lifetime use of any drug, including analgesics and tranquillisers for non-medical purposes, among Victorian young people in 2009 has substantially decreased since the last survey (see Table 17). Overall lifetime use has fallen from 51.7% in 2004 to 41.3% in 2009 and is now at its lowest level since VYADS commenced in 2002.

Table 17 Lifetime and recent drugs use by age and gender

	Lifetime Use				Recent Use			
	2002 (n=4509) %	2003 (n=6052) %	2004 (n=6005) %	2009 (n=5001) %	2002 (n=4509) %	2003 (n=6052) %	2004 (n=6005) %	2009 (n=5001) %
TOTAL SAMPLE	51.6	56.4	51.7	41.3 [#]	31.4	35.4	31.4	25.6 [#]
SEX								
Male	55	59	54	44 [#]	36	40	35	29 [#]
Female	48	53	49	38 [#]	27	31	27	22 [#]
AGE								
16-17 years	35	40	32	23 [#]	25	27	23	19 [#]
18-21 years	53	56	52	41 [#]	33	37	33	27 [#]
22-24 years	61	68	64	52 [#]	33	39	35	28 [#]
AGE BY SEX								
Males ...								
16-17 years	36	41	36	24 [#]	25	28	25	19 [#]
18-21 years	56	60	55	44 [#]	38	41	37	30 [#]
22-24 years	66	72	65	56 [#]	41	45	40	34 [#]
Females ...								
16-17 years	35	38	29	22 [#]	25	26	20	18
18-21 years	49	53	49	38 [#]	28	32	30	24 [#]
22-24 years	57	64	63	49 [#]	26	33	30	22 [#]

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

There has also been a significant reduction in the prevalence of recent drug use among young people. While this fall has not been as large as that seen for lifetime use, there was nevertheless a moderate decrease of 5.8 percentage points in recent use since 2004. Reported recent use in 2009 is also significantly lower than 2002 and 2003 levels.

The decline in self-reported lifetime and recent use is evident across all age groups and among young men and women. The greatest decrease in lifetime and recent use occurred among young women aged 22-24 years (lifetime use fell by 14 points since 2004 and recent use fell by 8 points), while the smallest decrease was among young women aged 16-17 years (lifetime use falling by 7 points and recent use by 2 points). It should be noted, however, that this latter group had seen the greatest reductions in drug use in earlier years and, overall, was still the least likely to report using drugs.

There have also been significant changes in the use of specific classes of drugs since 2004 (see Table 18). Cannabis, ecstasy and amphetamines continue to be the most commonly used drugs among Victorian young people. The lifetime use of these drugs was 38.4%, 15.0% and 11.5%, respectively, while recent use was 20.5%, 9.0% and 6.6%.

The lifetime use of cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, heroin, inhalants and synthetic hallucinogens (including LSD) in 2009 was significantly lower than in all previous years.

The use of heroin in particular has fallen to very low levels, with less than 0.4% of young people having used this drug in their lifetime.

Table 18 Lifetime and recent use of various drugs

Drug type	Lifetime Use				Recent Use			
	2002 (n=4509) %	2003 (n=6052) %	2004 (n=6005) %	2009 (n=5001) %	2002 (n=4509) %	2003 (n=6052) %	2004 (n=6005) %	2009 (n=5001) %
Cannabis	49.4	54.2	49.7	38.4 [#]	28.2	31.4	27.5	20.5 [#]
Ecstasy	16.6	20.0	18.9	15.0 [#]	10.5	13.2	12.4	9.0 [#]
Amphetamines	14.6	17.1	16.3	11.5 [#]	8.3	10.8	10.2	6.6 [#]
Cocaine	6.4	7.6	6.8	6.8	3.4	3.5	3.2	4.1 [#]
Plant-based hallucinogens	5.2	6.2	4.9	6.0 [#]	1.7	2.1	1.8	3.5 [#]
Synthetic hallucinogens (incl. LSD)	7.5	8.2	5.8	4.0 [#]	1.8	2.5	1.7	2.4 [#]
Analgesics	2.7	4.4	3.6	3.8	1.4	2.1	1.8	2.0
Tranquillisers	2.6	4.3	3.4	3.5	1.6	2.3	1.9	2.2
Ketamine	-	-	-	3.1	-	-	-	1.7
Kava	-	-	-	2.6	-	-	-	1.2
Inhalants	3.3	4.5	3.3	1.8 [#]	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.0
GHB	-	-	-	1.5	-	-	-	0.7
Steroids	-	-	-	0.7	-	-	-	0.4
Khat	-	-	-	0.5	-	-	-	0.4
Heroin	1.9	2.5	1.4	0.4 [#]	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.1 [#]

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

Note: dash indicates use was not measured in the given year. LSD and other synthetic hallucinogens were combined in 2009 to ensure comparability with earlier years.

The recent use of many types of drugs among Victorian young people has also significantly decreased since the 2004 survey. Declines were mainly noted in the use of the most commonly used illicit drugs – marijuana, amphetamines and ecstasy – but also heroin. The recent use of each of these drugs is now at its lowest level since VYADS commenced in 2002.

Nevertheless, there have been slight increases in recent use of a number of drugs including synthetic and plant-based hallucinogens and cocaine. The recent use of synthetic hallucinogens has increased from 1.7% in 2004 to 2.4% in 2009. Recent use of this drug in 2009 is also higher than in 2002 but is consistent with results from the 2003 survey. The use of plant-based hallucinogens, by contrast, is now the highest recorded, although this may be at least partly due to differences in how the question was framed to young people rather than reflecting actual changes in patterns of use .

The recent use of cocaine has increased from 3.2% in 2004 to 4.1% in 2009. This is, however, not statistically different from the levels seen in 2002 or 2003.

3.2 Current use of drugs

Young people were also asked about their use of a small number of drugs in the past month (see Table 19). Consistent with the patterns of lifetime and recent drug use, cannabis (7.7%), ecstasy (3.8%) and amphetamines (3.5%) were the most commonly used drugs in the past month. The use of cannabis in the past month has fallen by almost half since the 2004 survey (7.7% cf. 14.1%) and is at its lowest level since the VYADS commenced. The current use of ecstasy and amphetamines has also decreased slightly since 2004 but is not statistically different to levels of use in 2002.

The use of heroin in the past month continues to be very low with approximately 0.1% of young people in the 2009 survey reporting use. Less than one percent of young people were currently using analgesics or tranquilisers for non-medical purposes.

Table 19 Current use of various drugs

Drug type	2002 n=4509 %	2003 n=6052 %	2004 n=6005 %	2009 n=5001 %
Cannabis	14.8	16.7	14.1	7.7 [#]
Ecstasy	4.3	6.4	6.2	3.8 [#]
Amphetamines	3.1	4.6	4.8	3.5 [#]
Analgesics	-	-	-	0.9
Tranquillisers	-	-	-	0.7
Heroin	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1

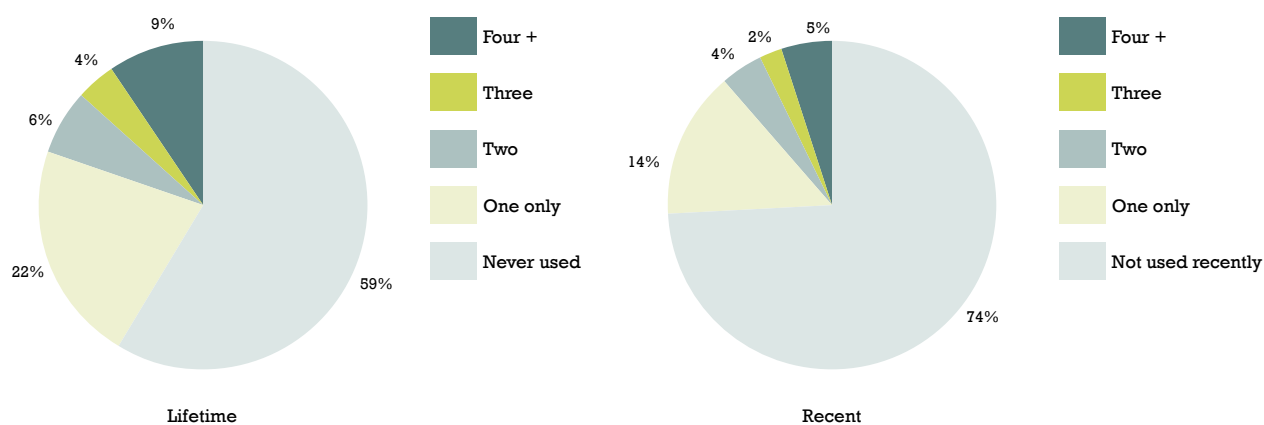
Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05). Note: dash indicates use was not measured in the given year.

3.3 Poly-drug use

The proportion of 16-24 year olds who had used one or more different types of drug in their lifetime and in the past 12 months is shown in Figure 4. As shown, approximately 13% of young people claim to have used three or more types of drugs in their life time. This figure drops to seven percent for recent use. The proportion of young people using three or more drugs is lower than in 2003 and 2004 but is consistent with levels seen in 2002.

It should also be noted that as a proportion of those who report using drugs, there has been a slight increase in lifetime and recent use of a larger number of drugs in 2009 compared to all previous survey years. One-quarter (23%) of those young people who have ever used drugs had used four or more types in 2009 compared with 18% in 2004 and 2003 and 16% in 2002. This trend was also evident among recent users: one-fifth (19%) had recently used four or more drugs in 2009 compared with 13% in 2004 and 11% in 2003 and 2002.

Figure 4 Lifetime and recent poly-drug use



Base: Total 2009 sample (n=5001)

3.4 Reasons for use and non use of drugs

Young people who had ever used drugs were asked what factors influenced their decision to first trying it, while those who had never tried drugs were asked what had influenced their decision to never try drugs. The main reasons given in the 2009 survey for first trying illicit drugs (see Table 20) were curiosity (57%) and peer pressure (52%). Less than one-in-ten young people said it was due to wanting to do something exciting (7%) or availability (7%).

The influence of peer pressure in first trying drugs appears to have substantially increased in comparison to all previous years (cf. 44% in 2004, 39% in 2003 and 45% in 2002). By contrast, curiosity appears to have fallen (cf. 66% in 2004, 68% in 2003 and 64% in 2002) although it remains the most frequently cited reason. The proportion of young people who mentioned excitement as a reason for first trying illicit drugs has fallen since 2004 (10%) but was comparable to 2002 (7%).

A number of differences were also evident between subgroups of young people according to their reasons for first trying illicit drugs in the 2009 survey. Those living in metropolitan Melbourne and young men aged 22-24 years were more likely to cite peer pressure as a reason for first trying drugs, while those living in regional Victoria were more likely to say it was due to being under the influence of alcohol. Furthermore, those who had used three or more different drugs in the past 12 months were more likely to mention excitement, to feel better, traumatic experience and to enhance performance.

Table 20 Reasons for first trying illicit drugs

Reason	2009 (n=1908) %	Subgroups more likely to mention reason
Wanted to see what it was like (curiosity)	57	
Friend used/offered drug (peer pressure)	52	22-24 year old males (65%) Metro (59%)
To do something exciting	7	Used 3+ drug last 12m (14%)
Availability	7	
To feel better	6	Used 3+ drug last 12m (11%)
Drunk	4	
Under the influence of alcohol	4	Non-metro (6%)
To take a risk	2	
Family problems	1	
Traumatic experience	1	Used 3+ drug last 12m (2%)
Enhance performance	1	Used 3+ drug last 12m (2%)

Base: Ever used drugs. Percentages do not sum to 100% due to participants providing multiple responses.

The most common reasons given by young people for never trying illicit drugs included being worried about the potential health consequences of use (37%), having seen the negative experiences of others (26%) and lack of interest (25%). One-fifth (19%) said they had not tried illicit drugs because of pressure from family or friends. Sixteen percent cited drug education at school and 10% advertising or social marketing campaign (see Table 21).

Table 21 Reasons for never trying illicit drugs

Reason	2009 (n=3039) %	Subgroups more likely to mention reason
Worry about health problems	37	
Observing the negative experience of others	26	Females (29%)
Just not interested	25	22-24 year old females (33%) Non-metro (28%)
Pressure from family or friends	19	18-21 year olds (21%)
Drug education at school	16	16-17 year olds (20%), especially females (23%)
Religious/moral reasons	11	22-24 year olds (16%) Metro (13%)
Didn't want to become addicted	10	
Advertising (TV and elsewhere)	10	16-17 year olds (13%)
Didn't like to feel out of control	6	Females (8%)
Didn't think it would be enjoyable	6	
Friends didn't use or stopped using	6	22-24 year old females (11%) Metro (7%)
Fear of being arrested	5	16-17 year old males (least likely) (3%)
Didn't want family to find out	5	
Never had the opportunity to try illicit drugs	3	

Base: Never used drugs. Percentages do not sum to 100% due to participants providing multiple responses.

There have been a number of significant changes since 2004 in the reasons given by young people for never having tried illicit drugs. The impact of active prevention programs, such as drug education at school (cf. 11% in 2004 and 6% in 2003) and social marketing campaigns (cf. 6% in 2004 and 3% in 2003), have continued to increase in 2009 as reported reasons for never trying drugs and are now higher than in all previous years. The fear of prosecution (cf. 4% in 2004 and 3% in 2003) and pressure from friends (cf. 12% in 2004, 11% in 2003 and 14% in 2002) were also more frequently mentioned than in any other year. Moreover, young people were more likely to mention seeing the negative experiences of others compared to 2003 and 2004 (21% and 23%, respectively) although they were less likely to mention it compared to 2002 (37%). Religious or moral reasons were less likely to be mentioned in 2009 than in previous survey years (13% in 2003/04 and 15% in 2002).

As with the reasons for first trying drugs, a number of differences between key subgroups of young people were found in the reasons given for never trying illicit drugs in 2009. Young women were slightly more likely than young men to mention the direct negative effects of using drugs, such as seeing the negative experiences of others and not wanting to feel 'out of control', as reasons for never trying drugs. Young people living in regional Victoria were slightly more likely to say they had never tried drugs because they were not interested, while those in metropolitan Melbourne were more likely to cite religious or moral reasons and having friends who do not use drugs. Young people aged 16-17 years were more likely than older respondents to cite preventive programs, such as drug education at school (especially young women this age) and advertising campaigns, as reasons for never trying drugs.

3.5 Cannabis

3.5.1 Patterns of use

Cannabis continues to be the most commonly used illicit drug among Victorian young people. Approximately two-fifths (38.4%) reported lifetime use in 2009, while one-fifth (20.5%) reported recent use. Less than one-in-ten (7.7%) had used cannabis in the past month. Despite the apparent widespread use of cannabis among young people, the prevalence of lifetime, recent and current use is now likely to report recent use.

