



ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND ILLEGAL DRUGS IN SPAIN.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE

SPANISH OBSERVATORY ON DRUGS AND ADDICTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary function of the **Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions (OEDA)** is to offer a global vision of the characteristics and problems associated with the use of psychoactive substances (including alcohol, tobacco, hypnotosedatives, illegal drugs and new substances), as well as non-substance addictions (including gambling and compulsive internet use).

This Executive Summary contains the main results of the "2021 Report: Alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs in Spain". The information is presented under the following headings: Survey on alcohol and other drugs in Spain EDADES, 2019/2020; Survey on drug use in Secondary Schools in Spain ESTUDES, 2018/2019; Admissions to treatment for drug use in Spain, 2019; Drug-related hospital emergencies in Spain, 2019; Drug-related deaths in Spain, 2019; Drug-related Infectious diseases in Spain, 2019; Problematic drug use in Spain 2018/2019 and Spanish Early Warning System on new psychoactive drugs (SEAT).

Complementary information and previous reports are available at:

<https://pnsd.sanidad.gob.es/profesionales/sistemasInformacion/home.htm>



SURVEY ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS IN SPAIN. EDADES, 2019/2020

In 2019/2020, the drugs with the highest use prevalence among the Spanish population aged 15-64 years in the last 12 months are **alcohol, tobacco followed by prescribed and non-prescribed hypnotosedatives, cannabis and cocaine**. The age of initiation of use remains stable. Tobacco and alcohol are the psychoactive substances most commonly used at an early age, followed by cannabis. The psychoactive substances that tend to start being consumed at later ages are hypnotosedatives and opioid analgesics.

Prevalence of use (last year) is higher in the 15-34 age group, except for prescribed and non-prescribed hypnotosedatives and prescribed and non-prescribed opioid analgesics, where the highest prevalence is found in the older age groups. In 2019/2020, data confirm higher use among men (except for prescribed and non-prescribed hypnotosedatives and prescribed and non-prescribed opioid analgesics). These differences by sex are higher for alcohol, tobacco and cannabis.

Alcohol continues to be the most commonly consumed psychoactive substance. 77.2% have consumed alcohol in the last 12 months, 63.0% in the last 30 days and 8.8% daily in the last 30 days.

The prevalence of alcohol consumption has been stable and at high levels since the 1990s. It is worth highlighting the downward trend in daily drinkers since 2001, which reached the lowest value in the entire historical series in 2017, but increasing by more than one point in 2019/2020.



Characteristics of consumers of alcoholic beverages in the last 30 days	
Consumption prevalence	63.0%
Sex	57.4% are males
Age group with the highest consumption	64.7% (aged 25-34)
Types of alcoholic beverages (in the last 7 days)	Beer: 38.9%; wine: 19.7%; spirits: 13.8%

19.4% of Spaniards aged 15-64 **have been drunk** in the past year. Also, **binge drinking** has generally been on an upward trend since 2007. Thus, in 2019/2020, 15.4% have consumed alcohol in the form of binge drinking in the last 30 days. Both drunkenness and binge drinking are more prevalent in male and are concentrated among 15-34 year olds.

39.4% of the population aged 15 to 64 has used **tobacco** in the last year, 36.8% in the last month and 32.3% on a daily basis. Compared to 2017, the figure has decreased from 34.0% to 32.3%, returning to the figures recorded in 2005, after which there was a decrease over the years until 2017.

Characteristics of daily tobacco users	
Consumption prevalence	32.3%
Sex	57.2% are males
Age group with the highest consumption	35.5% (aged 25-34)
Type of tobacco	Cigarettes: 73.3%, rolling tobacco: 17.5% and both types: 9.2%.

In 2019/2020, 10.5% of the population aged 15-64 has tried **e-cigarettes** and, within this age group, 48.9% has used e-cigarettes with nicotine, whereas 24.3% smoked both nicotine and nicotine-free cartridges. The use of these devices in the last month is higher in the 15-24 age group.

