

Data Collection on Cannabis Use and Retail

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**Conference “Illicit drug market and its
possible regulatory body”**

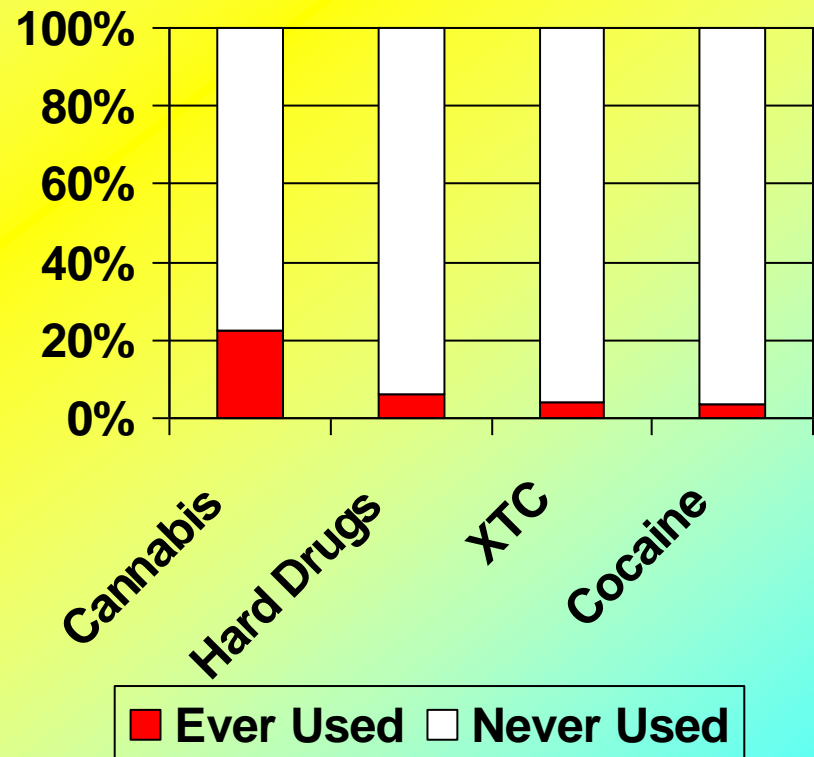
Rome, September 16-17, 2009

- **Most monitoring relies on quantitative data**
 - Official statistics (treatment, law enforcement)
 - Self report data from surveys

- **All indicators have limitations**
 - Data might predominantly reflect policy
 - drug law offences, seizures, treatment demand
 - Under-representation of relevant groups
 - heavy users in general population; school drop outs in ESPAD