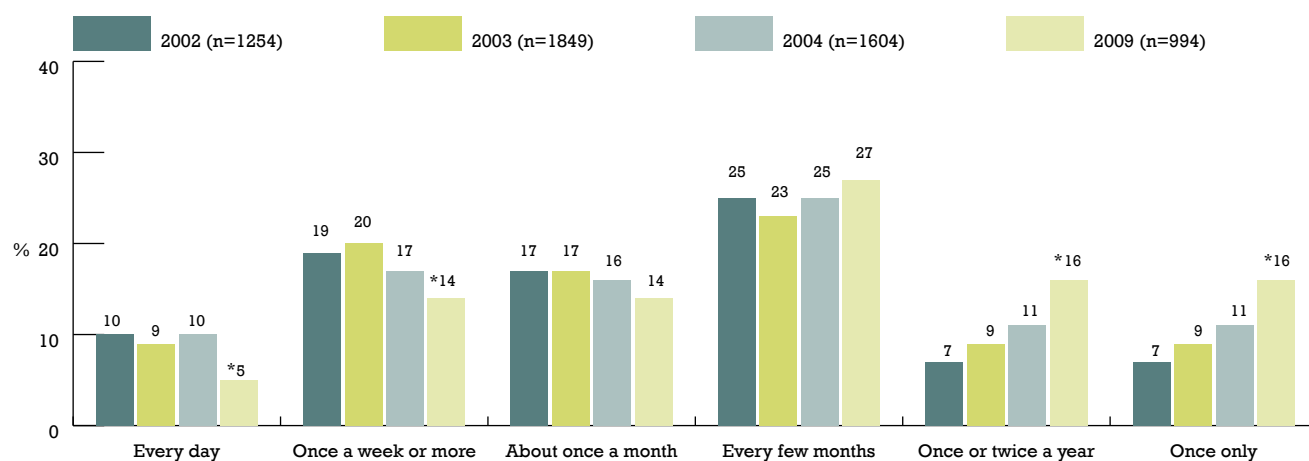
Table 22 Recent cannabis use by age and gender

Recent Use	2002	2003	2004	2009
	%	%	%	%
TOTAL SAMPLE	28.2	31.4	27.5	20.5 [#]
SEX				
Male	32	36	31	23 [#]
Female	24	26	24	17 [#]
AGE				
16-17 years	23	25	21	16 [#]
18-21 years	31	33	29	22 [#]
22-24 years	28	34	30	21 [#]
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	24	26	23	17 [#]
18-21 years	36	39	33	25 [#]
22-24 years	33	40	35	25 [#]
Females ...				
16-17 years	23	23	18	15
18-21 years	25	27	25	20 [#]
22-24 years	23	27	25	16 [#]

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

One-third (33%) of young people who had recently used cannabis reported using it 'about once a month' or more often, while two-fifths (43%) used it 'once or twice a year' or less (see Figure 5). One in twenty (5%) reported using cannabis every day.

Figure 5 Frequency of using cannabis among recent users



Base: Recent cannabis users. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

The frequency of cannabis use among recent users remained relatively stable between the 2002 and 2004 surveys. However, in 2009 there was a significant shift towards less frequency use. More specifically, the proportion of recent users who report using cannabis at least once a week has significantly decreased (cf. 19% in 2009, 27% in 2004 and 29% in 2003 and 2002), while the proportion reporting occasional use (i.e. once or twice a year, or once only) has significantly increased (cf. 43% in 2009, 33% in 2004 and 31% in 2003 and 29% in 2002).

3.5.2 Context of use

The majority (88%) of young people who had ever used cannabis had obtained it from a friend or acquaintance. The proportion of young people sourcing cannabis through this channel has decreased slightly since 2004 (91%). A minority (5%) of young people – particularly young men (7% cf. 3% of young women) – reported obtaining cannabis from a dealer.

The most common place young people used cannabis was at a friend's home (63%), followed by their own home (24%), public places (13%) and private parties (12%). A minority usually used cannabis at raves, dance parties or concerts (2%); licensed premises (2%); educational facilities (1%); or in a vehicle (2%).

The number of young people using cannabis at a friend's house has increased slightly since 2004 (60%), while use in their own home, at private parties, licensed premises or in a car was lower than in all previous years. Those aged 22-24 years were slightly less likely than other young people to usually use cannabis at a friend's home (58%), while young men of this age were more likely to usually use in their own home (34%). Younger people (16-17 year olds) were more likely to usually use cannabis at private parties (19%) and young men were more likely to use in public places (15% cf. 10% of young women).

The majority (84%) of lifetime cannabis users reported smoking it in a joint or reefer. Less than half (47%) smoked it using a bong or pipe and 15% said they ate it. The proportion of young people smoking cannabis from a bong or pipe has continued to decline in 2009 and is now at its lowest level since the first VYADS survey (cf. 60% in 2004, 68% in 2003 and 73% in 2002). There has also been a moderate decline in the number of young people eating cannabis in comparison to all previous surveys (cf. 22% in 2004, 30% in 2003 and 27% in 2002).

3.6 Ecstasy

3.6.1 Patterns of use

Fifteen percent of Victorian young people reported lifetime ecstasy use in the 2009 survey, while nine percent reported recent use. Despite ecstasy continuing to be the second most commonly used illicit drug among young people, these figures represent the lowest prevalence of lifetime and recent use since the start of the survey. Less than one-in-twenty (3.8%) young people had used ecstasy in the past month. Current use was slightly lower than the high recorded in the 2003 and 2004 surveys, but is comparable to 2002.

The median age for first use of ecstasy was 17.5 years, which is consistent with previous surveys.

The small fall in recent ecstasy use was not uniform across sub-groups (see Table 23).

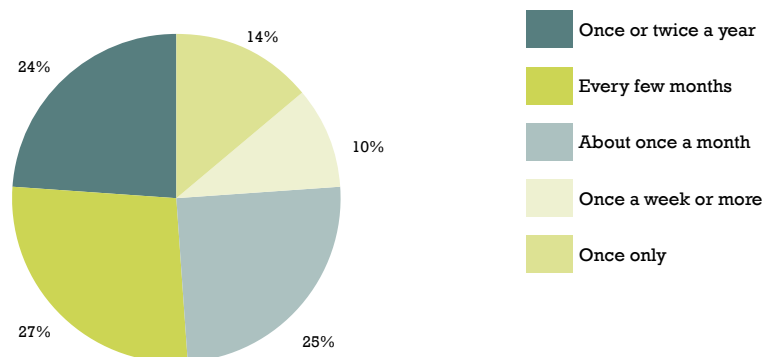
- There were no significant changes in recent use among 16-17 year olds; however, there have been decreases among older young men and women (18-24 years) compared to 2003 and 2004 but not in comparison to 2002.
- Young men aged 22-24 years were the only group of young people whose use of ecstasy in 2009 was also statistically significantly lower than 2002.
- Despite these decreases, recent use continued to be a little higher among young men aged 18-21 years (11%), and highest among young males aged 22- 24 years (14%).

Table 23 Recent ecstasy use by age and gender

Recent Use	2002	2003	2004	2009
	%	%	%	%
TOTAL SAMPLE	10.5	13.2	12.4	9.0#
SEX				
Male	13	15	15	11#
Female	8	11	10	7#
AGE				
16-17 years	3	3	3	4#
18-21 years	11	15	14	10#
22-24 years	15	18	17	11#
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	3	3	4	4
18-21 years	13	16	16	11#
22-24 years	20	22	20	14#
Females ...				
16-17 years	4	4	3	3
18-21 years	9	13	11	8#
22-24 years	9	14	14	8#

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

One-third (35%) of recent ecstasy users reported using it at least once a month (see Figure 6). Twenty-seven percent have used it every few months, 24% once or twice a year and 14% once only. The prevalence of more frequent ecstasy use was broadly consistent with previous surveys (34% used monthly or more in 2004, 33% in 2003 and 35% in 2002).

Figure 6 Frequency of using ecstasy among recent users

Base: Recent ecstasy users (n=412)

3.6.2 Context of use

The majority (83%) of young people who had ever used ecstasy usually obtained it from a friend or acquaintance, while 14% sourced ecstasy directly from a dealer. The proportion of young people who usually obtained ecstasy from a friend or acquaintance was slightly lower than in all previous surveys (cf. 87% in 2004 and 88% in 2002 and 2003). Young men, particularly those aged 18-24 years, were more likely to obtain ecstasy from a dealer, while young women were more likely to obtain ecstasy from a friend or acquaintance (87% cf. 81% young men).

Young people typically swallowed ecstasy (99% reported using the drug this way) while a minority (12%) said they snorted it.

The most common places young people used ecstasy were at licensed premises (59%); at a rave, dance party or concert (28%); at a friend's house (20%); or at a private party (16%). Less than one-in-ten (7%) reported usually using ecstasy in their own home. The places where young people usually used ecstasy were consistent with previous surveys. The only exception was a small reduction in young people using ecstasy in their own home against all previous years (cf. 13% in 2004, 11% in 2003 and 12% in 2002) and private parties compared to 2004 (23%). The latter was not significantly different to 2002 (10%) or 2003 (19%).

Some sub-group differences were found in the usual place of use:

- Young people aged 18-24 years were more likely to report usually using ecstasy at licensed premises (62%), while 22-24 year olds were more likely to use it at a rave, dance party or concert (34%).
- Young women were more likely than young men to use at a friend's house (26% cf. 16%, respectively) and 16-17 year olds were considerably more likely to use ecstasy at private parties (44%).

3.7 Amphetamines

3.7.1 Patterns of use

The prevalence of lifetime and recent amphetamine use among Victorian young people has fallen to the lowest level since the survey began. Just over one-in-ten (11.5%) young people in 2009 reported lifetime use of amphetamines (down 4.8 points compared with 2004) and 6.6% reported recent use (down 3.6 points). Less than one-in-twenty (3.5%) young people had used amphetamines in the past month. This is slightly lower than the high recorded in the 2003 and 2004 surveys, but is comparable to 2002.

The median age for first use of amphetamines was 17.5 years.

The slight decline in the prevalence of recent amphetamine use between the apparent peak seen in 2003-2004 and the current survey was evident across all sub-groups of young people, save among young women aged 16-17 years for whom recent use was already very low (see Table 24). However, the only groups of young people for whom recent use in 2009 is also lower than in 2002 are young men aged 16-17 years and those aged 18-21 years.

Recent amphetamine use continues to be related to gender and age. Young men were slightly more likely than young women to report recent use. Recent use also increases dramatically with age. Young men aged 22-24 years reported the highest recent use of all groups.

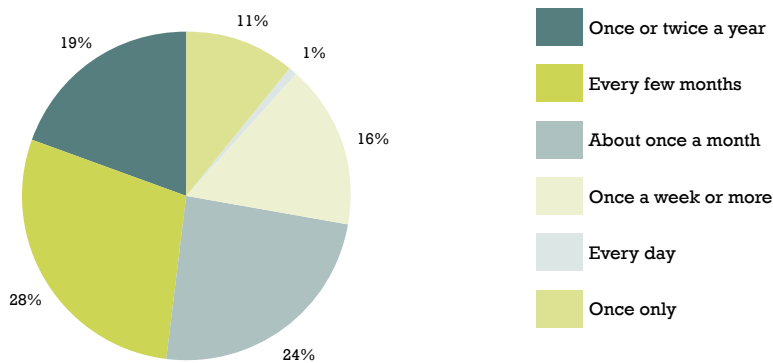
Table 24 Recent amphetamines use by age and gender

Recent Use	2002	2003	2004	2009
	%	%	%	%
TOTAL SAMPLE	8.3	10.8	10.2	6.6 [#]
SEX				
Male	10	13	12	8 [#]
Female	6	9	8	5 [#]
AGE				
16-17 years	3	4	3	1 [#]
18-21 years	9	12	11	7 [#]
22-24 years	11	14	14	9 [#]
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	3	3	3	1 [#]
18-21 years	11	14	12	8 [#]
22-24 years	15	18	17	12 [#]
Females ...				
16-17 years	4	4	3	2
18-21 years	7	10	10	6 [#]
22-24 years	7	10	10	7 [#]

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

Two-fifths (41%) of young people who had recently used amphetamines reported using this drug once a month or more (see Figure 7). Twenty-eight percent used amphetamines every few months, 19% once or twice a year and 11% only once. The proportion of young people using amphetamines once a month or more appears to have increased slightly since 2002 (cf. 35% in 2004, 28% in 2003 and 31% in 2002). It should be noted, however, that the difference between the 2009 and 2004 surveys is statistically not significant.

Figure 7 Frequency of using amphetamines among recent users



Base: Recent amphetamine users (n=290)

3.7.2 Context of use

The majority (81%) of young people who had ever used amphetamines reported obtaining the drug from friends or acquaintances. This is a slight decrease on all previous years (cf. 87% in 2004 and 86% in 2003 and 88% in 2002). Slightly over one-in-ten (12%) young people had obtained amphetamines from a dealer. Young men, particularly those aged 22-24 years, were more likely than other young people to source amphetamines from a dealer.

The most common places young people had used amphetamines were at licensed premises (49%); at a friend's house (29%); at a rave, dance party or concert (23%); in their own home (15%); and at private parties (14%). There was very little change between 2004 and 2009 in terms of where young people usually used amphetamines. The exception was a slight decrease in the use of amphetamines at private parties in comparison to 2003 (23%) and 2004 (24%) but not in comparison to 2002 (13%).

The majority of users reported snorting (71%) amphetamines. Two-thirds (66%) reported having swallowed the drug, one-third (34%) smoked it and two percent injected it. Smoking amphetamines appears to have substantially increased in recent years (cf. 14% in 2002, 24% in 2003 and 23% in 2004). The oral ingestion of amphetamines has also slightly increased since 2004 (59%) but is not significantly different to 2002 (71%).

3.8 Heroin

3.8.1 Patterns of use

The reported use of heroin by young Victorians is very low and is now at its lowest level since the survey commenced. Lifetime heroin use was reported by 0.4% of the young people surveyed, while recent and current use was 0.1%. Due to the extremely low numbers of young people reporting use of heroin in this survey, patterns of use according to age and gender are not reported.

The median age for first use of heroin was 17.5 years.

3.8.2 Context of use

The main sources of supply of heroin among lifetime users were friends or acquaintances (68%) and directly from a dealer (28%). Two-fifths (40%) of those who had ever used heroin usually used it in their own home, while one-third (32%) said they used it at a friend's house. Twelve percent said they usually used heroin in a public space and eight percent in licensed premises.

Those who had used heroin often smoked the drug (52%). Less than one-third said they had injected (28%) or snorted (28%) heroin.

3.9 Analgesics

3.9.1 Patterns of use

The use of analgesics or painkillers for non-medical purposes among Victorian young people is relatively uncommon. Lifetime analgesics use was reported by 3.8% of young people. Two percent had recently used analgesics and 0.9% had done so in the past month.

The median age for first use of analgesics was 17.0 years.

The prevalence of lifetime and recent analgesic use was slightly higher than the level recorded in 2002 but unchanged from 2003 and 2004 (see Table 25). There were few significant differences between young people according to their lifetime or recent use, save that lifetime use appears to steadily increase with age and is highest among young men aged 22-24 years.