Regarding **prescribed and non-prescribed hypnotosedatives**, an estimated 645,000 people started using them in 2019/2020, with the highest uptake



among women aged 35-64. 22.5% of the population aged 15-64 years has used prescription or non-prescription hypnotosedatives at some time in life, surpassing the 20% mark for the third time in the entire historical series. 12.0% has used them in the last year, 8.6% in the last month and 6.4% daily in the last month.

Characteristics of hypnotosedatives users in the last 12 months	
Consumption prevalence	12.0%
Sex	60.8% are females
Age group with the highest consumption	17.6% (aged 55-64)

With regard to the use of **hypnotosedatives without a prescription**, 3.1% of the population aged 15-64 years admits to having used hypnotosedatives without a prescription at some point in their lives, with the average age of first use being 30.6 years. On the other hand, 1.3% of the population aged 15-64 years have used hypnotosedatives without prescription in the last 12 months, similar to the figure obtained in 2017 (1.3%). Less than 1% of the general population admits to having used non-prescribed hypnotosedatives in the last 30 days. In contrast to the use of hypnotosedatives as a whole, the prevalence of non-prescribed hypnotosedatives use is very similar across all age groups and both sexes.

15.2% of the Spanish population aged 15-64 years admits having used **opioid analgesics with or without a prescription** at some point in their lives. The use of these substances is more widespread among women than among men, with prevalence increasing in both groups as age increases. Over time, there is an increase in the prevalence of use in both sexes. Codeine and tramadol are the opioid analgesic with the highest prevalence of use among the population aged 15-64.



Only 1.7% of the population has ever used **opioid analgesics without a prescription** (1.8% among men and 1.5% among women). Most admit having obtained the drug through a friend or a relative (53.4%) or by another means (46.6 %) such as using a prescription that belonged to someone else.

In 2019/2020, an estimated 237,000 people aged 15-64 started using **cannabis**. The highest uptake is among males under 25 years of age, with 86,000 under 15-17 year olds having started using cannabis. Thus, the upward trend in the number of people starting to use cannabis is confirmed. 37.5% of the population aged 15-64 has ever used cannabis, 10.5% in the last year, 8.0% in the last month (for the time periods of last year and last month prevalence has remained stable since 2001) and 2.9% daily in the last month, a proportion that is increasing compared to the last measurements. The prevalence of lifetime prevalence of cannabis use has shown an upward trend since 1995.

Characteristics of cannabis users in the last 30 days	
Consumption prevalence	8.0%
Sex	71.1% are males
Age group with the highest consumption	15.9% (aged 15-24)
Type of cannabis used	Marijuana: 48.7% Hashish: 20.6% Hashish + marijuana: 30.8% Cannabis + tobacco: 86.9%

An estimated 61,000 people (15-64 years) used **cocaine (powder and/or base)** for the first time in 2019/2020, with the highest initiation of use occurring among males under 25 years, with 3,000 under 15-17 years having started using cocaine. 10.9% of the population aged 15-64 has ever used powder cocaine, 2.5% in the last year and 1.1% in the last 30 days. The