General population surveys predominantly measure **non-use**

Dutch population
15-64 years
77.4% never
cannabis
95.9% never
hard drugs

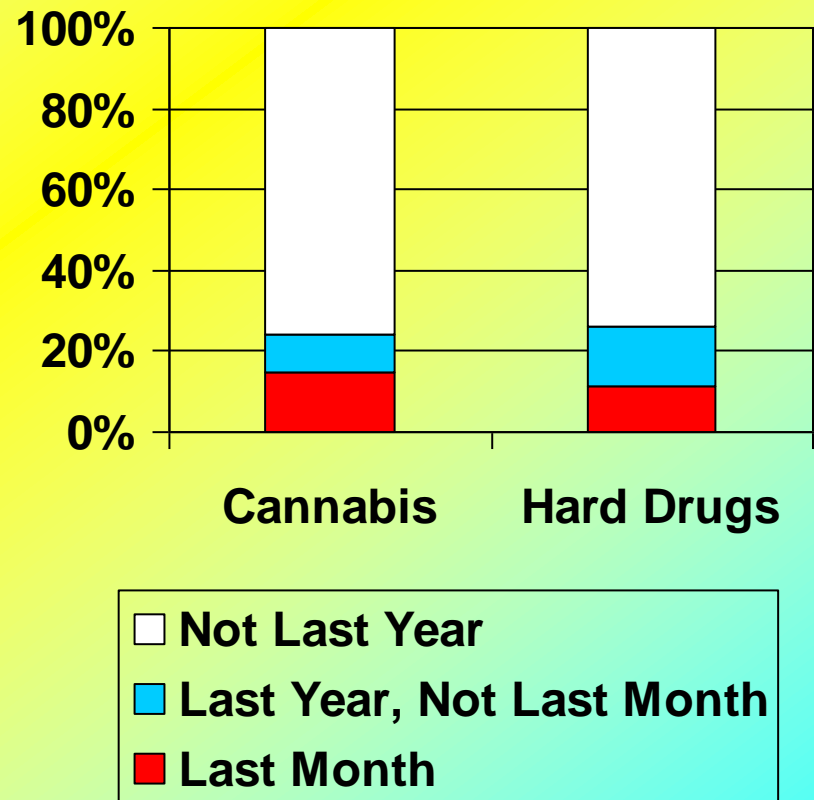


General population surveys predominantly measure **ex-use**

Dutch population
15-64 years

$\frac{3}{4}$ ever users not
last year

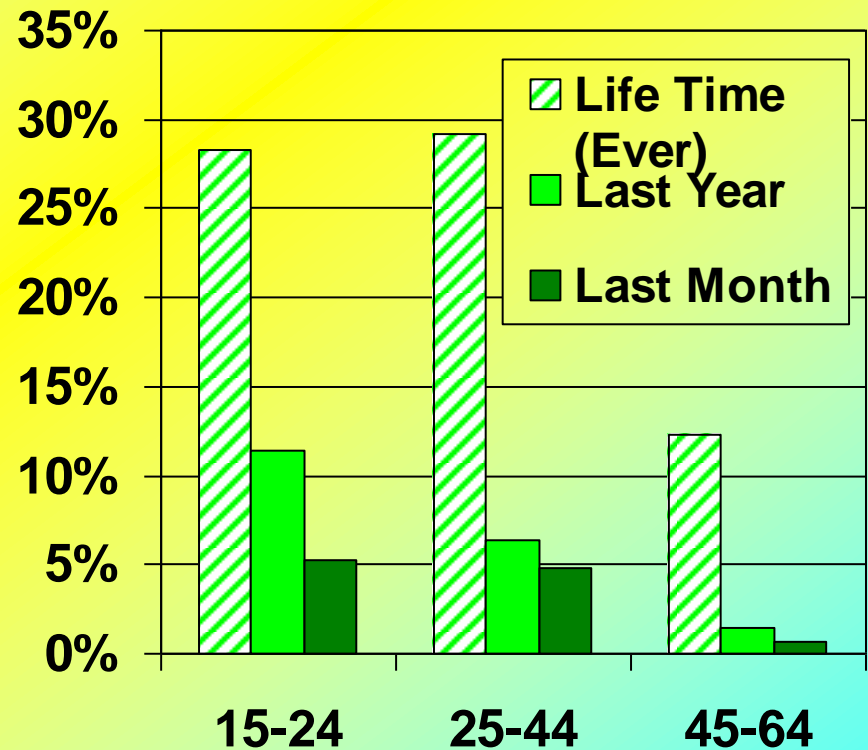
Indicates **user**
culture of
(self)
regulation



Current Cannabis Users Mostly Younger Generation

Dutch
population
15-64 years
(2005)

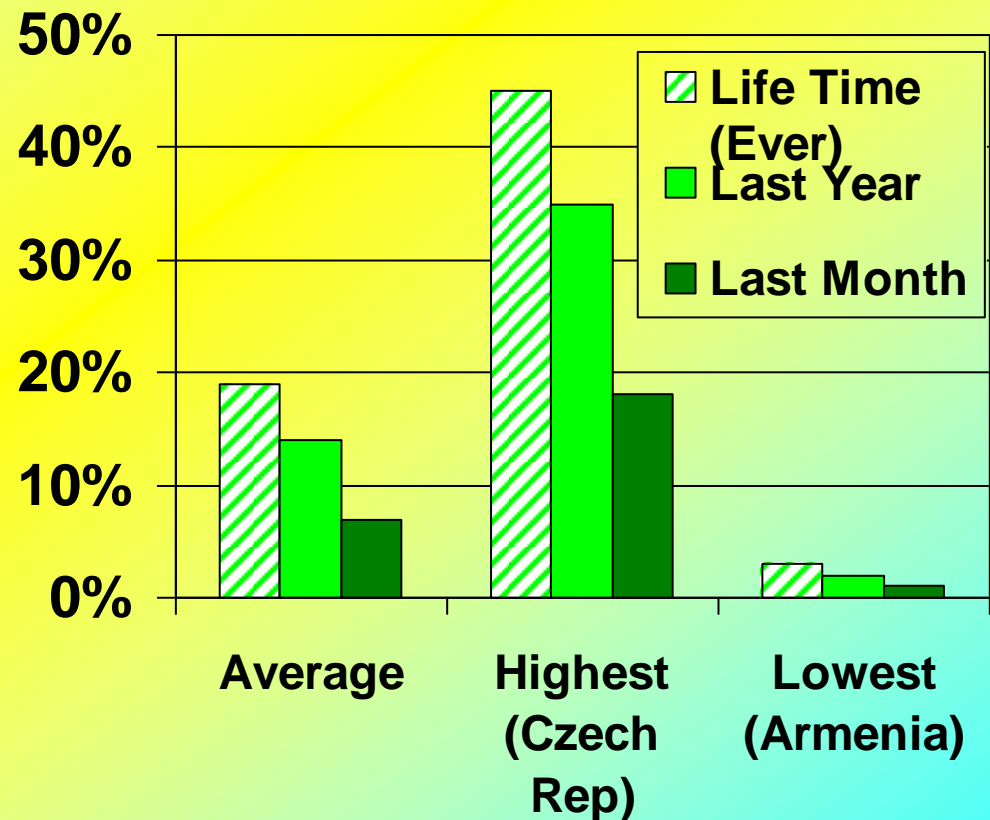
With older age
more dis-
continuation



Variation in Cannabis Prevalence across Europe

ESPAD survey
students 15-
16 years
35 countries
(2007)