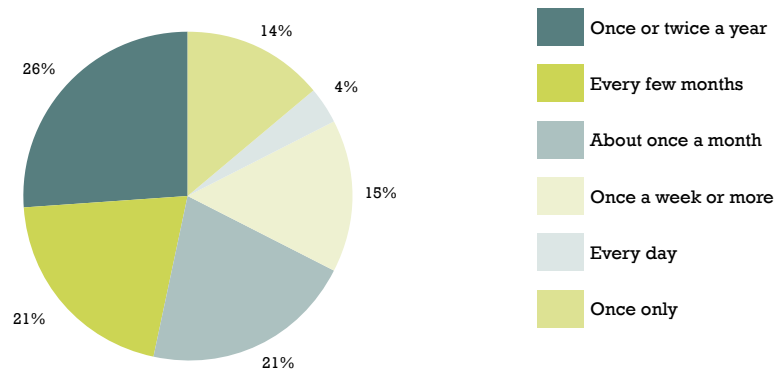
Table 25 Lifetime and recent use of analgesics by age and gender

Lifetime and Recent Use	Lifetime Use				Recent Use			
	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2009 %	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2009 %
TOTAL SAMPLE	2.7	4.4	3.6	3.8	1.4	2.1	1.8	2.0
SEX								
Male	3	5	4	4	1	2	2	2
Female	3	4	4	3	1	2	2	2
AGE								
16-17 years	2	3	3	2	1	1	2	1
18-21 years	3	4	3	3	1	2	2	2
22-24 years	3	7	5	5	1	3	2	3
AGE BY SEX								
Males ...								
16-17 years	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
18-21 years	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	2
22-24 years	4	8	5	7	2	4	2	3
Females ...								
16-17 years	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	2
18-21 years	3	4	3	3	1	2	2	2
22-24 years	2	5	5	4	1	3	2	2

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

The majority (58%) of recent analgesic users reported using codeine. Fifteen percent said they had used oxycodone (e.g. OxyContin, Proladone Suppository, Endone) and one-in-ten (9%) morphine. A very small number of users said they had used propoxyphene (1%) or methadone (1%). Less than one-third (28%) said they had used other types of analgesics. No young people reported using buprenorphine. The types of analgesics used by young people were consistent with previous years.

Two-fifths (40%) of those young people who had used analgesics or painkillers for non-medical purposes in the past 12 months reported a usage frequency of about 'once a month' or more (see Figure 8). One-fifth (21%) reported using it every few months, one-quarter (26%) once or twice a year and 14% only once. This question was included in the 2009 VYADS survey for the first time and, as a consequence, no comparisons can be made over time.

Figure 8 Frequency of using analgesics among recent users

Base: Recent analgesics users (n=93)

3.9.2 Context of use

The most common (46%) source of supply for analgesics or painkillers among young people was a friend or acquaintance, although it should be noted this source is much less frequently mentioned than for illicit drugs, such as cannabis, ecstasy and amphetamines. One-quarter (22%) of young people reported obtaining analgesics or painkillers from a shop, 11% through doctor shopping or forged scripts, and nine percent from their parents. It is unclear whether the latter was with or without consent.

The most common places where young people used analgesics or painkillers were in their own home (67%) and at a friend's house (26%).

3.10 Tranquillisers

3.10.1 Patterns of use

The prevalence of non-medical use of tranquillisers was very similar to that of analgesics (see Table 26). In 2009, lifetime use was reported by 3.5% of young people, approximately two percent (2.2%) had used tranquillisers recently and 0.7% had done so in the past month.

The median age for first use of tranquillisers was 18.0 years.

The lifetime and recent use of tranquillisers by young people remains slightly higher than in 2002 but was unchanged from 2003 and 2004. Lifetime use of tranquillisers continues to be strongly related to age and is highest among young people aged 22-24 years. The recent use of tranquillisers is slightly higher among young people in this age category.

Table 26 Lifetime and recent use of tranquillisers by age and gender

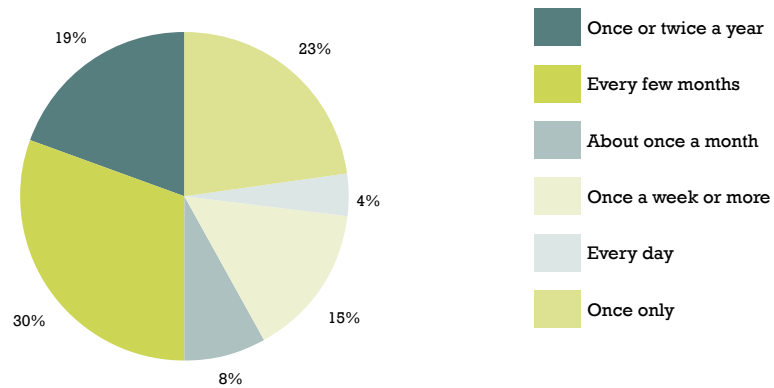
	Lifetime Use				Recent Use			
	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2009 %	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2009 %
TOTAL SAMPLE	2.6	4.3	3.4	3.5	1.6	2.3	1.9	2.2
SEX								
Male	3	4	4	4	2	2	2	2
Female	2	4	3	3	2	2	2	2
AGE								
16-17 years	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	1
18-21 years	2	4	3	3	2	2	2	2
22-24 years	4	6	5	5	2	3	2	3
AGE BY SEX								
Males ...								
16-17 years	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
18-21 years	2	4	4	3	1	3	3	2
22-24 years	5	7	6	6	3	3	3	3
Females ...								
16-17 years	1	3	2	2	1	2	1	1
18-21 years	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	2
22-24 years	2	5	4	5	1	3	2	2

Base: Total sample. #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

The most common types of tranquillisers used by young people were diazepam (52%) and alprazolam (40%). A small number of recent users said they had used temazepam (7%), oxazepam (1%) or diphenhydramine (1%). One-third (31%) had used other types of tranquillisers and 3% were unsure of the types they had used. No young people reported using flunitrazepam and clonazepam.

There have been some changes in the types of tranquillisers used by young people. Diazepam (e.g. Valium, Ducene, Antenex) use appears to have increased since 2004 (when it was at 37%) but is not significantly different from 2002 or 2003 (38% and 46%, respectively). There has also been an increase in use of Alprazolam (e.g. Xanax, Kalma) among young people since 2004 (4%). The use of temazepam by contrast, has decreased to its lowest level since the start of the VYADS (25% in 2004, 32% in 2003 and 25% in 2002). There has also been a slight decrease in the use of oxazepam from 2003 (13%) and 2004 (9%) levels. However, use was not significantly different from 2002 (6%).

Less than one-third (27%) of those who had used tranquillisers in the past 12 months reported using these drugs 'once a month' or more (see Figure 9). One-quarter (23%) reported using tranquillisers only once, one-fifth (19%) once or twice a year and 30% every few months. This question was included for tranquilliser use for the first time in the 2009 VYADS survey.

Figure 9 Frequency of using tranquilisers among recent users

Base: Recent users of tranquilisers (n=100)

3.10.2 Context of use

The majority (66%) of young people who had ever used tranquilisers or sleeping pills had obtained them from friends and acquaintances. A minority said they bought them at a shop (10%), obtained them by doctor shopping or forged scripts (9%) or obtained them from a parent (8%).

The most common places young people used tranquilisers or sleeping pills were very similar to the pattern seen for analgesics. The place mentioned most often was their own home (64%), followed by a friend's home (29%). A small number (6%) reported using tranquilisers in licensed premises.

4 Factors associated with recent alcohol and drug use

The concurrent recent use of alcohol and drugs has emerged as an important issue in 2009 for the Victorian Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council, given the possible compounding harms associated with using both substances. Hence, this section of the report presents an analysis of the factors associated with concurrent use of alcohol and drug use in the past year. In particular, consideration is given to describing the ways in which young people who engage in such behaviour differ from other groups of young people.

In order to undertake the analysis the total sample surveyed in 2009 was divided into groups based on respondents' lifetime and recent alcohol and drug use. Several possibilities for group formation were explored; however, the following was chosen as it offered a reasonably simple approach to categorising young people while incorporating different levels of drug and alcohol consumption.

Four main groups were defined:

- **Lower level drinkers** (n = 1597 or 31.9% of the unweighted sample): consisted of young people who had used alcohol in the last 12 months but who had not consumed 20 or more standard drinks in a single session during this time. These young people had never tried drugs.
- **Higher level drinkers** (n = 901 or 18.0%): consisted of young people who had used alcohol in the last 12 months and who had consumed 20 or more standard drinks in a single session in the past year. These young people had also never tried drugs.
- **Past drug users** (n = 642 or 12.8%): comprising those who had ever tried drugs but had not used any drugs in the last 12 months. These young people had, however, used alcohol in the last 12 months.
- **Recent users of alcohol and drugs** (n = 1209 or 24.2%): these young people reported using both alcohol and drugs in the last 12 months.

As a result of these definitions, some young people (n = 652 or 13.0%) were excluded from the analysis. Most of those excluded fell into two groups:

- Non-users of alcohol and drugs (n = 371 or 7.4%): young people who had never tried alcohol or drugs at any point in their lifetime; and
- Non-recent users of alcohol (n = 224 or 4.5%): young people who had tried alcohol but not in the past year. They had also never used drugs.

It was considered appropriate to exclude these respondents from the analysis as its focus was on exploring the differences between those young people who exhibited different patterns of recent alcohol and drug use. Including those in the above two groups was felt to add unnecessarily to the complexity of the analysis and the presentation of the results.

The broad differentiating factors that were examined related to three areas: attitudes to alcohol and drug use (which included agreement to selected statements and the perceived acceptability of using substances), the extent of alcohol and/or drug use among peers, and socio-demographic characteristics.

The following sections present the findings from each of these areas.

4.1 Attitudes to alcohol and drug use

There was evidence of a strong association between respondents' attitudes to alcohol and drug use and their membership of the four alcohol and drug user groups.

Overall, young people who had recently used alcohol and drugs held more positive views on alcohol and drug use than all other groups. Those who had never used drugs (i.e. lower and higher level drinker groups) on the other hand, held the least positive views on the use of drugs, while lower level drinkers had the least positive views on alcohol consumption (see Table 27).

Table 27 Attitudes to alcohol and drugs use by key groups

	Lower level Drinkers (n=1597) %	Higher level drinkers (n=901) %	Past drug users (n=642) %	Recent alcohol and drug users (n=1209)
Attitudes to alcohol use ...				
Nothing good to be said	25	19	16	10
One of life's pleasures	70	81	80	86
Innocent way to have fun	23	44	34	51
Drunk person is a disgusting sight	68	58	62	51
Attitudes to drug use ...				
Nothing good to be said	92	90	87	57
Gives you a good feeling	19	20	42	74
Innocent way to have fun	3	5	10	29
High person is a disgusting sight	85	83	76	52
Consider it wrong to use ...				
Alcohol regularly	14	9	5	5
Cannabis	85	76	57	26
Ecstasy	96	96	88	63
Amphetamines	96	96	90	68
Heroin	98	99	97	95
Analgesics	92	93	90	80
Tranquillisers	93	94	92	81

Base: Alcohol and drug use groups (n = 4349). Note: 'Attitudes' reports percent who agree ('agree' and 'strongly agree'), while 'considers it wrong to use' reports percent who feel it is 'wrong' or 'very wrong' to use each. Red shading indicates group(s) with the most positive attitudes. Green shading indicates group(s) with the least positive attitudes.

The following outlines in greater detail the key differences that emerged between the groups. As noted earlier, **recent alcohol and drug users** had the most positive views towards alcohol and drug use. In particular, members of this group were:

- Least likely to agree there is ‘nothing good to be said’ about using alcohol or drugs and that a drunk or high person is a ‘disgusting sight’.
- Most likely to agree that using alcohol or drugs is ‘an innocent way to have fun’ and that alcohol is one of life’s pleasures or that drugs give you a good feeling.
- They were also the least likely to say it was wrong for someone their age to drink alcohol regularly or to use cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, analgesics and tranquillisers.

Higher level drinkers and **past drug users** typically held more positive views than lower level drinkers. Higher level drinkers and past drug users were fairly similar in their profile in terms of their views on alcohol use. The only exception to this trend was that higher level drinkers were more likely than past drug users to agree drinking was an ‘innocent way to have fun’ (44% cf. 34%).

There were, however, considerable differences between high level drinkers and past drug users in their views on drug use, with the latter being more positively disposed towards drug use. Thus:

- Past drug users were less likely than higher level drinkers to agree there is ‘nothing good to be said about using drugs’ and that ‘a high person is a disgusting sight’, and more likely to agree that using drugs is ‘an innocent way to have fun’ and that drugs ‘give you a good feeling’.
- Past drug users were also less likely to say it was ‘wrong’ for someone their age to use cannabis, ecstasy and amphetamines.

Lower level drinkers, by contrast, held the most negative views on alcohol of all four groups. These young people were less likely to agree that using alcohol is ‘an innocent way to have fun’ or ‘one of life’s pleasures’ and were more likely to agree there is ‘nothing good to be said’ about using alcohol and that a drunk person is a ‘disgusting sight’. Lower level drinkers were also the least likely to consider it ‘wrong’ for someone their age to drink alcohol regularly.

The views on drugs held by this group were similar to those of high level drinkers. These groups of alcohol users were not significantly different on their agreement with the four statements about drug use or whether it was wrong to use ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, analgesics and tranquillisers for non-medical purposes. The only difference between these two groups insofar as their views on drug use were concerned was that lower level drinkers were more likely to consider it wrong to use cannabis.

4.2 Alcohol and drug use among peers

There was also a strong association between reported use of alcohol and drugs by peers and personal patterns of alcohol and drug use. The main differences found between the four alcohol or drug use groups were (see Table 28):

- **Recent alcohol and drug users** were more likely than other groups to have at least a few friends who use cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, analgesics and tranquillisers for non-medical purposes.
- **Past drug users** were the group next most likely to report having at least a few friends who use drugs (except heroin).
- **Higher level drinkers** were less likely than either of the above groups to have some friends who regularly drink alcohol or use drugs. However, this group was more likely than lower level drinkers to have at least a few friends who drink alcohol regularly or use cannabis, ecstasy or amphetamines.
- **Lower level drinkers** were the least likely to have friends who regularly drink alcohol regularly or use drugs.

Table 28 Use of alcohol and drugs in social networks

At least 'a few' friends who use ...	Lower level drinkers (n=1597) %	Higher level drinkers (n=901) %	Past drug users (n=642) %	Recent alcohol and drug users (n=1209) %
Alcohol regularly	93	96	98	99
Cannabis	34	45	67	90
Ecstasy	14	23	40	68
Amphetamines	9	16	30	55
Heroin	3	4	4	4
Analgesics	5	7	10	20
Tranquillisers	4	6	10	22

Base: Alcohol and drug use groups (n = 4349). Note: Red shading indicates group(s) with the most positive attitudes. Green shading indicates group(s) with the least positive attitudes.