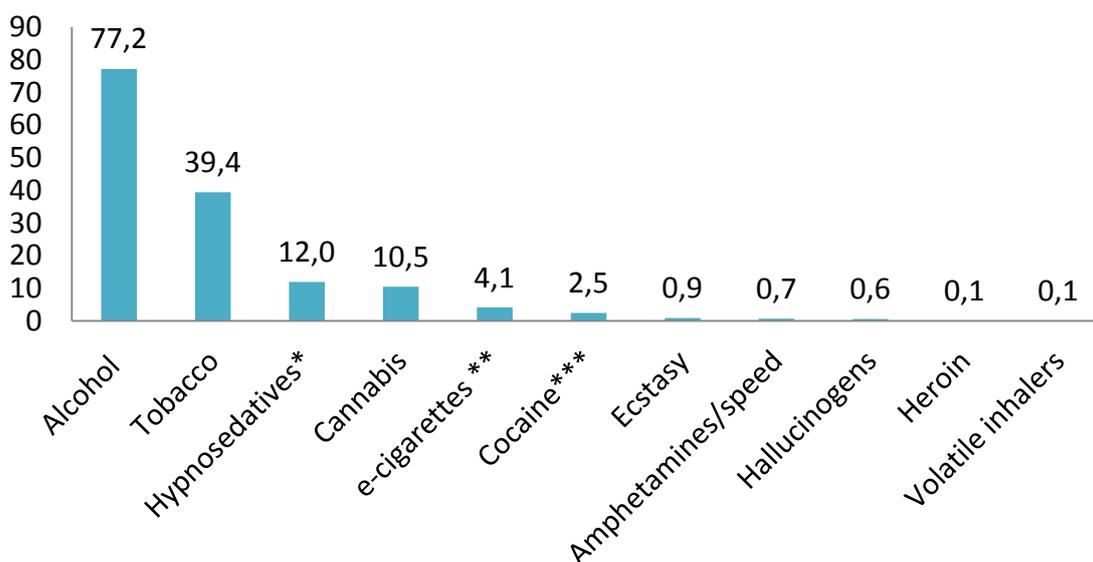
prevalence of powder cocaine use shows an increase compared to 2017, confirming the upward trend that started in 2001.

Characteristics of cocaine users (powder and/or base) in the last 12 months	
Consumption prevalence	2.5%
Sex	80.9% are males
Age group with the highest consumption	3.7% (aged 25- 34)
Type of cocaine consumed	Mostly in powder

In 2019/2020, 0.7% of the population aged 15-64 years has used **heroin** at some time, 0.1% in the last year and 0.0% in the last month. The average age of onset is 22.6 years and the profile of the user is that of a man over 45 years old. Heroin use has stabilized since the mid-1990s.

In 2019/2020, 5.5% of the population aged 15-64 has ever used **hallucinogens**, 4.3% **amphetamines** and 5.0% **ecstasy**. The prevalence in the last year and last month for all these substances is below 1%.

Last year use prevalence of psychoactive substances among 15-64 year old population (%). Spain, 2019/2020



Source: Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions. EDADES 2019/2020.



New psychoactive substances (NPS) are considered to be those that mimic the effect of illegal drugs (cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy...). These new substances (keta, spice, synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic marijuana, meow meow, flakka, superman, cathinones, mephedrone, fentanyl derivatives, methoxamine, NBOMe, ayahuasca, kratom...) can be in the form of herbs, pills, powders, liquids, incense, etc. 81.1% of the population indicates that they have never heard of substances of this type, a percentage that has increased with respect to that obtained in 2017 (73.8%). By sex, the highest level of lack of knowledge is registered among women.

When asked about the use of this type of substance in general, 1.7% of the population aged 15-64 said they have used them at least once in a lifetime. By type of substance, 0.6% has tried **spice** at least once in their lifetime, 0.9% **ketamine**, 0.2% **mephedrone** and **ayahuasca**, and 0.3% **pink cocaine (nexus)**. As usual, substance use is more prevalent in men than in women. The highest prevalence of substance use was found in the 25-34 age group, where 4.0% of men reported having tried these substances at some time. This is a minority phenomenon in Spain, although active surveillance is carried out through the Spanish Early Warning System (SEAT).

About 40.4% of people aged 15-64 has used **two or more legal or illegal drugs** in the last 12 months (28.1% - 2 drugs, 9.1% - 3 drugs, 3.2% - 4 drugs or more drugs). Polydrug use is more prevalent among men and, especially, in the 25-34 age group. Among the heavy polydrug users (those who consumed **four or more psychoactive substances during the last year**), the most frequent substances used were alcohol, tobacco and cannabis (with prevalence above 90%), followed by powder cocaine and hypnotosedatives with or without a prescription (above 50% of use). It should also be noted that ecstasy, amphetamines and hallucinogens were used in excess of 15%.



Risk perception of drug use has increased since 2017 for most of the substances, with figures always higher among women than men. The biggest differences by sex are found in relation to alcohol and cannabis use.