*NB: most ever-
users start at
later age.*

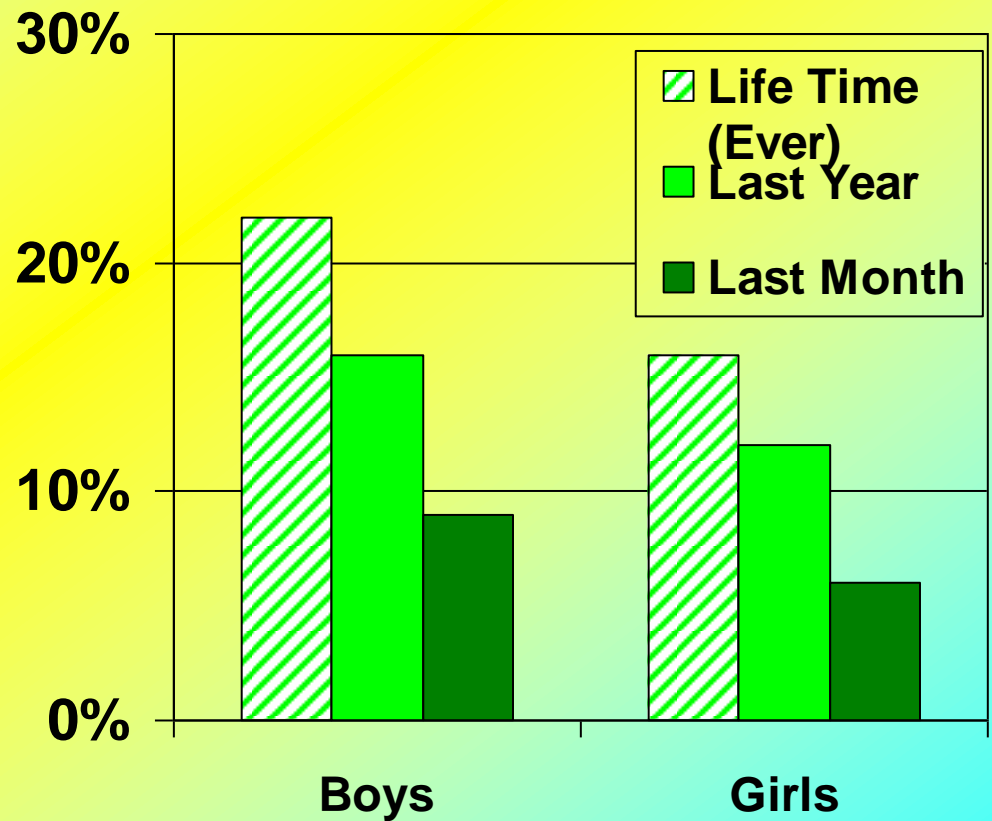


Gender Gap

ESPAD survey
students 15-
16 years

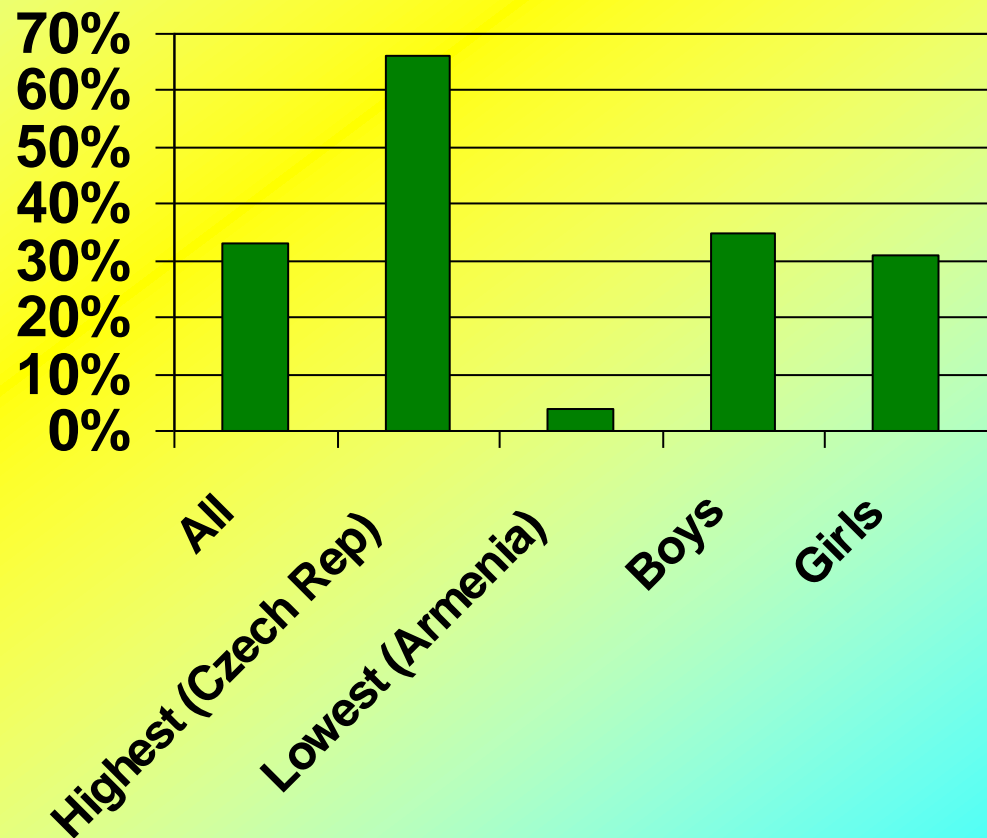
35 countries
(2007)