4.3 Socio-demographic factors

Owing to the relatively large number of socio-demographic characteristics involved, the relationship between these characteristics and the four alcohol and drug use groups was examined through discriminant analysis. The attitudinal and peer usage factors previously discussed were not included in this analysis because of the very strong relationship each had with the alcohol and drug use groups. The strength of these relationships greatly limited the power of the socio-demographic factors to differentiate between groups, as was desired in this analysis.

The socio-demographic variables included in the final discriminant analysis were:

- Gender by age groupings (16-17 years, 18-21 years and 22-24 years).
- Work and educational status: attending secondary school, undertaking post-secondary education, being employed, being unemployed, and highest education was trade certificate.
- Level of disposable income: less than \$40 per week, \$40-\$80 dollars a week and over \$80 per week.
- Household structure: two parent household, single parent household, couple living together, and sharing with non-related adults.
- Other variables: language other than English spoken at home (LOTE), sexual orientation, living in Melbourne, living in rural Victoria and SEIFA quartile (1st and 4th).

Several other variables were considered, but were not retained in the final analysis as they did not significantly contribute to the discrimination between groups. These variables included: Indigenous status, living alone, living in regional cities (i.e. Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong) and SEIFA quartile (2nd and 3rd).

The outcome of the discriminant analysis is presented in the form of a discriminant map (see Figure 10) . The map has two basic dimensions:

- The x-axis (horizontal axis) which discriminates between the groups according to their lifetime use of drugs. The alcohol-only groups (lower and higher level) are positioned at the left hand end of this axis, while the past drug user and recent alcohol and drug user groups are positioned to the right. The main discriminators on this dimension are life stage and income.
- The y-axis (vertical axis) is largely gender-based and, in particular, appears to discriminate between 'higher' and 'lower' risk groups according to the recent consumption of alcohol or drugs.

The proportion of each alcohol/drug use group in each socio-demographic category explored is also shown in Table 29.

The variables that best predict the membership of a particular group are generally those positioned closest to that group in the map space. With this in mind, the following outlines the socio-demographic profile of each group of young people.

- **Recent alcohol and drug users** were most strongly associated with the variables in the top right quadrant. Thus, the socio-demographic characteristics over-represented in this group were males aged 18-21 years, comparatively high disposable incomes (over \$80 per week), having a full- or part-time job or being unemployed (but not attending school), being of gay, lesbian, bisexual or unsure orientation, living in a shared household (non-related adults) and living in metropolitan Melbourne (rather than regional Victoria).

- **Past drug users** were most associated with 22-24 year old young women who were living with a partner. This group was also associated with 22-24 year old young men (although not as strongly as females in this age group) and completion of a trade certificate.
- **Higher level drinkers** were typically associated with young men aged 16-17 years, living in a household with two parents and having a comparatively moderate weekly disposable income (\$40-\$80) and still attending secondary school.
- **Lower level drinkers** were associated with limited disposable income (less than \$40 per week) and young women aged 16-17 years. This group was also associated with having a language other than English spoken at home, suggesting possible cultural influences in the patterns of consumption. Lower and higher level drinkers were both associated with living in rural Victoria.

Figure 10 Discriminant map of differentiators between recent alcohol and drug use groups



Note: This map is based on plotting the canonical correlation between each variable and the first two discriminant functions.

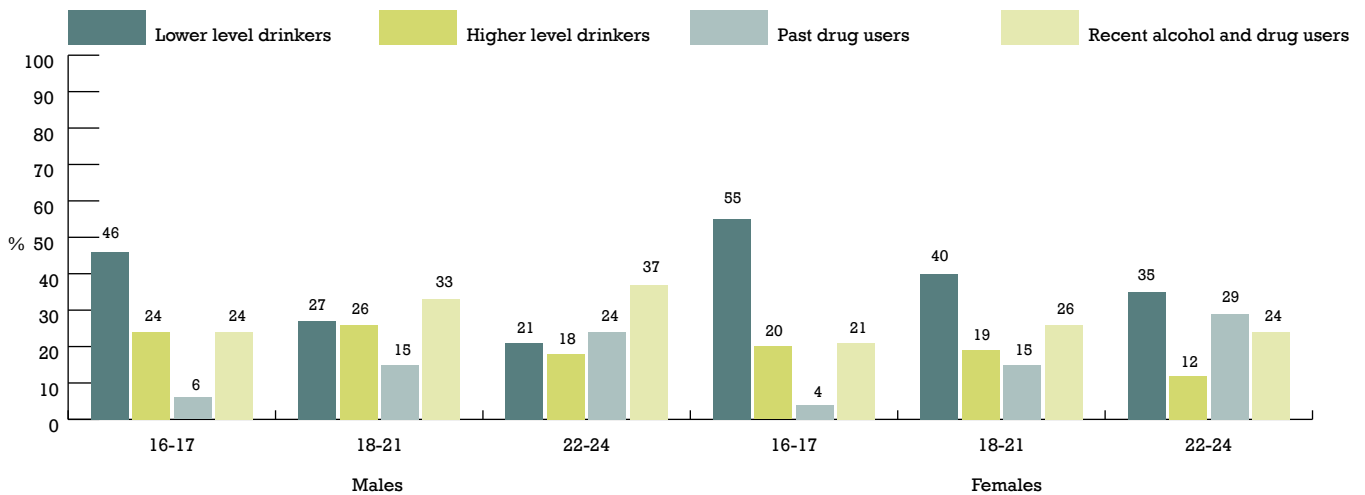
Table 29 Socio-demographic profile of recent alcohol and drug use groups

	Lower level drinkers (n=1597) %	Higher level drinkers (n=901) %	Past drug users (n=642) %	Recent alcohol and drug users (n=1209) %
Age and gender grouping¹				
Female 16-17 years	15	9	2	7
Female 18-21 years	26	22	20	20
Female 22-24 years	17	10	28	14
Male 16-17 years	13	12	3	8
Male 18-21 years	18	31	20	27
Male 22-24 years	11	16	26	23
Work or education status				
Working full-time or part-time	65	70	72	77
Attending secondary school	35	31	10	19
Undertaking post-school study	38	42	42	40
Currently unemployed	3	5	5	8
Highest education was trade certificate	5	8	14	12
Weekly disposable income²				
Over \$80 per week	52	59	71	74
\$40-80 per week	23	22	15	15
Less than \$40 per week	22	15	13	9
Living arrangements¹				
Two parents	63	65	49	53
Single parent	19	16	21	24
Alone	3	3	3	3
Couple	7	5	11	8
Share	6	8	8	9
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	2	1
Gay, lesbian, bisexual or unsure	4	4	7	9
Language other than English spoken at home	11	10	6	4
Location¹				
Metropolitan Melbourne	76	71	75	79
Regional city	7	9	6	7
Rural Victoria	17	20	19	13
SEIFA				
1 st quartile	22	26	23	19
4 th quartile	26	25	25	32

Note: Work or education status categories are mutually exclusive. ¹Totals do not always sum to 100% due to rounding. ²Totals do not sum to 100% due to a small number of 'don't know' and 'refused' responses.

The analysis of socio-demographic factors suggests that life stage and gender are effective differentiators between the four alcohol and drug use groups. This relationship was further explored through an examination of the proportion of each alcohol/drug use group in each age/gender category as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11 Recent alcohol and drug use groups by age and gender



Base: Alcohol and drug use groups (n = 4349).

As can be seen:

- Lower level drinkers make up about half of young people aged 16-17 years who were included in the analysis; however, the proportion steadily decreases with age. The rate of decline in the proportion of lower level drinkers is more pronounced among young men.
- The proportion of higher level drinkers is relatively stable until about 22-24 years, when there appears to be a slight decrease among young men and women.
- There was a corresponding increase in the alcohol and drug use groups with age. This increase was particularly strong among young men, where the proportion increased from 24% among 16-17 year olds to 33% among 18-21 year olds and then to 37% among 22-24 year olds. Whereas among young women, there was only a slight increase in the proportion of these groups from 16-17 years (21%) to 18-21 years (26%), but no meaningful change at 22-24 years (24%).
- There was a steady increase in the proportion of past drug users across the age groups, especially between 18-21 years and 22-24 years. The increase in past users was more pronounced among young women than young men, and by 22-24 years there were more young women who were past drug users (29%) than recent users (24%). Although the proportion of past users also slightly increased with age among young men, there was no corresponding decrease (or even plateau) in the number of recent alcohol and drug users. This suggests that as young people get older they have more chance of being a past user but also that the age at which young men begin to cease drug use in larger numbers is beyond the 16-24 years age range.

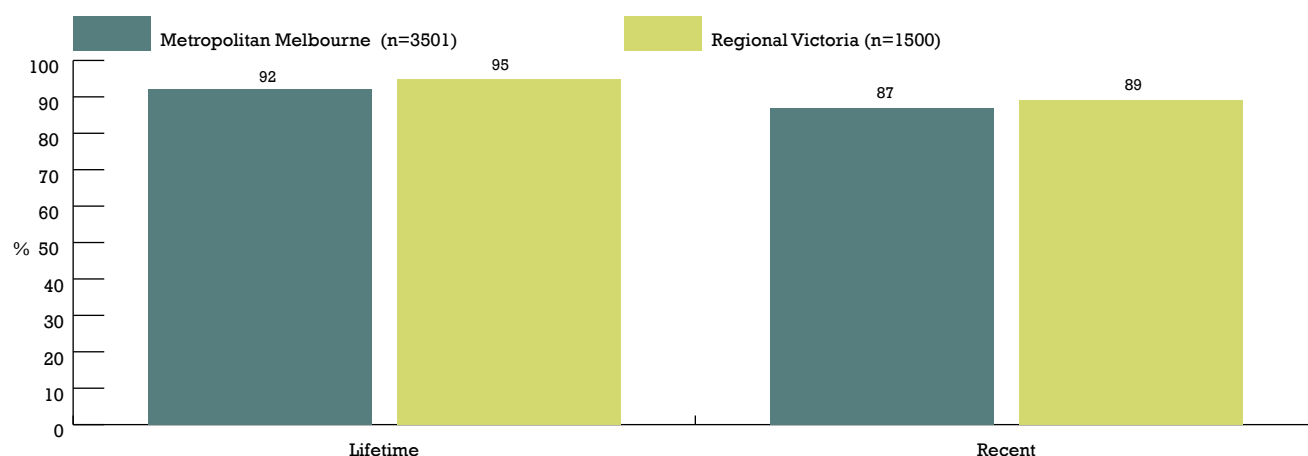
5 Alcohol and drug use in metropolitan and regional Victoria

This section explores differences in the use of alcohol and drugs by young people living in metropolitan Melbourne and those living in regional Victoria. Consistent with previous surveys, there appears to be some differences in the patterns of alcohol and drug use among these groups of young people.

5.1 Alcohol use

The overall prevalence of lifetime and recent alcohol use by young Victorians is very high (as described in Chapter 2). It appears, however, that young people living in regional Victoria were slightly more likely than those living in metropolitan Melbourne to have ever tried alcohol (95% cf. 92%) and to have consumed it in the past year (89% cf. 87%, see Figure 12). It should be noted that, despite these differences, the prevalence of lifetime and recent alcohol consumption is still high among young people living in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Figure 12 Lifetime and recent alcohol use by region



Base: Total 2009 sample

High level consumption of alcohol was also explored for differences between young people living in metropolitan and regional Victoria. This was defined according to frequency of drinking 20 or more, 11 or more, and seven or more standard drinks in a day (see Table 30). It is apparent that young people in regional Victoria are more likely than those in metropolitan Melbourne to have consumed alcohol above each of these thresholds on at least one occasion in the past year.

Table 30 Higher level alcohol consumption by region and gender

At least once in the last 12 months	Metro %	Regional %
20 or more standard drinks		
Total Sample	41	46
Males	49	57
Females	32	35
11 or more standard drinks		
Total Sample	55	62
Males	63	71
Females	46	52
7 or more standard drinks		
Total Sample	68	73
Males	73	78
Females	62	67

Note: 2009 sample only. Metro base: Total n=3501 (Male: n=1770; Female: n=1731). Regional base: Total n=1500 (Male: n=703; Female: n=797).

These geographically-based differences were reasonably consistent between young men and women. The only exception was that young women were not significantly more likely to consume 20 or more standard drinks in a single day regardless of whether they were living in metropolitan Melbourne or regional Victoria (32% cf. 35%).

Young people who were living in regional Victoria were also less likely to say they never intended getting drunk on the occasions they consumed alcohol than were those in metropolitan Melbourne (24% cf. 28%, respectively). However, there were no significant differences between these groups in regards to the frequency of being unable to remember afterwards what happened while drinking.

5.2 Drug use

There were also some differences in patterns of drug use between young people living in metropolitan Melbourne and those living in regional Victoria. As shown in Table 31, the use of drugs appears to be slightly more common among those living in metropolitan Melbourne, although not all of the apparent differences were statistically significant.

Young people living in metropolitan Melbourne were more likely than those in regional Victoria to report recent use of any drug (27% cf. 22%). Lifetime use was not significantly different between these two groups.

The lifetime use of cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, natural hallucinogens and tranquillisers was higher among young people in metropolitan Melbourne, compared to those living in regional Victoria. Young people in metropolitan Melbourne were also more likely to report recent use of cannabis and cocaine.