Regarding the perception of availability, cannabis is positioned as the most accessible illegal substance (59.4% of people think that they could easily acquire it, a lower proportion than that recorded in 2017, 63.3%). It can be seen that there has been a slight decrease in the perceived availability of cannabis since 2009. Powder cocaine is the next illegal substance most people perceive as easy or very easy to obtain within 24 hours (42.1%), followed by ecstasy (26.7%) and base cocaine (24.8%).

Regarding the **actions to solve the drug problem**, citizens consider the most effective measures to be education (89.2%), police and customs control (82.6%), advertising campaigns (81.5%) and treatment (80.1%). Among the least popular measures are the legalization of all drugs (only 24.8% consider it to be an effective measure) and the legalization of cannabis (36.5%), with both values having increased since 2017.

SURVEY ON DRUG USE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SPAIN.

ESTUDES 2018/2019

The drugs most commonly used by young people (14-18 years old) are legal drugs (alcohol and tobacco), followed by cannabis and hypnotosedatives with or without a medical prescription.



The use of legal drugs is more widespread among females and the use of illegal drugs, among males (except for hypnosedatives without a medical prescription). The average age of starting drug use is between 14 and 16 years old and prevalence rates increase with age.

In 2018, 77.9% of 14-18 year olds had ever consumed alcohol, 75.9% in the last year and 58.5% in the last month. In 2018, 346,600 students aged 14-18 years started drinking **alcohol**.

Characteristics of drinkers of alcoholic beverages in the last 30 days	
Consumption prevalence	58.5%
Sex	52.3% are females
Average age of onset of use	Aged 14
Type of beverage (in the last 7 days)	Spirits: 29.0%, beer: 24.2%, hard liquors: 14.3%

Alcohol consumption remains at high levels, although a slight decrease in drinking prevalence is observed in the relative figures for the last 30 days and matches with an increase in the percentage of students who report a higher risk of alcohol consumption.

Intensive episode consumption, **drunkenness** and **binge drinking**, continues with high prevalence, with a slight rebound in this year. Almost half of the students have gotten drunk in the last year, 46.5% of the girls and 42.3% of the boys. The binge drinking pattern is similar to drunkenness: 32.3% of students have binge drinking in the last month, a figure that increases with increasing age. At 14 and 15 years old, the percentage of women who binge drink is higher than that of men and at 16 and 17 years old, the percentage of men is higher than that of women. 51.3% of 14 to 18 year olds say that they have engaged in binge drinking in the last year. These figures also increase with age: 28.4% of 14-year-olds and 64.1% of 18-year-olds have engaged in binge drinking in the last year.



Underage students obtain alcohol very easily, mainly from supermarkets (54.0%) and bars/pubs (54.0%). It is also the psychoactive substance perceived as the least dangerous among students.

In 2018, 41.3% smoked **tobacco** once in their lifetime, 35.0% in the last year and 26.7% smoked in the last 30 days. In 2018, 205,600 students aged 14-18 started using tobacco (21,000 more than in 2016).

Characteristics of tobacco users in the past 30 days	
Consumption prevalence	26.7%
Sex	56,3% are females
Average age of onset of use	Aged 14.1
Type	Cigarettes: 36.9%, rolling tobacco: 14.1% and both types: 49.0%.

In 2018, a slightly upward trend in tobacco consumption was observed, ending a phase of declining consumption that started in 2004 (coinciding with Law 28/2005), and continued until 2014. The perceived risk of daily tobacco consumption has increased and the majority (88.7%) of young people believes that it can cause a lot or quite a lot of health problems. The number of students living in households with smokers continues to fall to 41.4%. On the other hand, 48.4% of students have ever used e-cigarettes, more frequently among boys and loaded with nicotine-free cartridges (71.5%).

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug among young people. In 2018, 33.0% had used cannabis in their lifetime, 27.5% in the last year and 19.3% in the last month. Among those who had used in the last year, 3.3% of boys and 1.4% of girls had used 20 days or more. In 2018, 222,200 students aged 14-18 started using cannabis.