Boys higher
prevalence
than girls



Perceived Availability Cannabis: fairly or very easy

ESPAD survey
students 15-
16 years
35 countries
(2007)



General Population Surveys Only Rough Indicators

- **Lifetime prevalence in particular might reflect use abroad**
- **Miss hidden populations, too general for specific trends**
- **National data = mix of regional patterns and trends**

Pros and Cons of General Population Surveys

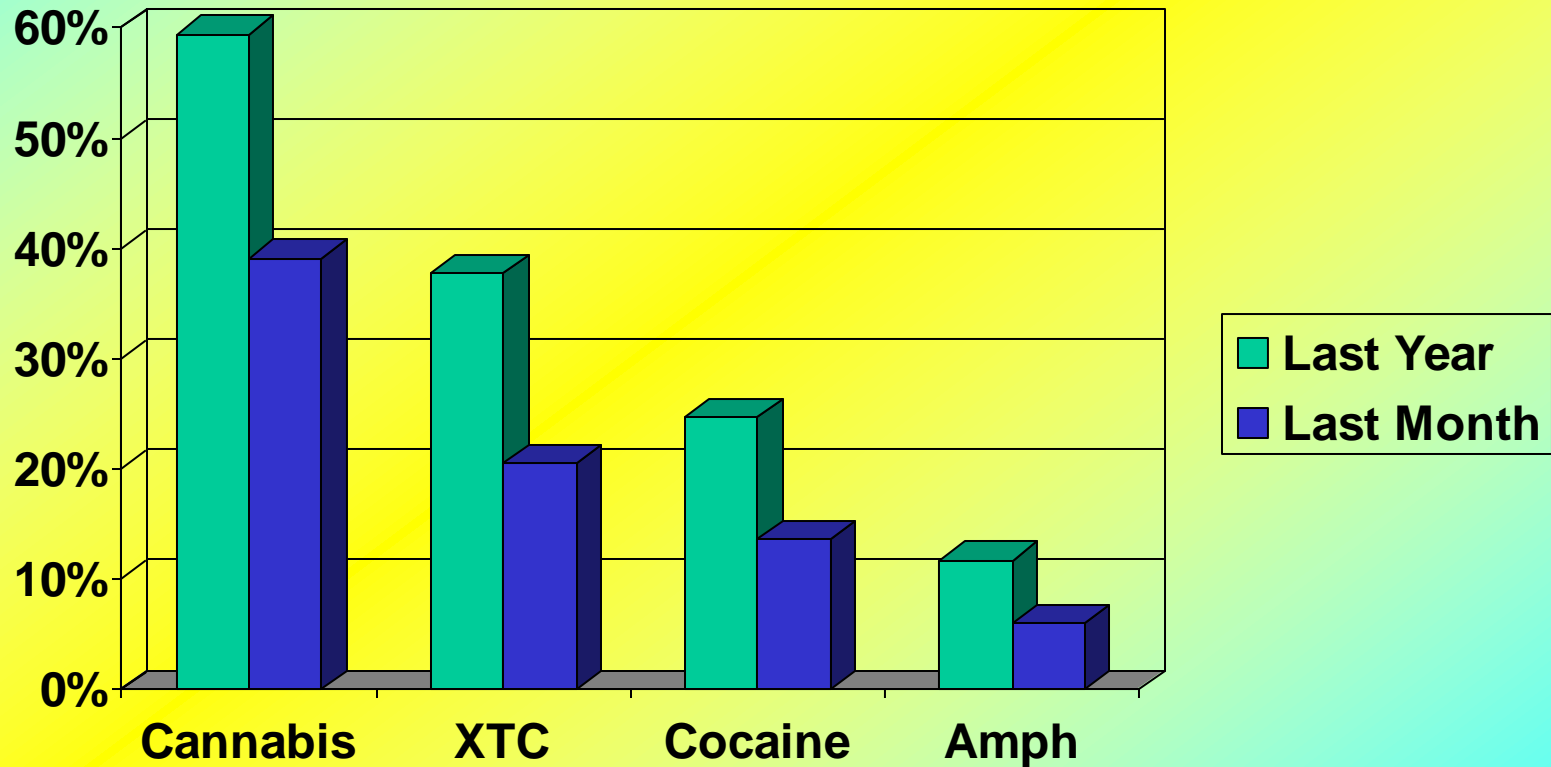
- **Data on cannabis use predominantly collected in general population and school surveys.**
- **Advantage = derived from normative (representative) samples.**
- **However, in most cases, only rather 'rough' indicators of consumption patterns**
- **Generally no information about supply.**
- **Consequently: big gap in information about frequency of use and dosage, price and distribution channels.**