Table 31 Lifetime and recent drug use volume alcohol consumption by region and gender

Drug type	Metro (n=3501) %	Regional (n=1500) %
Any Drug		
Lifetime use	42	39
Recent use	27	22
Cannabis		
Lifetime use	39	36
Recent use	21	17
Ecstasy		
Lifetime use	16	13
Recent use	9	9
Amphetamines		
Lifetime use	12	10
Recent use	7	6
Cocaine		
Lifetime use	8	4
Recent use	5	3
Synthetic Hallucinogens (incl. LSD)		
Lifetime use	4	4
Recent use	2	3
Natural Hallucinogens		
Lifetime use	6	5
Recent use	4	3
Heroin		
Lifetime use	0.5	0.4
Recent use	0.1	0.1
Analgesics		
Lifetime use	4	4
Recent use	2	2
Tranquillisers		
Lifetime use	4	2
Recent use	2	2
Inhalants		
Lifetime use	2	1
Recent use	1	1

Base: Total 2009 sample

6 Attitudes to alcohol and drug use

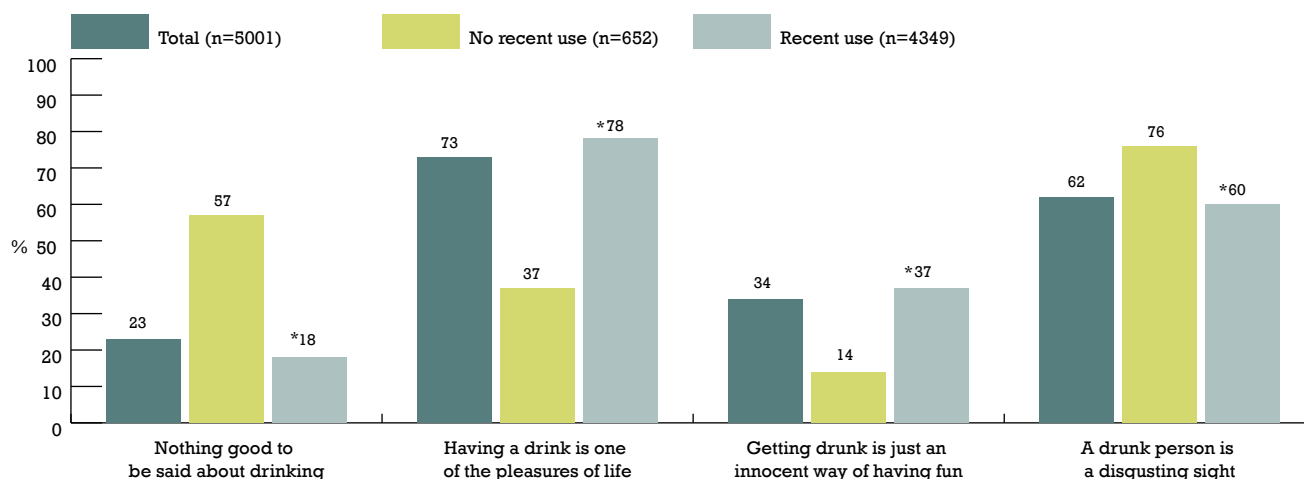
This section of the report examines young people's attitudes to alcohol and drug use. Young people's attitudes were measured in a number of ways including their agreement or disagreement with statements about the use of alcohol and drugs, the perceived acceptability of 'people their age' using alcohol regularly or using drugs, and the extent to which drug use occurs within their social networks.

6.1 Attitudes to alcohol use

All young people surveyed were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with four statements concerning the use of alcohol. The statements were introduced to the VYADS for the first time in 2009.

Overall, young people appear to have fairly positive attitudes towards the use of alcohol (see Figure 13). Approximately three-quarters (73%) of those surveyed agreed that drinking alcohol is 'one of life's pleasures', while one-third (34%) believed 'getting drunk is just an innocent way of having fun'. One-quarter (23%) agreed with the statement 'there is nothing good to be said about drinking' (73% disagree) and slightly less than two-thirds (62%) agreed that 'a drunk person is a disgusting sight' (33% disagreed with this proposition).

Figure 13 Attitudes to alcohol use by recent use



Base: Total sample. *denotes result for non-recent users is significantly different from recent users ($p < .05$).

A number of gender and age-related differences were apparent in reported attitudes towards the use of alcohol:

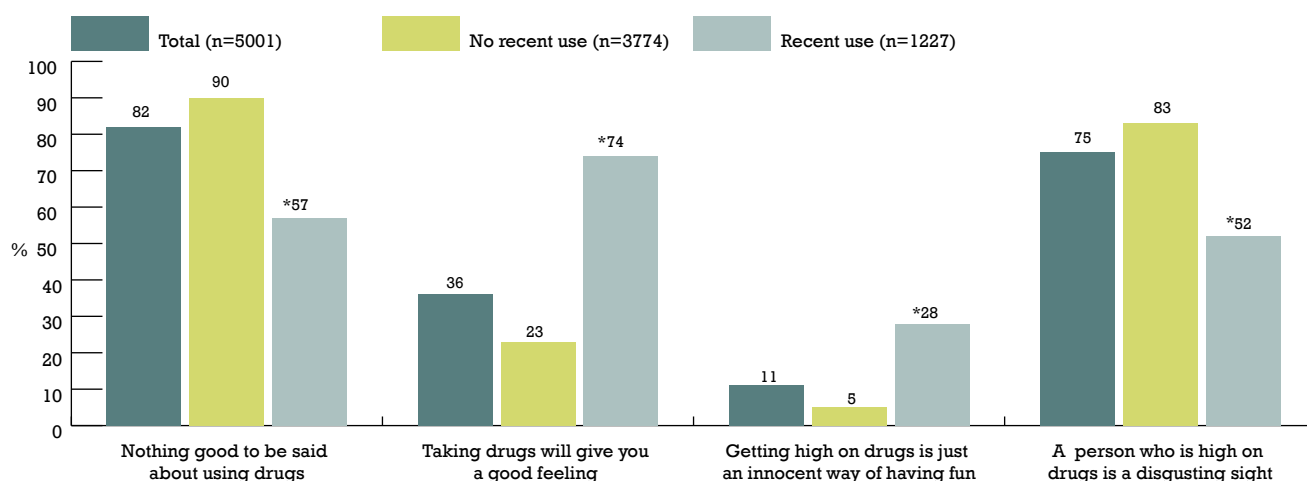
- Typically, young women and 16-17 year olds had slightly more negative attitudes towards the use of alcohol, although there were some variations to this trend across the statements. More specifically, young people aged 16-17 years were more likely to agree 'there is nothing good to be said about alcohol' (30% cf. 21% of 18-24 year olds) and were less likely to agree that 'drinking is one of life's pleasures'. The latter was particularly true for 16-17 year old females (64%).
- By contrast, 18-21 year olds were slightly more likely than other young people to agree 'getting drunk is just an innocent way of having fun' (37%) while 22-24 year olds were more likely to agree that 'a drunk person is a disgusting sight' (66%).
- Young women were less likely than young men to agree that 'getting drunk is just an innocent way of having fun' (29% cf. 39%) and 'having a drink is one of life's pleasures' (69% cf. 76%). They were more likely to agree with the statement 'a drunk person is a disgusting sight' (65% cf. 59%).

The largest differences in attitudes to alcohol use were found between those who had and had not used alcohol (see Figure 13). The differences were typically quite large and indicated that those who had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months had much more positive attitudes towards use than those who had not done so.

6.2 Attitudes to drug use

Overall, young people appear to have less positive attitudes to drug use than they do to the use of alcohol (see Figure 14). The majority of 16-24 year olds agreed with the statements 'there is nothing good to be said about using drugs' (82%) and 'a person who is high on drugs is a disgusting sight' (75%). Just over one-in-three (36%) agreed that 'taking drugs will give you a good feeling' (56% disagree with this statement), while about one-in-ten (11%) agreed that 'getting high on drugs is just an innocent way of having fun' (86% disagree that this is the case).

Figure 14 Attitudes to drug use by lifetime use



Base: Total sample. *denotes result for non-recent users is significantly different from recent users ($p < .05$).

Typically, young men aged 18-24 years had more positive attitudes to drug use than other young people. They were more likely to agree that drugs will give you a good feeling and that getting high was an innocent way of having fun, and less likely to agree with the statements 'there is nothing good to be said about using drugs' and that 'a person who is high on drugs is a disgusting sight'.

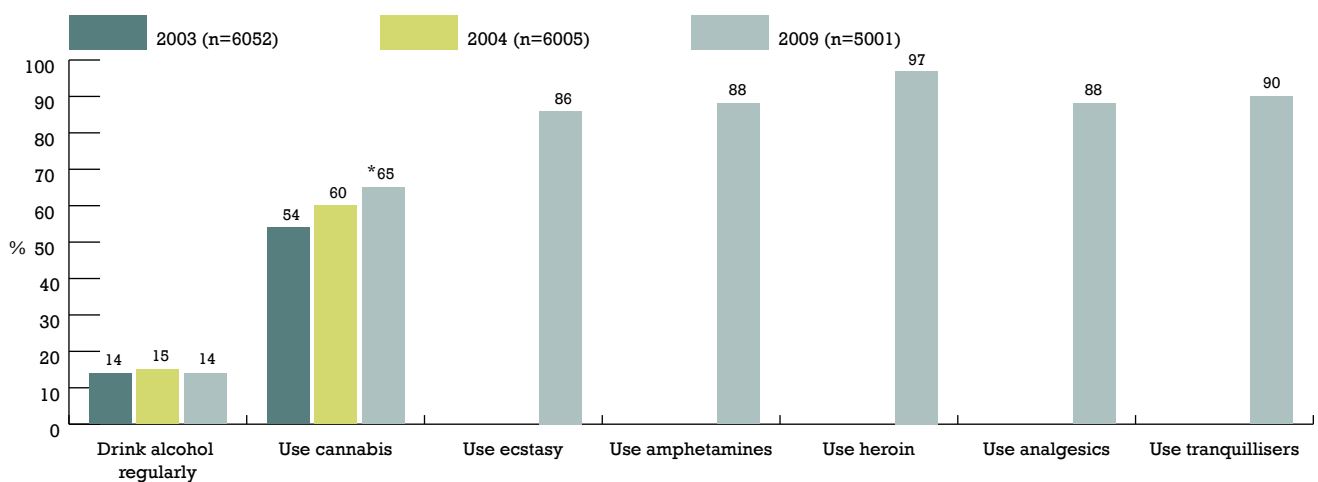
As was the case with attitudes towards the use of alcohol, the largest differences were found between those who had and those who had not used drugs. These differences were consistent across all statements and indicated that recent drug use was associated with more positive attitudes towards the use of drugs.

6.3 Perceived acceptability of using alcohol and drugs

The way young people were questioned about the perceived acceptability of using alcohol and drugs varied slightly between surveys. In 2003 and 2004 separate questions were used for alcohol, cannabis and 'other drugs' (described as 'ecstasy, LSD, speed and other illegal drugs'), while in 2009 separate questions were used for alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, analgesics and tranquillisers. This change is reflected in the results presented in Figure 15.

A minority of young people (14%) in 2009 believed it was wrong for someone their age to regularly drink alcohol, while two-thirds (65%) said it was wrong to use cannabis. In 2009, the overwhelming majority (over 85%) of young people feel it is wrong for people their age to use other types of drugs including ecstasy (86%), amphetamines (88%), analgesics (88%) and tranquillisers (90%). Nearly all (97%) said it was wrong to use heroin.

Figure 15 Considered wrong for someone their age to use alcohol or various drugs



Base: Total sample. Note: 'Wrong' is defined as the proportion who feels it 'wrong' or 'very wrong' to do each of the things listed. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

The proportion of young people who believed it was wrong for someone their age to regularly drink alcohol was not significantly different from previous surveys. Cannabis, however, has continued to lose ground as an 'acceptable' drug to use with the proportion of young people saying it is wrong to use it increasing significantly in each survey. While the questions used in 2009 were not identical to those used in the earlier surveys, the proportion of young people who say it is wrong to use each type of drug shown in Figure 15 was significantly higher than for 'other drugs' in 2003 or 2004. In those years, 80% and 83% of young people, respectively, believed it was wrong to use 'other drugs like ecstasy, LSD, speed and other illegal drugs'.

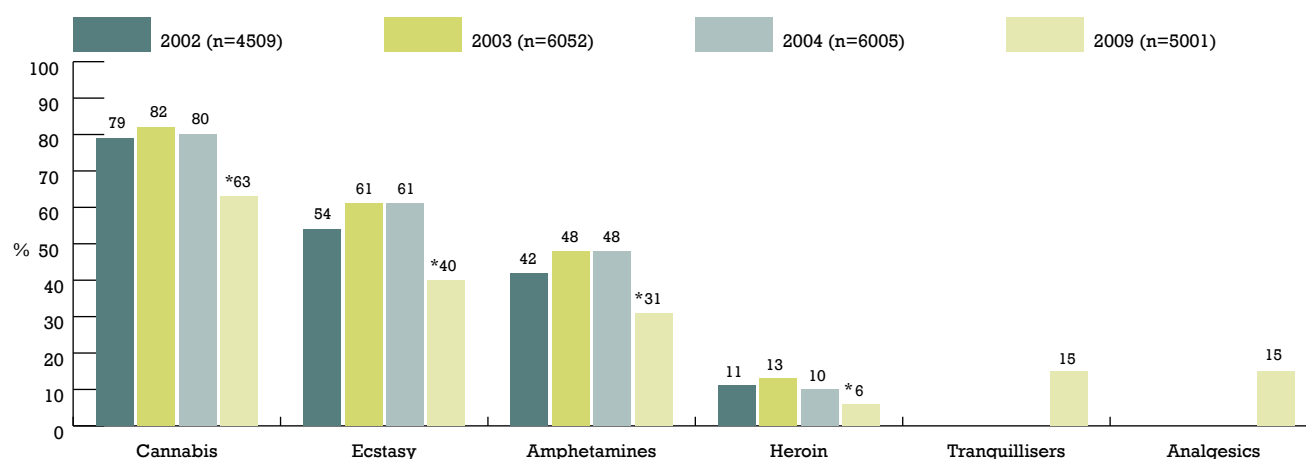
These changes are consistent by age, gender and personal use. Notwithstanding these changes, there remain large differences between young people in terms of the perceived acceptability of using alcohol or drugs:

- Young men are typically more likely than young women to feel it is acceptable to use cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, analgesics and tranquillisers.
- Those aged 16-17 years were less likely than other young people to believe it is acceptable to use alcohol regularly and all drug types mentioned in the survey.
- Young people who reported lifetime or recent alcohol use were less likely than non-users to say it was wrong to regularly use alcohol. Similarly, those who reported lifetime or recent drug use were less likely to believe it was wrong to use each type of drug.

6.4 Drug use among peers

The proportion of young people who said one or more of their friends or acquaintances uses cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, analgesics or tranquillisers is substantially higher than the proportion of young people who reported using the drugs themselves (see Figure 16).

Figure 16 Proportion of young people with one or more friends who use each drug



Base: Total sample. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

Slightly less than two-thirds (63%) of young people surveyed in 2009 reported having at least one friend who uses cannabis. Two-fifths (40%) reported having at least one friend who uses ecstasy, one-third (31%) at least one who uses amphetamines and 6% reported at least one friend who uses heroin. The use of tranquillisers and analgesics for non-medical purposes among friends and acquaintances was introduced to this question in 2009. For each drug, 15% of young people said they had one or more friends who use it.

Since the 2004 survey, there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of young people who reported having at least one friend who uses cannabis (down 17 points), ecstasy (down 21 points), amphetamines (down 17 points) or heroin (down 7 points). Moreover, the proportion of young people who reported having friends who use these drugs is now at its lowest level since the survey commenced in 2002. These changes were consistent across age, gender and personal use subgroups.

7 Effects of using alcohol and drugs

This section of the report examines the reported impact of alcohol and drug use on young Victorians. The impact of alcohol and drug use was measured in a number of ways including the extent to which young people engaged in various behaviours while under the influence, contact with police, whether or not they felt their use has had any effect on different aspects of their lives, exposure to anti-social behaviour as a result of someone else's use, and attempts to reduce or cut down or stop their use.