Characteristics of cannabis users in the past 30 days	
Consumption prevalence	19.3%
Sex	54.1% are males
Average age of onset of use	Aged 14.9
Type	Marijuana: 43.8%, hashish: 19.3%. Hashish + marijuana: 37%. Cannabis + tobacco: 87.1%.

In 2018, a rebound in prevalence was observed in all temporary indicators after a downward trend that began in 2004 and lasted until 2014. There is also a rebound in problematic cannabis use, with an increase of more than two points. Young people have a low perception of the risk associated with cannabis use and, after alcohol and tobacco, it is the psychoactive substance perceived as the most available by this population.

Hypnosedatives are the substance used by the highest proportion of students after alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. In 2018, 8.6% of young people aged 14-18 had used (non-prescribed) hypnosedatives in their lifetime, 6.1% in the last year and 2.9% in the last month. Hypnosedatives use is more prevalent among females. There is a slightly upward trend in the use of non-prescribed hypnosedatives among 14-18 year-olds.

Characteristics of users of non-prescribed hypnosedatives in the last 12 months	
Consumption prevalence	6.1%
Sex	62.4% are females
Average age of onset of use	Aged 14.3

In 2018, 2.9% of the population aged 14-18 has used **cocaine** (powder and/or base) in their lifetime, 2.4% in the last year and 0.9% in the last



month. A downward trend in use, which started in 2004, can be observed. 97.3% of students aged 14-18 years think that regular use of powder cocaine can cause a lot/quite a lot of problems, a risk perception that has remained stable since 1994, just as the perceived availability of cocaine remains stable.

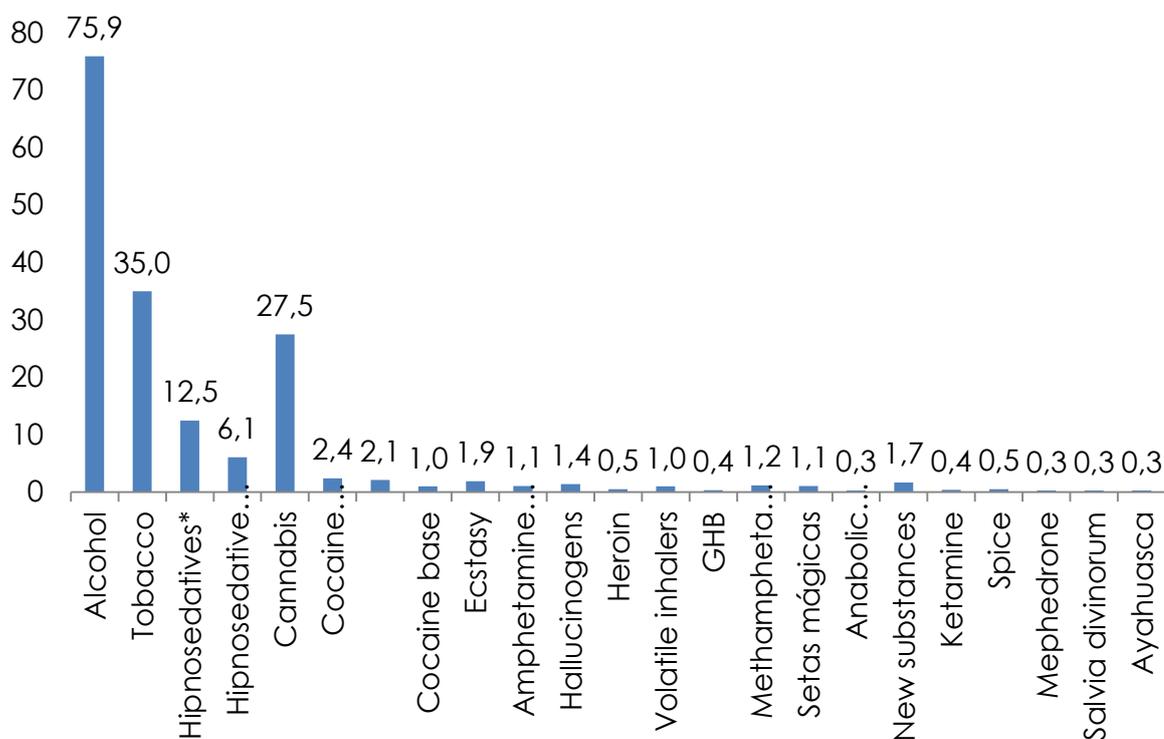
Characteristics of cocaine users (powder and/or base) in the last 12 months	
Consumption prevalence	2.4%
Sex	65.1% are males
Average age of onset of use	Aged 15.2
Type	Mostly powder cocaine