Site Survey as Alternative: Clubbers in Amsterdam, 2007

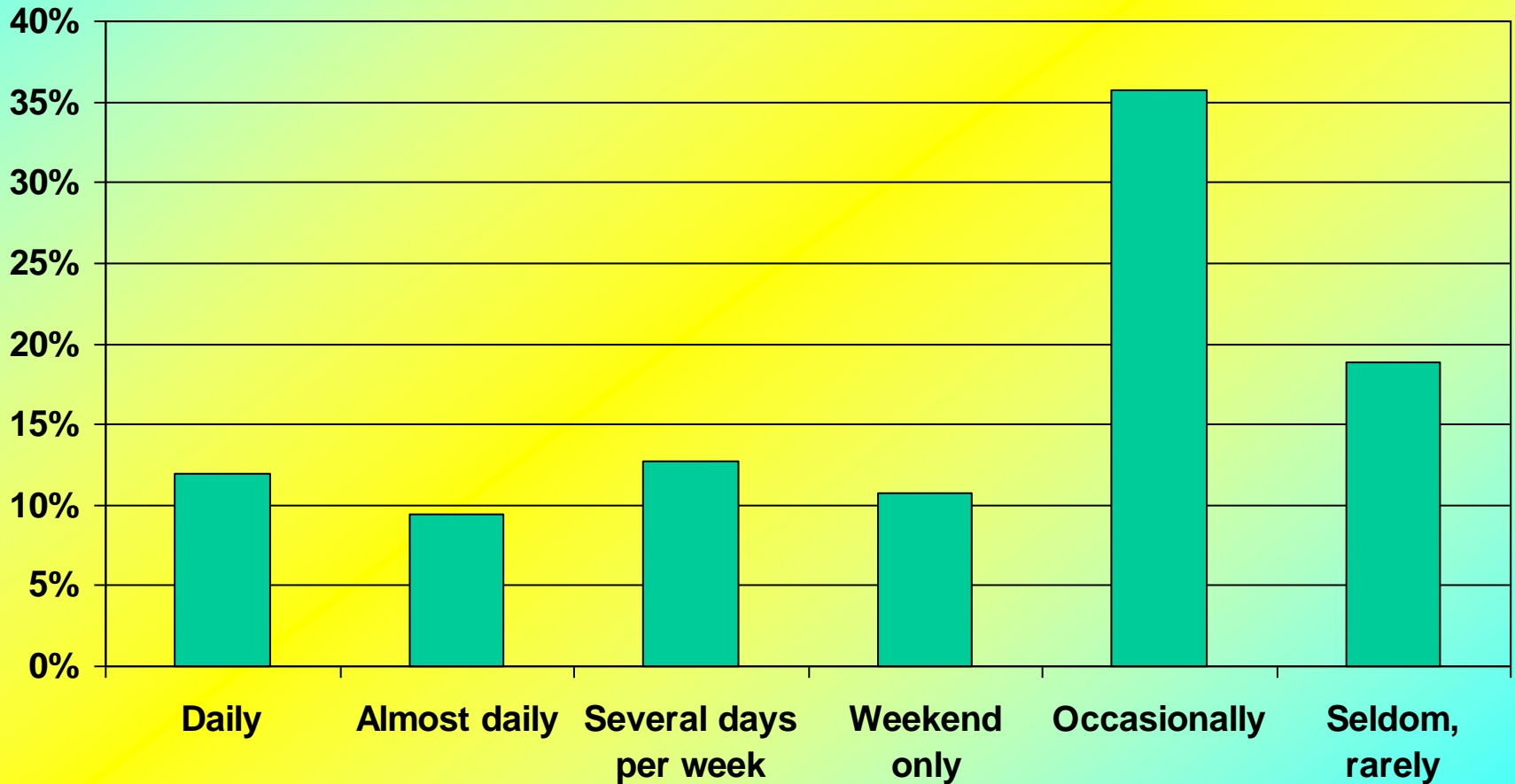
- **N = 646**
- **Mean age = 24.9**
- **41.2% male / 58.8% female**