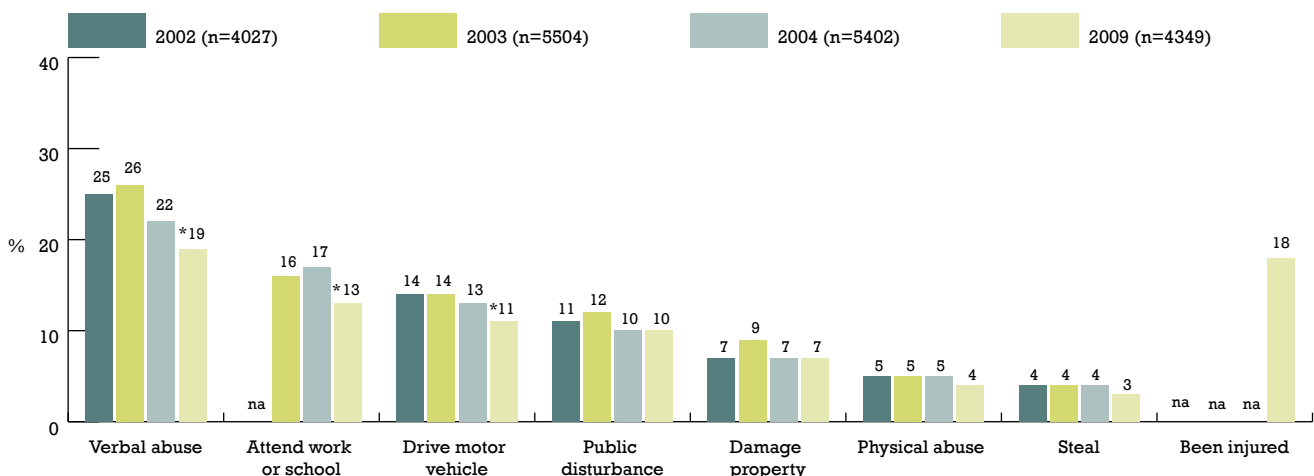
7.1 Activities under the influence

7.1.1 Alcohol

Recent users of alcohol were asked whether they had engaged in a number of activities while under the influence in the past year. These activities included verbally or physically threatening someone, going to work or school, driving a motor vehicle, creating a public disturbance, causing property damage, stealing something and being injured.

Two-fifths (43%) of young people who reported recent alcohol use had engaged in one or more of these behaviours in the past 12 months. Slightly less than one-fifth (19%) said they had verbally abused someone else while under the influence of alcohol (see Figure 17). A similar proportion (18%) had been injured. Approximately one-in-ten had attended school or work (13%), driven a motor vehicle (11%) or caused property damage (10%). A minority reported assaulting someone (4%) or stealing something (4%).

Figure 17 Behaviours while under the influence of alcohol



Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

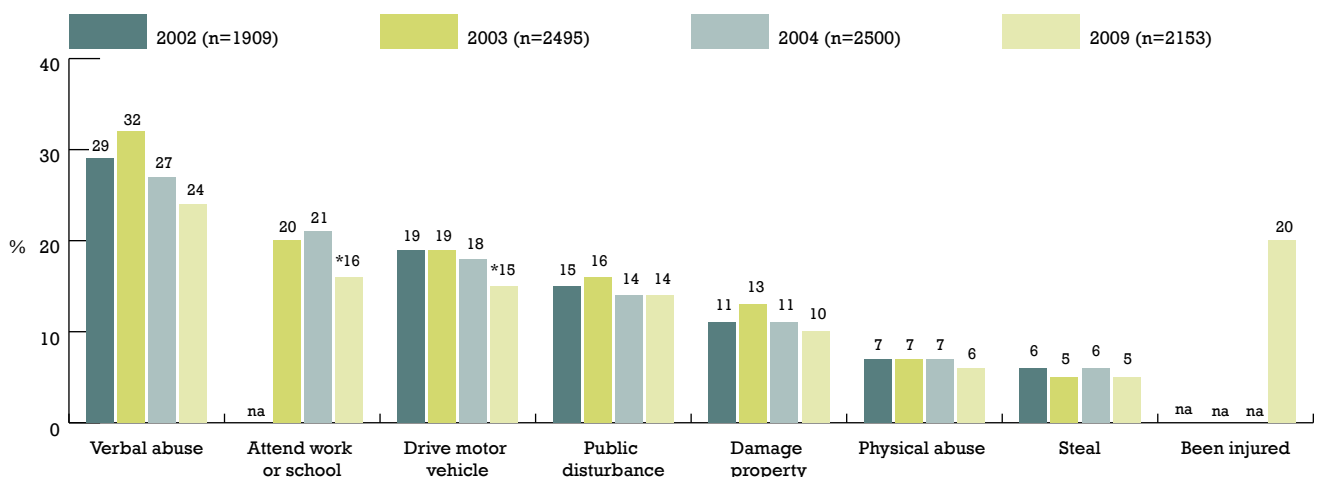
There have been slight decreases since 2004 in the proportion of young people who reported driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, attending school or work, and verbally abusing someone else. Each are now at their lowest level since VYADS commenced.

The overall decreases in these behaviours tended to be driven by falls within particular subgroups:

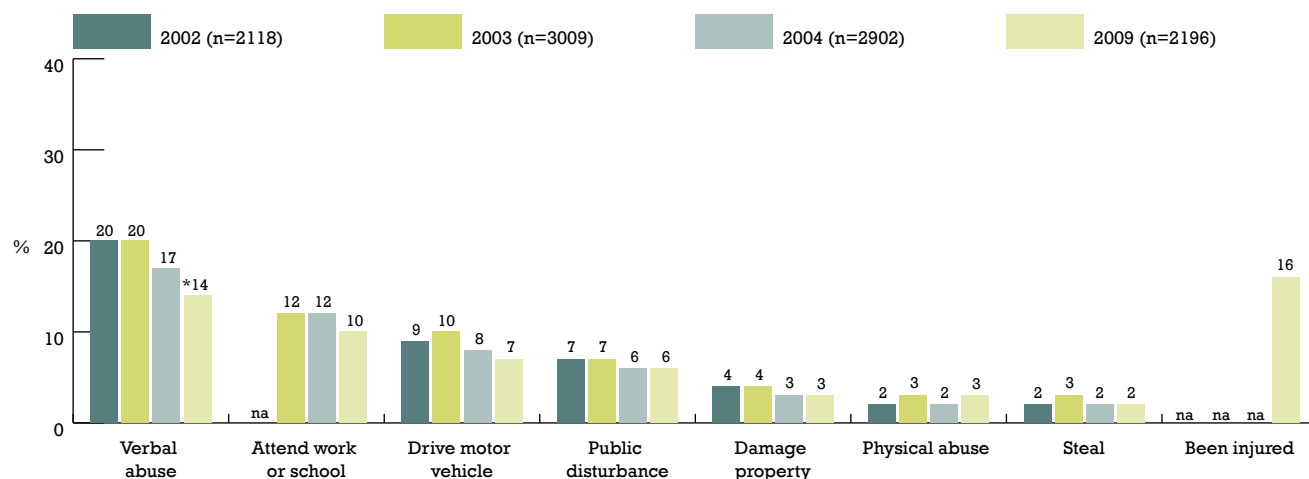
- The slight decrease in the proportion of young people reporting driving a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol was mainly evident among young males (see Figure 18 and 19) and especially those aged 18-21 years (13% in 2009, 16% in 2004 and 17% in 2002 and 2003).
- The reduction in the proportion of young people attending work or school while under the influence of alcohol was primarily driven by decreases among males 18 years and over.
- The slight overall decrease in verbal abuse, by contrast, was primarily driven by falls among females aged 18-21 years (15% in 2009, 18% in 2004, 22% in 2003 and 21% in 2003).

Notwithstanding these reductions over time, there continued to be some clear differences between young people in reported engagement in these behaviours. Young men were more likely than young women to engage in all these behaviours (see Figure 18 and 19). Property damage was more likely to be reported by 16-17 year old males, while 22-24 year old females were the least likely to report being injured while under the influence of alcohol. Driving a car under the influence significantly increased with age and was most common among 22-24 year old males (25%).

Figure 18 Behaviours while under the influence of alcohol among males



Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

Figure 19 Behaviours while under the influence of alcohol among females

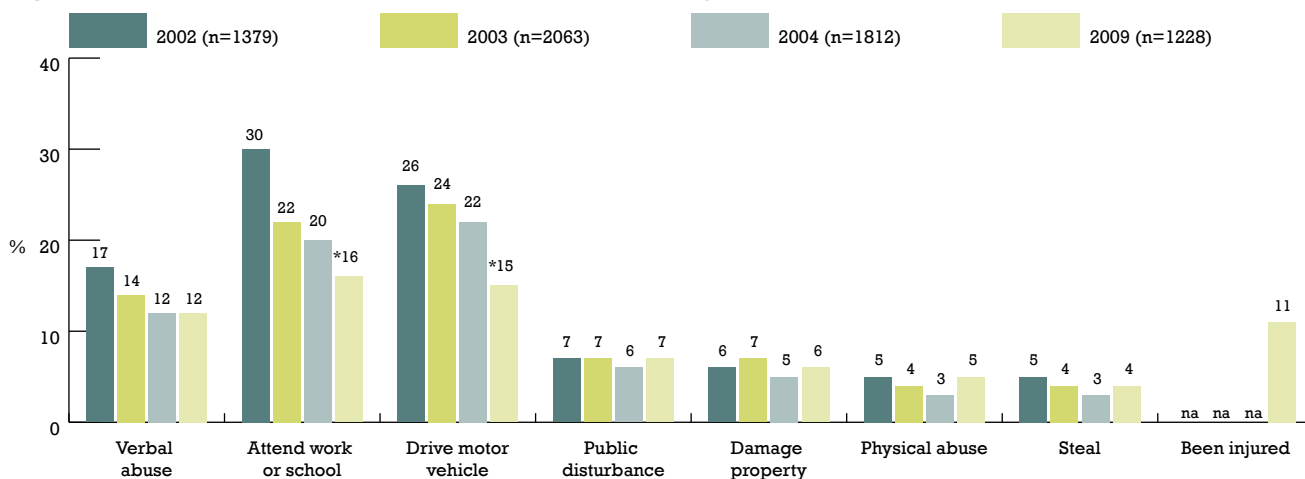
Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$)

7.1.2 Drugs

Young people who had recently used drugs were also asked whether they had engaged in particular activities while under the influence of drugs in the past year. As shown in Figure 20, the most frequently reported behaviours were attending school or work (16%) and driving a motor vehicle (15%). Approximately one-in-ten (12%) said they had verbally abused someone else, while a similar proportion (11%) said they had been injured. A minority of recent users reported creating a public disturbance (7%), damaging property (6%), physically abusing someone else (5%) or stealing something (4%).

There have been few changes in the proportion of recent drug users reporting these behaviours in 2009. The two exceptions to this were attending school or work, and driving a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs. There has been a consistent decline in each of these behaviours since 2002 and both are now at their lowest level since the first VYADS survey.

Figure 20 Behaviours while under the influence of drugs

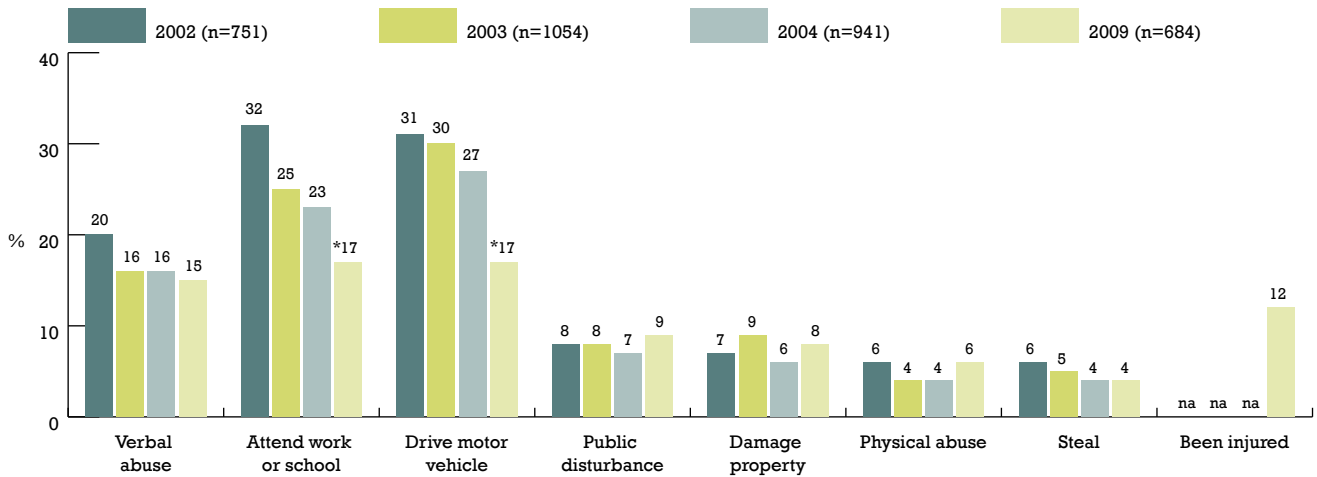


Base: Used drugs in past 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

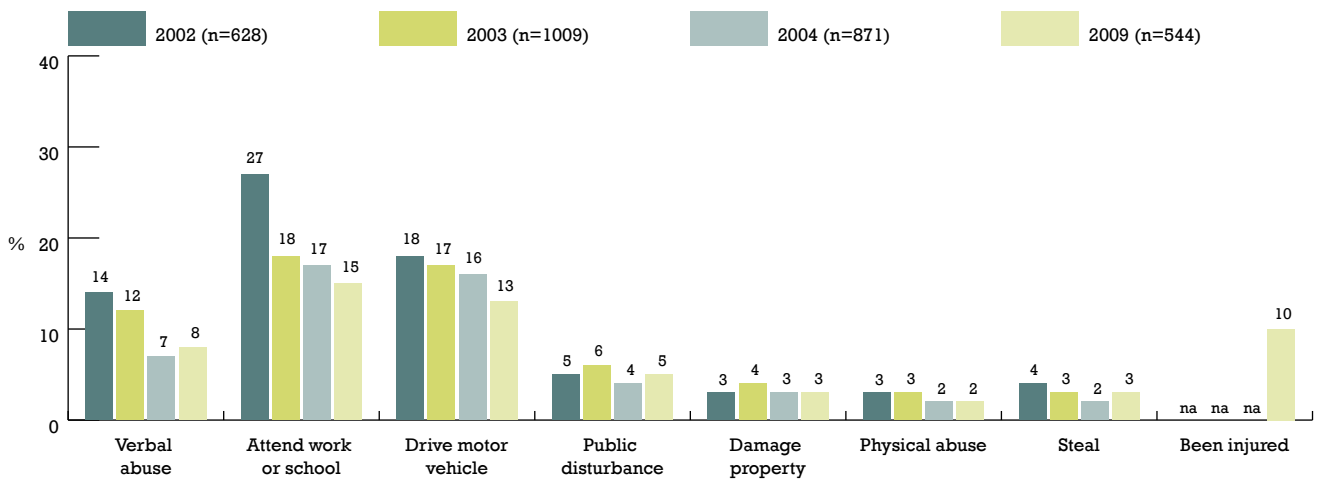
The overall reduction in the proportion of young people attending school or work under the influence of drugs appeared to be mainly driven by falls among males (see Figure 21 and 22) and 18-21 year olds. The moderate decrease in reports of driving a motor vehicle while under the influence was primarily among males, especially those aged 18 years and over, but also females aged 18-21 years.