In 2018, in the last 12 months, 1.9% of 14-18 year-olds has used **ecstasy**, 1.1% has used **amphetamines** and 1.4% has used **hallucinogens**. The percentage of users of amphetamines, ecstasy and hallucinogens remains low although, since 2016, there has been a slight upturn in the prevalence of ecstasy and hallucinogen use after a steady decline from 2002 to 2014. The prevalence of amphetamines use has remained stable since 2016.

New **psychoactive substances** are, in general terms, substances with lower prevalence rates than traditional drugs. In 2018, 2.4% of students aged 14-18 have used a new psychoactive substance (ever in their lifetime). 0.8% has tried spice in their lifetime, 0.6% has tried ketamine, 0.4% has tried salvia, 0.4% has tried mephedrone, and 0.4% has tried ayahuasca. Remarkably, 54.4% has never heard of such substances.



Last year use prevalence of psychoactive substances among 14-18 year old students (%). Spain, 2019/2020



Source: Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions. ESTUDES 2018/19.

26.0% of young people aged 14 to 18 years old consider to be **fully informed** on the subject of drugs. The main channels through which they receive information are the educational center (81.7%) and the family (68.6%). 76.9% has received information on the effects and problems associated with legal drugs (tobacco, alcohol and hypnosedatives), and 69.4% on the effects and problems associated with illegal drugs (hashish/marijuana, cocaine, synthetic drugs...).



TREATMENT ADMISSIONS FOR DRUG ADDICTION. SPAIN, 2019.

In 2019, there were 50,035 admissions to treatment for illicit drug abuse or dependence of which more than half (54.9%) were first-time admissions.

In terms of the weight that each drug accounted for in the total number of admissions, in 2019 **cocaine** remained **the illegal drug that caused the highest number of admissions to treatment** (44.7% of the total), followed by cannabis (28.4%) and opioids (22.3%).

Among those admitted to treatment **for the first time in their lifetime** (first admissions), cannabis had been the substance that generated the most first admissions to treatment. However, in 2017, cocaine surpassed cannabis in number of admissions, a situation that is confirmed in 2019, with cocaine in the first place (45.4%), followed by cannabis (37.7%) and opioids (11.2%).

As previous years, in 2019, the majority of patients admitted to treatment for illicit drug abuse or dependence were male (82.9%). The average age was 35.6 years for all admissions, with no clear differences by sex. The mean age among first admissions to treatment was 32.8 years. On the other hand, 11.9% of people admitted to treatment were born outside Spain, with no differences by sex.

In Spain, the vast majority (87.2%) of patients admitted to treatment for illicit drugs lived in family homes (houses, flats or apartments), 8.4% lived in institutions and 3% had precarious or unstable accommodation. The most frequent model of cohabitation is the family of origin/with their parents or own family (wife/husband and/or children).

More than half (55.9%) of patients entered treatment on their own accord or were encouraged to do so by relatives or friends, although the public



health system (hospitals or other health services/general practitioner/primary health care and other drug dependence services) referred approximately one third of those admitted to treatment (26.6%).

In 2019, among those admitted to treatment for any of the substances considered, **4,877 had injected at some point in their lives**, confirming the downward trend since records began in the 1990s and reaching the lowest figure in the historical series.