- **42.3% employed**
- **53.9% student (+ employment)**
- **3.8% neither**

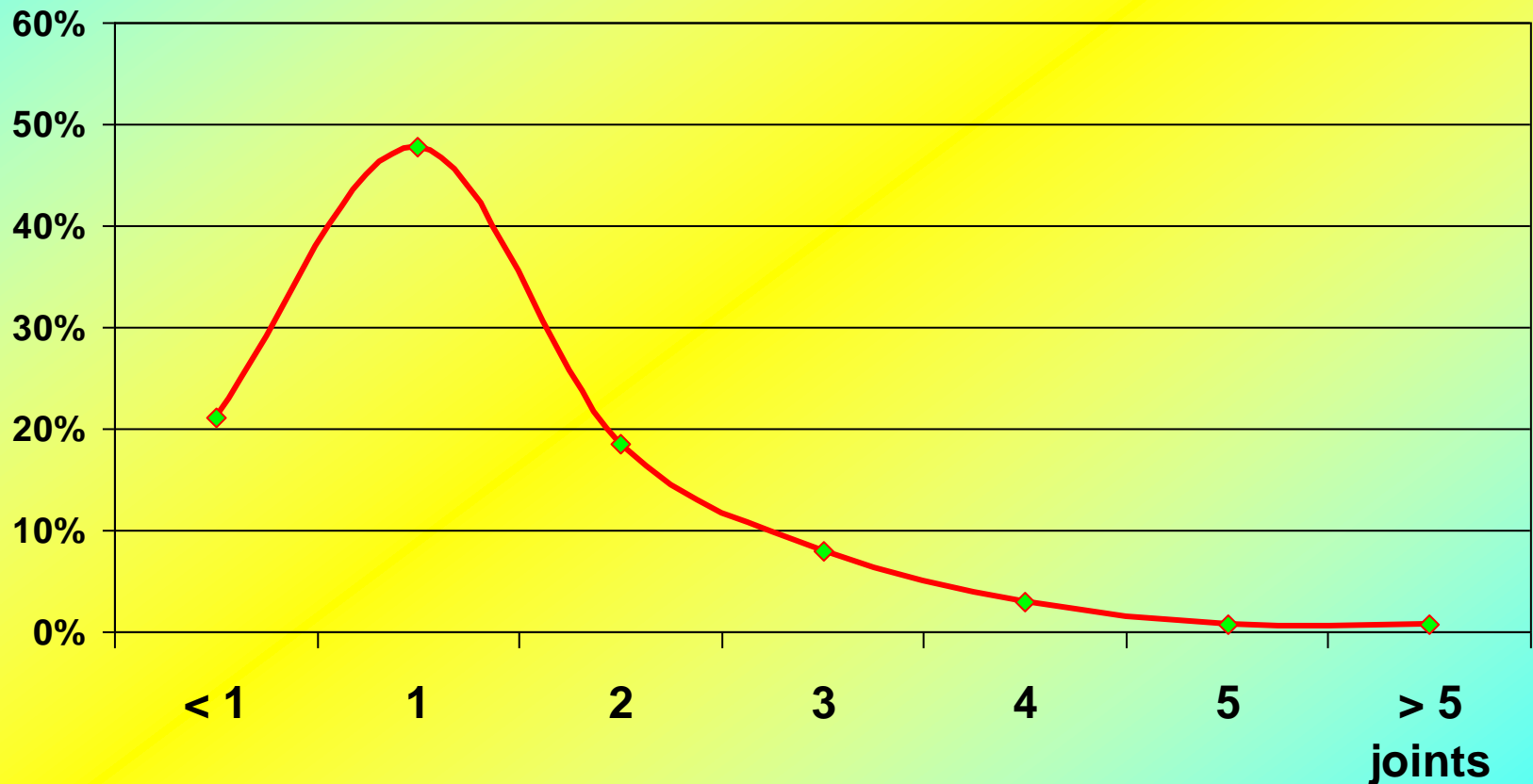
Prevalence Rates Clubbers Amsterdam, 2007