There continues to be a number of differences between young people insofar as reported engagement in these behaviours is concerned. These follow a similar pattern to differences in reported behaviours while under the influence of alcohol. Notably:

- Males continue to be more likely than females to engage in all of these behaviours, except for stealing something and being injured (see Figure 21 and 22).
- Property damage is more likely to be committed by 16-17 year olds (11%).
- Driving a car under the influence of drugs significantly increases with age.

Figure 21 Behaviours while under the influence of drugs among males

Base: Used drugs in past 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

Figure 22 Behaviours while under the influence of drugs among females

Base: Used drugs in past 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

7.2 Police contact

The 2009 survey introduced a number of questions about young people's contact with police while under the influence of alcohol and also while under the influence of drugs. Police contact relating to alcohol use was asked only of those who had ever used alcohol, while contact relating to drug use was asked only of those who had ever used drugs.

The responses to these questions indicated that few young people have had contact with police while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. A minority (3%) of lifetime alcohol users have ever been stopped or arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, while six percent had been stopped or arrested by police for some other reason after they had been drinking. Males aged 22-24 years were more likely to have been stopped or arrested for drink driving. Males were more likely than females (9% cf. 3%) to report being stopped or arrested by police for other reasons.

The proportion of young people who reported being stopped or arrested for possessing or handling drugs was very low (2%) among recent drug users. Three percent reported being stopped by the police or arrested for something else (including while driving) after they had been using drugs. Young men were again more likely than young women to report contact with police in both situations: possessing or handling drugs (3% cf. 1%) and other reasons (5% cf. 1%).

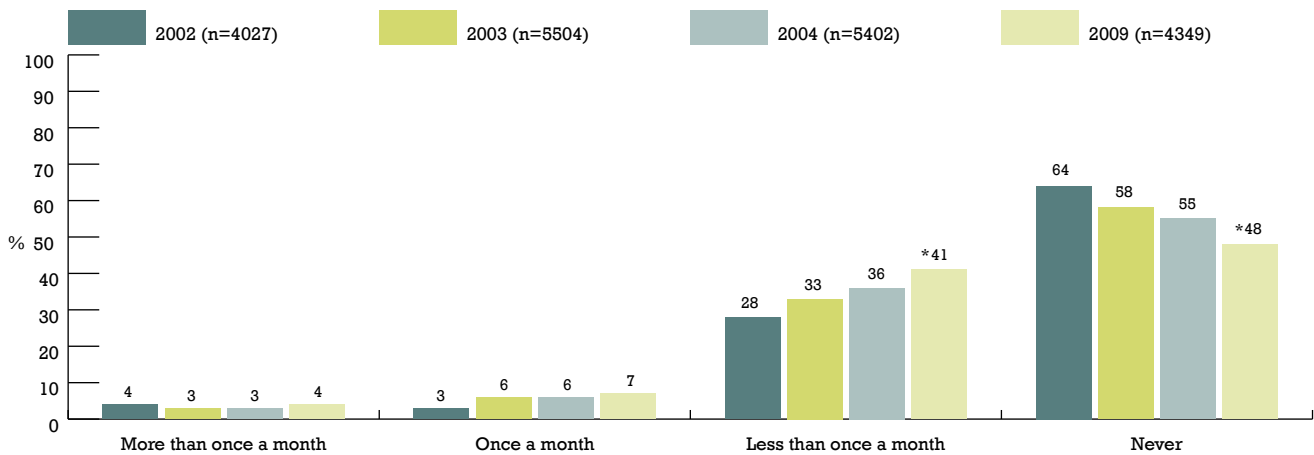
7.3 Personal impact

7.3.1 Alcohol

Recent alcohol users were asked how often they had been unable to remember afterwards what happened while drinking in the past year.

The 2009 survey revealed that about half (52%) of those who had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months had experienced such effects after drinking alcohol (see Figure 23). The majority of these young people had occasionally (less than once a month) experienced this event; however, a substantial minority (11% of recent drinkers) had experienced it at least once a month in the past year.

The proportion of young people who have experienced this impact of alcohol use in the past year has increased steadily since 2002. The increase is primarily within the occasional frequency of less than once a month (up 13 points from 2002, 8 points from 2003 and 5 points from 2004). It is also reasonably consistent across all gender and age groups; although, the increase between 2004 and 2009 was slightly greater among young women (up 7 points to 42% cf. males up 4 points to 40%).

Figure 23 Frequency of drinking until 'unable to remember what happened'

Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

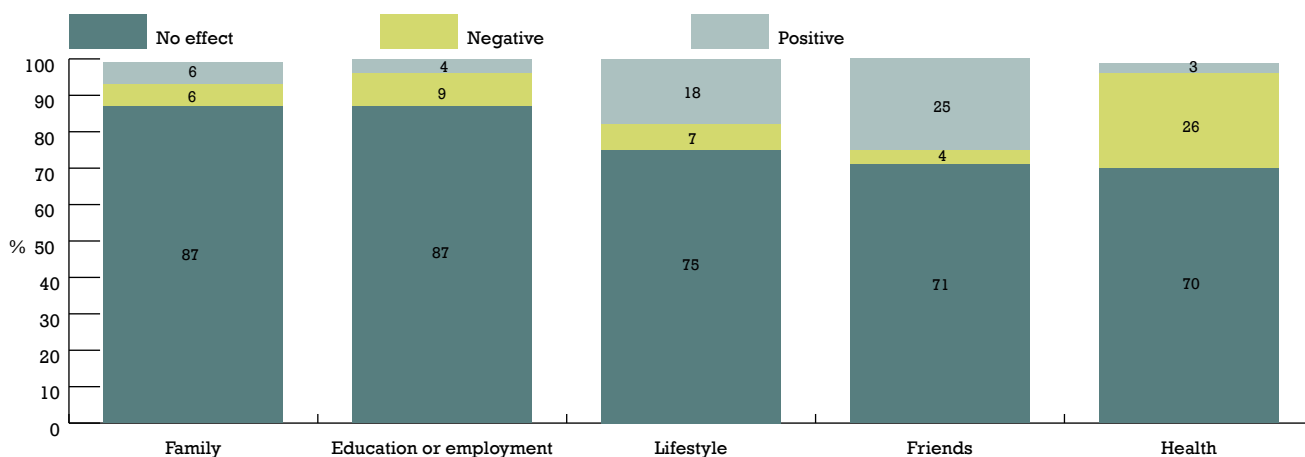
Recent users of alcohol were also asked whether or not their use of this product had any effect on their relationships (with either family or friends), their education or employment, their lifestyle and their health. This question was introduced in reference to alcohol consumption for the first time in 2009.

Overall, the majority of young people felt their use had no effect on various aspects of their life (see Figure 24). Health was the area in which young people were more likely to report a negative effect. By contrast, lifestyle and friends were areas where young people were more likely to feel their alcohol use had a positive impact.

There are some age and gender differences in terms of the perceived impact of alcohol use including:

- Females being slightly more likely than males to say their alcohol consumption had no effect on each aspect of their life. Against this, males were slightly more likely to feel their alcohol consumption had positive effects.
- Those aged 16-17 years were less likely to say their alcohol use had a positive effect on their lifestyle.

Figure 24 Effects of alcohol use on aspects of life



Base: Drank alcohol in past 12 months (2009 Survey, n=4349). Note: 1% 'didn't know' what effect their alcohol use had on their health.

7.3.2 Drugs

Young people who had ever used drugs were asked whether or not their drug use had any effect on the same aspects of their lives as discussed above for alcohol use. As shown in Table 32, the majority of these young people believed their drug use had no effect, although health, as was the case for alcohol use, was the area in which young people were most likely to report their use of drugs had a negative effect. However, unlike the results for alcohol, in 2009 there were no aspects where the proportion attributing a positive effect to drug use was greater than the proportion who felt drug use had a negative effect.

Some changes were evident in the perceived personal impact of drug use over time. In particular:

- There was a decrease in the proportion of young people reporting their drug use had a positive effect on their lifestyle (down 10 points since 2002).
- In addition, slightly fewer young people felt their drug use had a positive effect on their relationships with friends (down 5 points from 2002).

The perceived effects of drug use were fairly consistent by age and gender. The only exception was that males were more likely than females to feel drug use had a positive effect on their relationships with friends (16% cf. 9%).

Table 32 Effects of illicit drug use on aspects of life

Effect of drugs on ...	2002 (n=1969) %	2003 (n=3283) %	2004 (n=2976) %	2009 (n=1908) %
Family				
Positive	6	4	4	3 [#]
Negative	16	15	13	15
No effect	78	81	82	82
Education or employment				
Positive	3	2	3	2
Negative	16	15	14	16
No effect	81	82	83	82
Lifestyle				
Positive	18	12	12	8 [#]
Negative	15	15	14	16 [#]
No effect	66	72	74	75
Friends				
Positive	18	14	13	13
Negative	10	11	10	13 [#]
No effect	72	75	77	74 [#]
Health				
Positive	2	2	2	3 [#]
Negative	40	31	29	28
No effect	57	66	69	68

Base: Ever used drug ('don't know' and 'refused' responses not shown in this table). #denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

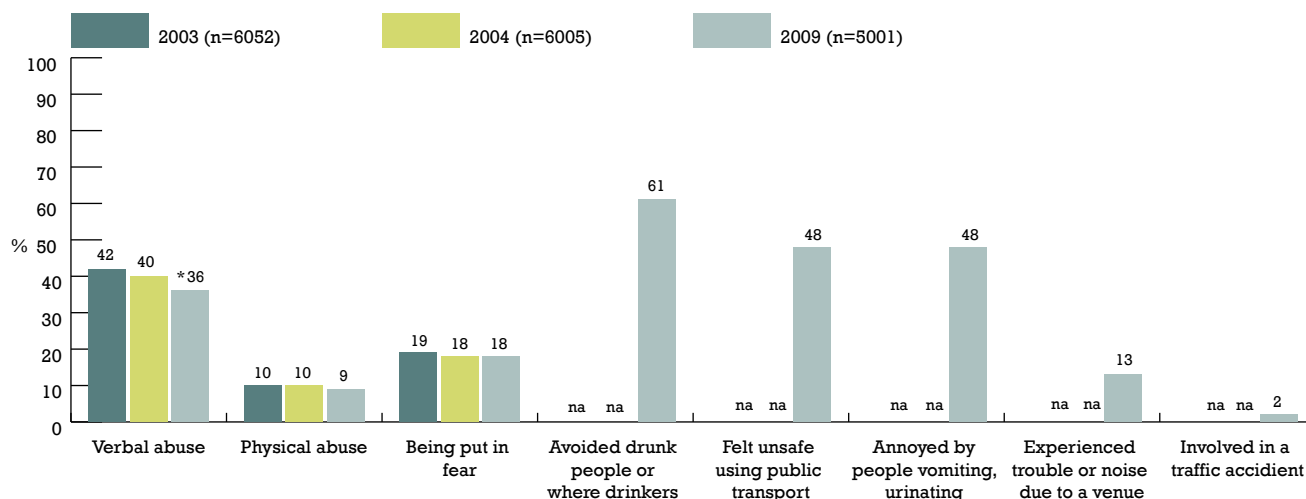
7.4 Exposure to alcohol and drug induced anti-social behaviour

Young people were asked two sets of questions regarding their exposure to anti-social behaviour resulting from someone else's alcohol consumption or drug use. The first set of questions – which have been included in the VYADS survey since 2003 – related to exposure to abuse (verbal or physical) and being put in fear. The second set related to a number of specific behaviours or events and were included for the first time in the 2009 survey. Each set of questions was asked separately in relation to other people's behaviour – once for alcohol and once for drugs.

7.4.1 Anti-social behaviour resulting from others' alcohol consumption

The majority (85%) of young people surveyed in 2009 have experienced some form of anti-social behaviour as a result of other people's alcohol consumption. The most common experience (reported by 61% of young people) was the need to 'avoid drunken people or places where drinkers hang out' (see Figure 25). Approximately half had felt unsafe while on public transport (48%) or had been annoyed by people vomiting, urinating or littering in their community (48%). Just over one-third (36%) said they had been verbally abused by someone under the influence of alcohol in the past year, about one-fifth (18%) had been put in fear, and around one-in-ten had been physically assaulted (9%).

Figure 25 Behaviours encountered from people under the influence of alcohol



Base: Total sample. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 (p<.05).

There was a slight decline in the proportion of young people who experienced verbal abuse in 2009 in comparison with earlier years (down 4 points since 2004 and 6 points since 2003). This fall occurred mainly among males and 16-17 year old females. There were, however, no changes in the reported incidence of being physically assaulted or of being put in fear.

In 2009 there were several differences in the extent to which gender and age sub-groups experienced anti-social behaviour as a result of other people's alcohol consumption:

- Males were more likely than females to have experienced verbal (42% cf. 30%) or physical abuse (13% cf. 6%), while young women were more likely to have experienced all other forms of anti-social behaviour, apart from being involved in an accident and experiencing excessive noise or trouble from licensed venues.
- Those aged 16-17 years were less likely than others to have experienced verbal or physical abuse, being put in fear and to have felt unsafe in a public place.

7.4.2 Anti-social behaviour resulting from other's drug use

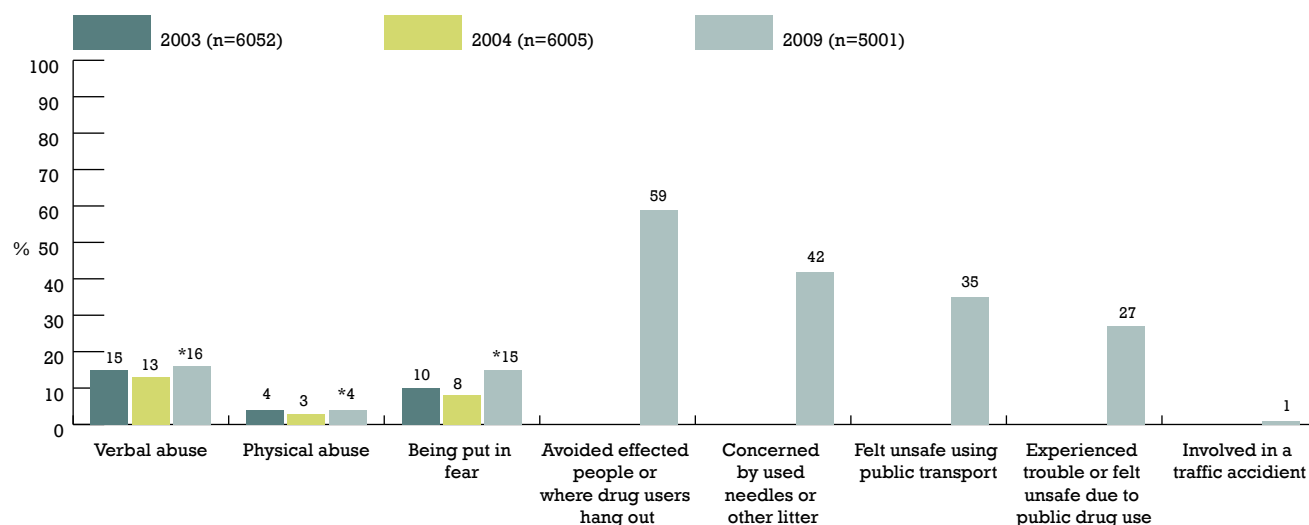
Three-quarters (75%) of young people reported experiencing some form of anti-social behaviour as a result of other people's drug use in the past year. As with alcohol-related anti-social behaviour, avoiding people under the influence of drugs or places where drug users hang out was the most common experience; reported by 59% of young people (see Figure 26). Approximately two-fifths (42%) said they had been concerned by used needles or other drug paraphernalia lying around, just over one-third (35%) had felt unsafe while on public transport, and just over one-quarter (27%) had felt troubled or unsafe due to active public drug use. Furthermore, 16% of young people had been verbally abused by someone under the influence of drugs, 15% had been put in fear and four percent had been physically assaulted.