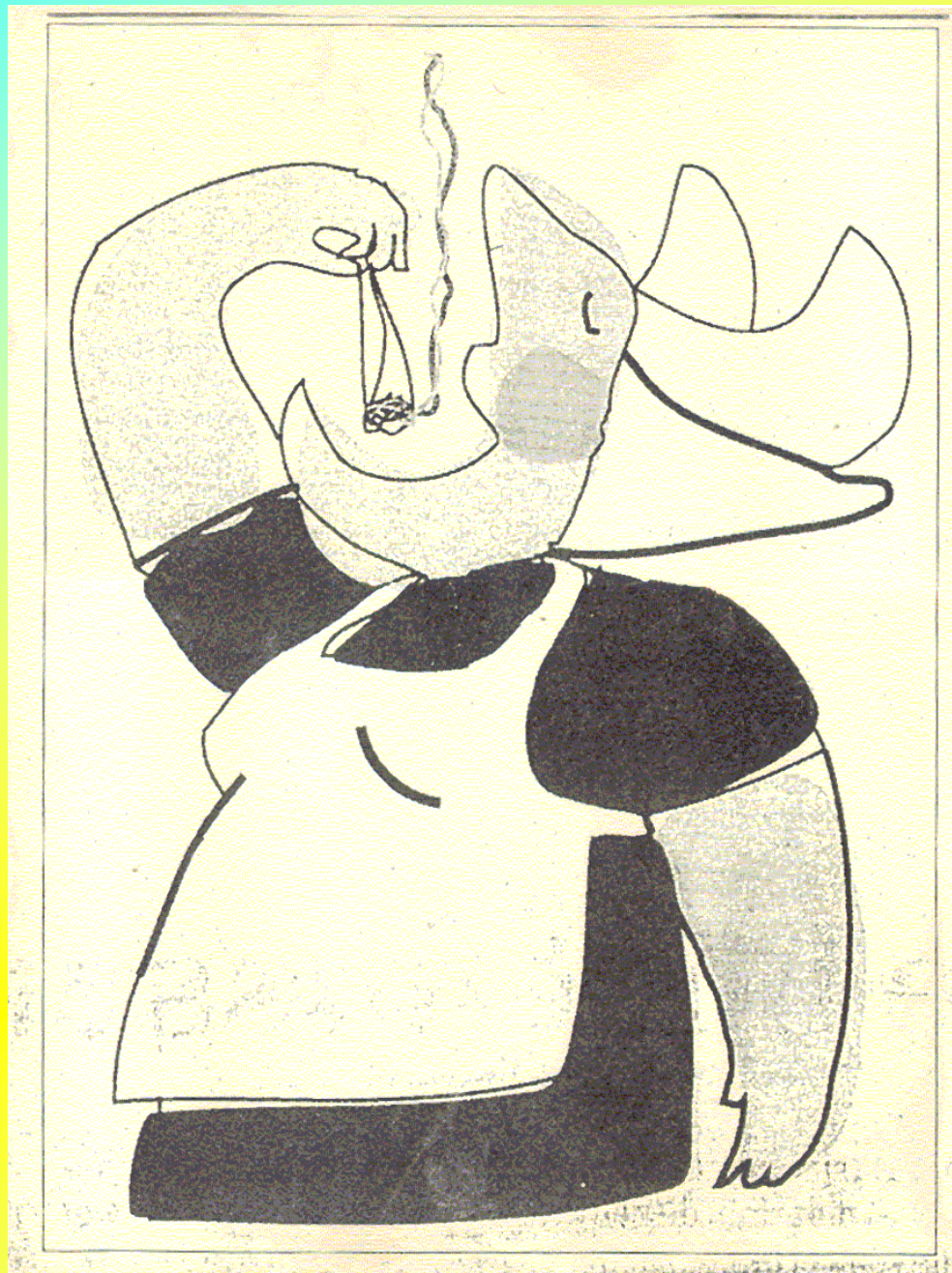


Frequency Cannabis Use (current users)



Number of Joints per Day of Use (current users)





Why Coffee Shops as Research Site? I

- **In the Netherlands, the sale of cannabis to users is tolerated in so-called coffee shops.**
- **In certain regions coffee shops attract many tourists. Typically the case in Amsterdam.**
- **Choosing coffee shops as a research site does not reflect any preference for Dutch cannabis policy whatsoever.**
- **Not focus on phenomenon of ‘drug tourism’**
- **Nor intend to evaluate coffee shop policy.**

Why Coffee Shops as Research Site? II

- **Unique opportunity to study large international sample of current users.**
- **Although illicit drugs other than cannabis are not tolerated in coffee shops, visitors often are recent or current users of such substances.**
- **Survey allows for generating data on consumption patterns of both cannabis and party drugs.**

Focus on Home Country

- **Most tourists who visit coffee shops only stay in Amsterdam for a short period of time (often only the weekend).**
- **Consequently, they will be in the position to report on recent (= past 12 months) and current (= past 30 days) drug use *in their own country*.**

Retail Markets: Data on Supply

- **It may be assumed that foreign coffee shop visitors in Amsterdam will be more open to report on the rather sensitive issue of supply in their home country.**
- **Do they buy drugs in the streets, from private dealers, delivery services (who bring drugs to their homes), private marihuana growers, etc. or do they grow their own marihuana?**

Self-completed Questionnaire

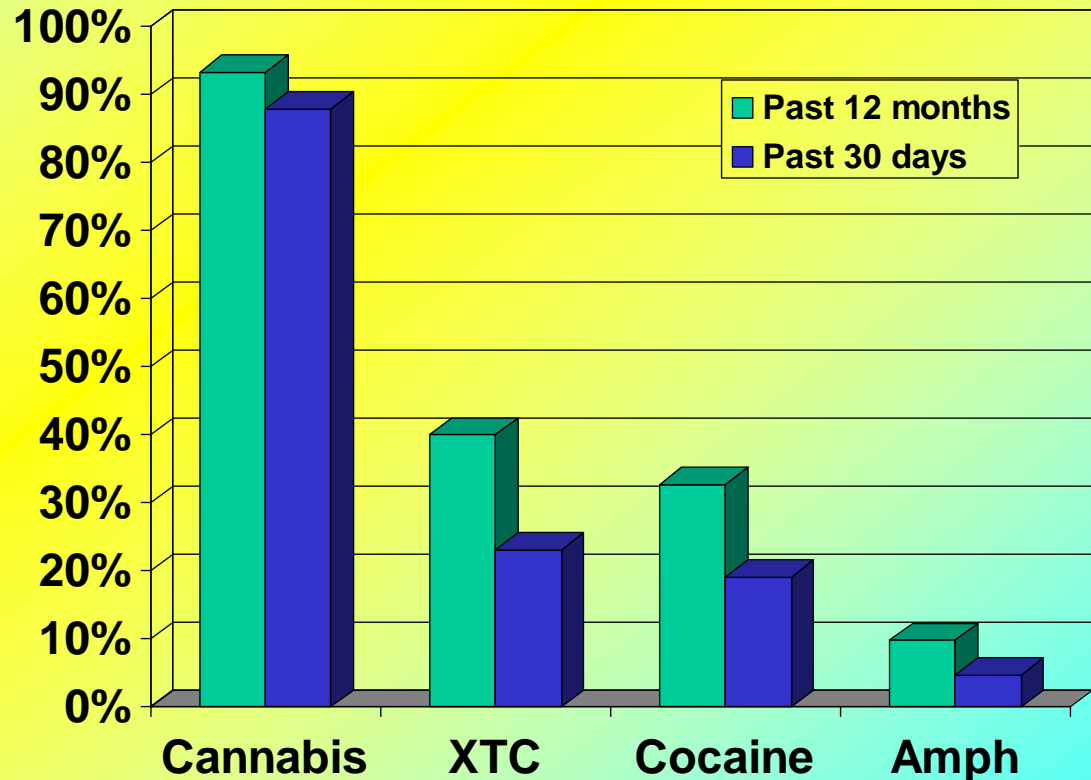
- **Socio-demographics**
- **Use of cannabis, XTC, cocaine, and (meth) amphetamines: lifetime, past 12 months, and 30 days *previous* to visit to Amsterdam.**
- **Frequency of use**
- **Amounts per occasion**
- **Price (per unit bought) and quality (Likert scale), both at retail level, in home country.**
- **Supply (at retail level) in home country.**

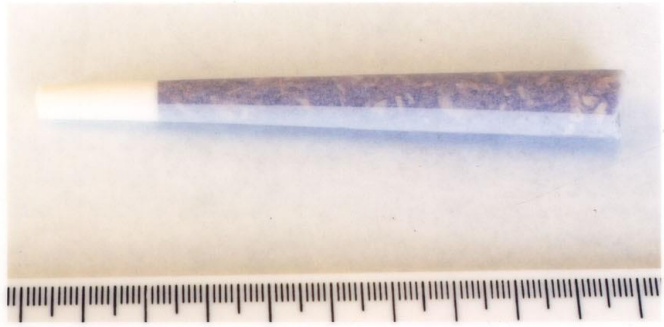
Sample Size

- **N = 2,500 (including 250 local visitors).**
- **N = 250-300 each from:**
 - Belgium
 - Germany
 - France
 - Italy
 - Spain
 - United Kingdom
 - Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland)
 - new EU-member states in Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary).
- **Data analyzed and reported on:**
 - total sample
 - per country or cluster of countries
 - be related to national prevalence rates.

Coffee Shop Survey Local Visitors Amsterdam 2001

Net sample size expected to collect sufficient data for analysis on both cannabis and party drugs.





A



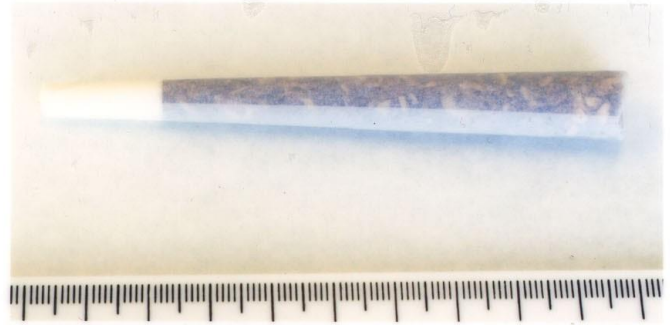
B



C



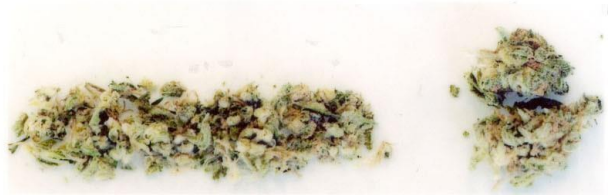
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A



B



C



D