Since 2004, there have been slight increases in the number of young people experiencing physical abuse (up 1 point), verbal abuse (up 3 points) and being put in fear (up 7 points); however, only the latter result is also higher than in 2003.

There were a number of gender and age difference in reported experience of anti-social behaviour resulting from drug use by other people:

- Young men were more likely than young women (17% cf. 14%) to have been verbally abused by someone under the influence of drugs, while 16-17 year olds were less likely to have been verbally abused in the past year.
- Females were more likely than males to report feeling unsafe on public transport (43% cf. 28%) and to have witnessed drug use activity (30% cf. 24%).
- Young men aged 18-24 years (i.e. 18-21 years and 22-24 years) were more likely than other young people to report being physically abused, while young women in this age range were more likely to have felt unsafe on public transport or been put in fear in the past year.

Figure 26 Behaviours encountered from people under the influence of drugs



Base: Total sample. *denotes result for 2009 is significantly different from 2004 ($p < .05$).

7.5 Reducing alcohol or drug use

Young people who had recently used alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, analgesics or tranquillisers were asked if they had tried to stop or reduce their use of each substance they had used in the past year. Those who had tried to do so were also asked how successful their attempt had been. In addition, young people who had ever used alcohol or any drug were asked whether they had ever sought or received advice or help for a problem to do with their alcohol or illicit drug use. Those who had done so in the past year were also asked where they had gone for advice or help.

7.5.1 Tried to stop or cut down use

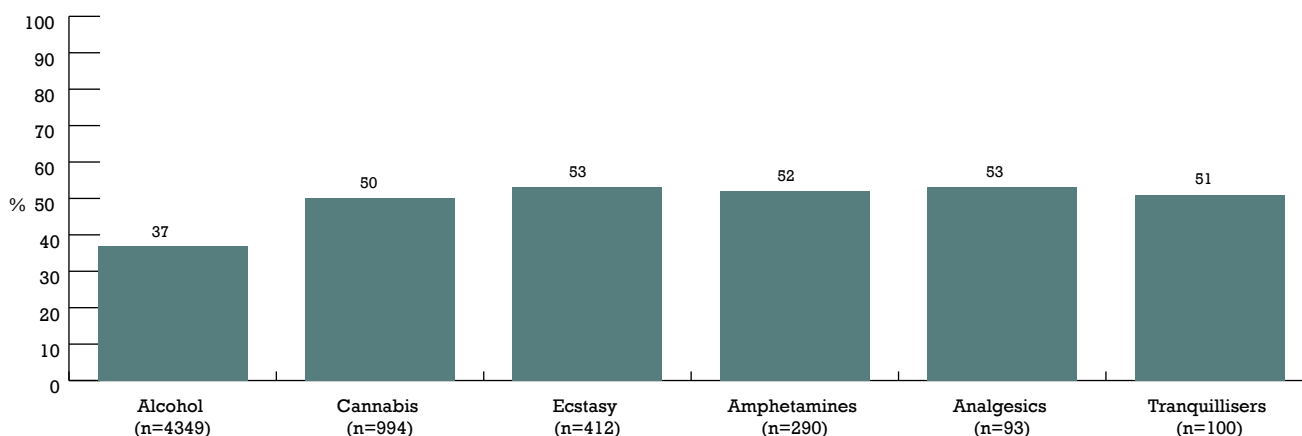
Overall, one-third (37%) of young people who had recently used alcohol had also tried to cut down their use. By contrast, approximately half of those who had recently used each type of drug had also tried to cut down in the past year (see Figure 27).

Young people who had engaged in harmful drinking practices were more likely than those who had not to report having tried to reduce their alcohol consumption in the past year. Specifically:

- Young people who had consumed seven or more standard drinks in a day at least once in the past year were also more likely to have tried to reduce their alcohol consumption (41% cf. 23% of those who had not consumed alcohol at this level).
- The same was true for those who intended to get drunk at least some of the time when they drink alcohol (42% cf. 24% for those who never intend to get drunk when drinking alcohol), as well as those who had been unable to remember what had happened after drinking in the past year (44% cf. 30% for never).

Older males aged 22-24 years (46%) were also more likely to have tried to cut down their alcohol consumption.

Figure 27 Tried to stop or cut down use of alcohol and selected drugs in the past 12 months



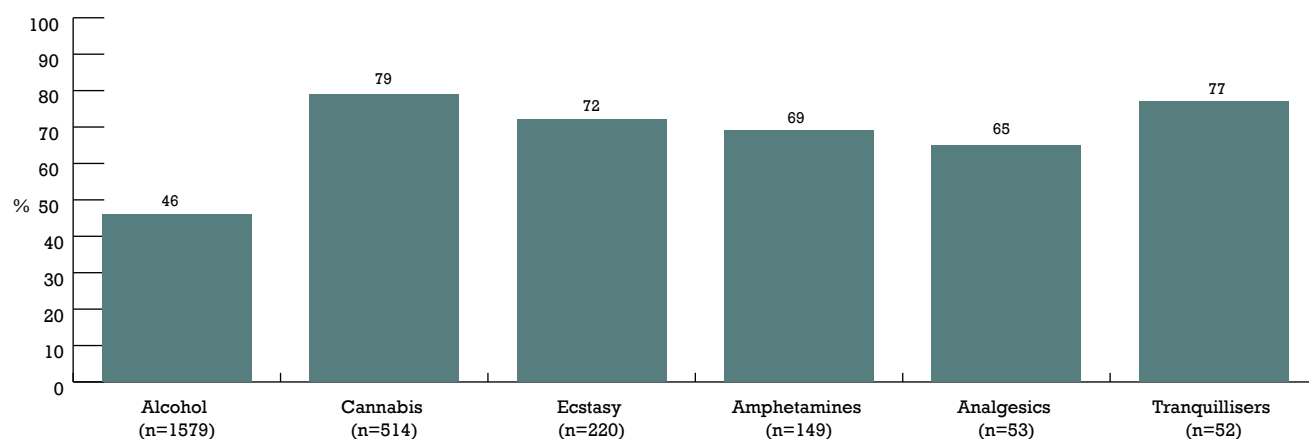
Base: Those who had used each substance in the past 12 months. Note: Heroin is excluded due to the very small user base (n=6).

Attempting to reduce use of these substances showed few differences between sub-groups. The only difference found was among recent cannabis users where 16-17 year olds (60%) were the most likely to have tried to stop or reduce their use.

Slightly less than half (46%) of those who had tried to reduce or stop their alcohol consumption felt they had been 'very successful' in their attempt (see Table 28). By contrast, the majority of young people who reported having tried to cut down their use of cannabis (79%), ecstasy (72%), amphetamines (69%), analgesics (65%) or tranquillisers (77%) felt they had been 'very successful' in doing so (see Figure 24).

Females were more likely than males to feel they had been very successful in reducing or stopping their use of cannabis (84% cf. 76%). There were no other significant differences between sub-groups of young people in the reported success of stopping or reducing alcohol or drug use.

Figure 28 'Very successful' in their attempt to stop or cut down use



Base: Tried to stop or cut down use of each substance in the past 12 months.

7.5.2 Help and information seeking

A small proportion (5%) of young people who had ever tried alcohol or used drugs reported seeking help for a problem with their own alcohol or illicit drug use. Sixty-five percent of those who had ever sought help (3% of users) had sought help in the past year. Males (6% cf. 4% of females) and particularly those males aged 22-24 years (8%) were slightly more likely to have sought help for a problem of this type.

The sources of advice or help most commonly used by young people (see Table 33) were general practitioners / health workers (36%), alcohol or drug treatment services (21%), student counsellors (17%) and welfare workers (14%).

Less than one-in-ten had sought help from a family member (9%), friend (9%), website on alcohol and drug information (8%) or telephone helpline (7%).

Table 33 Sources of advice or help for a problem with alcohol or drug use

Source of advice or help	(n=217) %	Sub-groups more likely to mention source
GP or health worker	36	18-24 years (39%)
Alcohol or drug treatment service	21	
Student counsellor	17	16-17 years (39%)
Welfare worker	14	Females (20%)
Family member	9	
Friend	9	
Website on alcohol and drug information	8	Metro (11%)
Directline or another telephone helpline	7	Metro (10%)
Support group	7	
Interactive website	2	
Religious leader	2	
Other	6	

Base: Sought advice or help for a problem with alcohol or drug use.

Appendix 1: Confidence Intervals

The following tables display the confidence intervals for key statistical comparisons reported in this document. The confidence intervals were calculated using effective bases. The use of effective bases was deemed appropriate for carrying out significance testing in this report as it included an adjustment to take account of the lower measurement precision that is a consequence of weighting the survey data.

The following formula was used to calculate the effective bases:

- Effective base = (sum of weighted counts) squared / sum of the squared weighted counts

Confidence intervals for comparisons between the 2009 and earlier VYADS surveys

2009 Prevalence	ALL PERSONS		
	2004 (n=5825)	2003 (n=5805)	2002 (n=4402)
5%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
10%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%
25%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%
35%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%
45%	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%
50%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%
55%	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%
65%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%
75%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%
85%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%
90%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%
95%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%

2009 Prevalence	MALES			FEMALES		
	2004 (n=2684)	2003 (n=2633)	2002 (n=2078)	2004 (n=4387)	2003 (n=1384)	2002 (n=2524)
5%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%
10%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%
25%	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%	2.3%	2.3%	2.5%
35%	2.7%	2.7%	2.9%	2.6%	2.6%	2.8%
45%	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.9%
50%	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.9%
55%	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.9%
65%	2.7%	2.7%	2.9%	2.6%	2.6%	2.8%
75%	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%	2.3%	2.3%	2.5%
85%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	1.9%	1.9%	2.1%
90%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%
95%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%

.....

Confidence intervals for age and gender comparison using 2009 survey data

Prevalence	ALL PERSONS			
	Total (n=4387)	16-17 years (n=1384)	18-21 years (n=2524)	22-24 years (n=1017)
5%	0.6%	1.1%	0.9%	1.3%
10%	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%	1.8%
25%	1.3%	2.3%	1.7%	2.7%
35%	1.4%	2.5%	1.9%	2.9%
45%	1.5%	2.6%	1.9%	3.1%
50%	1.5%	2.6%	2.0%	3.1%
55%	1.5%	2.6%	1.9%	3.1%
65%	1.4%	2.5%	1.9%	2.9%
75%	1.3%	2.3%	1.7%	2.7%
85%	1.1%	1.9%	1.4%	2.2%
90%	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%	1.8%
95%	0.6%	1.1%	0.9%	1.3%

Prevalence	MALES			
	Total (n=2168)	16-17 years (n=704)	18-21 years (n=1264)	22-24 years (n=490)
5%	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%	1.9%
10%	1.3%	2.2%	1.7%	2.7%
25%	1.8%	3.2%	2.4%	3.8%
35%	2.0%	3.5%	2.6%	4.2%
45%	2.1%	3.7%	2.7%	4.4%
50%	2.1%	3.7%	2.8%	4.4%
55%	2.1%	3.7%	2.7%	4.4%
65%	2.0%	3.5%	2.6%	4.2%
75%	1.8%	3.2%	2.4%	3.8%
85%	1.5%	2.6%	2.0%	3.2%
90%	1.3%	2.2%	1.7%	2.7%
95%	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%	1.9%

Prevalence	FEMALES			
	Total (n=2224)	16-17 years (n=679)	18-21 years (n=1262)	22-24 years (n=530)
5%	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%	1.9%
10%	1.2%	2.3%	1.7%	2.6%
25%	1.8%	3.3%	2.4%	3.7%
35%	2.0%	3.6%	2.6%	4.1%
45%	2.1%	3.7%	2.7%	4.2%
50%	2.1%	3.8%	2.8%	4.3%
55%	2.1%	3.7%	2.7%	4.2%
65%	2.0%	3.6%	2.6%	4.1%
75%	1.8%	3.3%	2.4%	3.7%
85%	1.5%	2.7%	2.0%	3.0%
90%	1.2%	2.3%	1.7%	2.6%
95%	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%	1.9%

Appendix 2: Unweighted Bases

Total sample

	2002	2003	2004	2009
	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)
SEX				
Male	2140	2743	2758	2473
Female	2369	3309	3247	2528
AGE				
16-17 years	1092	1492	1584	1418
18-21 years	2191	2966	2728	2550
22-24 years	1208	1513	1563	1033
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	570	725	721	714
18-21 years	1031	1339	1303	1269
22-24 years	531	643	677	490
Females ...				
16-17 years	522	767	863	704
18-21 years	1160	1627	1425	1281
22-24 years	677	870	886	543

Recent alcohol use

	2002	2003	2004	2009
	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)
SEX				
Male	1909	2495	2500	2153
Female	2118	3009	2902	2196
AGE				
16-17 years	916	1298	1362	1121
18-21 years	1994	2742	2505	2321
22-24 years	1101	1387	1416	907
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	474	626	627	559
18-21 years	942	1241	1210	1153
22-24 years	486	595	614	441
Females ...				
16-17 years	442	672	735	562
18-21 years	1052	1501	1295	1168
22-24 years	615	792	802	466

Recent drug use

	2002	2003	2004	2009
	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)
SEX				
Male	748	1054	941	684
Female	628	1009	871	544
AGE				
16-17 years	272	396	351	259
18-21 years	712	1065	898	689
22-24 years	385	568	529	280
AGE BY SEX				
Males ...				
16-17 years	144	200	182	136
18-21 years	389	550	474	383
22-24 years	212	287	268	165
Females ...				
16-17 years	128	196	169	123
18-21 years	323	515	424	306
22-24 years	173	281	261	115