In 2019, 22,345 admissions to treatment for **cocaine** were recorded, of which 19,627 were for powder cocaine and 2,710 for base cocaine. In 2016, there was an increase in the number of first admissions for cocaine, a trend that is confirmed in 2019 (12,491 new admissions), positioning **cocaine as the substance responsible for the highest number of first admissions to treatment**, overtaking cannabis.

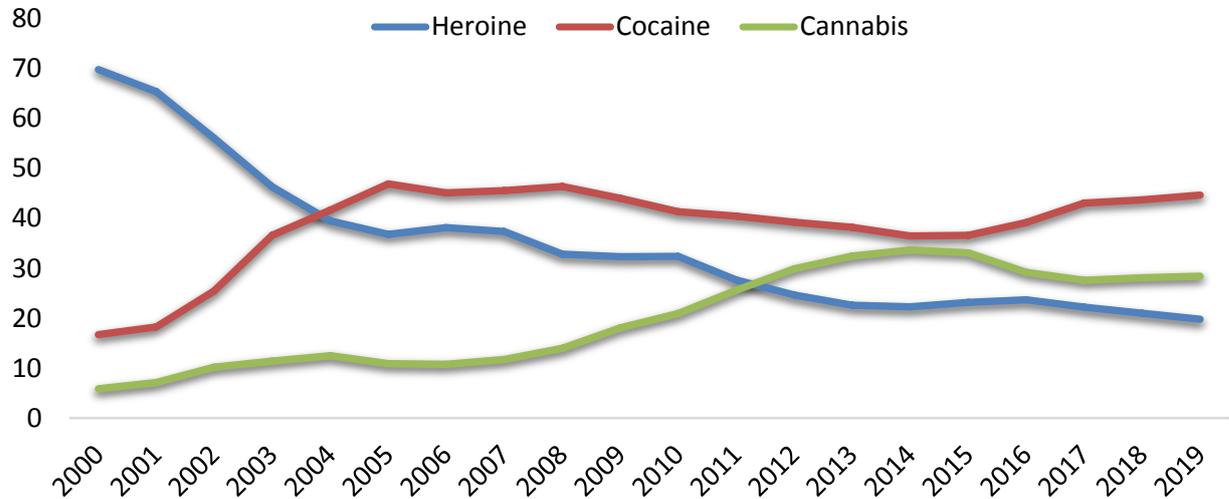
The total number of admissions to treatment for **cannabis** use in 2019 was 14,202, slightly higher than in 2018. The number of people admitted to treatment for cannabis use showed a clear upward trend until 2013, followed by a downward trend from 2014 until 2017. A change in trend was observed in 2018, which is confirmed this year.

It is important **to note the weight of cannabis among minors seeking treatment** for psychoactive substance abuse or dependence in Spain. Thus, 95.2% of all minors under 18 years of age who have been treated for illegal drug use in 2018 have done so for problems associated with cannabis use.

The number of people admitted to treatment for **heroin** use was 9,904 in 2019, confirming the downward trend that began in 2010. This trend is justified both by the decrease in the number of people admitted to treatment who had already been treated for heroin (7,177 people) and by those admitted for the first time (2,384 people).



Treatment admissions by psychoactive substance (%). Spain, 2000-2019



Source: Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions. Treatment admissions indicator.

DRUG-RELATED HOSPITAL EMERGENCIES. SPAIN, 2019.

In 2019, 5,352 emergency episodes related to non-therapeutic or non-medical drug use were reported. A relatively stable trend has been observed since 2011.

There is an **upward trend in the average age** of emergency attendees, from 27.8 years in 1996 to 34.1 years in 2019. This increase can be related to the high number of **cocaine-related emergencies** (average age 36.1 years). Those presenting at the emergency room for opioid and hypnosedatives related episodes are older, while those presenting for ecstasy, cannabis, hallucinogens and amphetamines are younger.

The distribution of emergencies, according to their resolution, has not varied significantly over the years, with the most frequent being that the patient is discharged, approximately 73% in 2019. The resolution of the emergency does not vary significantly depending on the substance, although a higher percentage of hospital admissions can be observed in



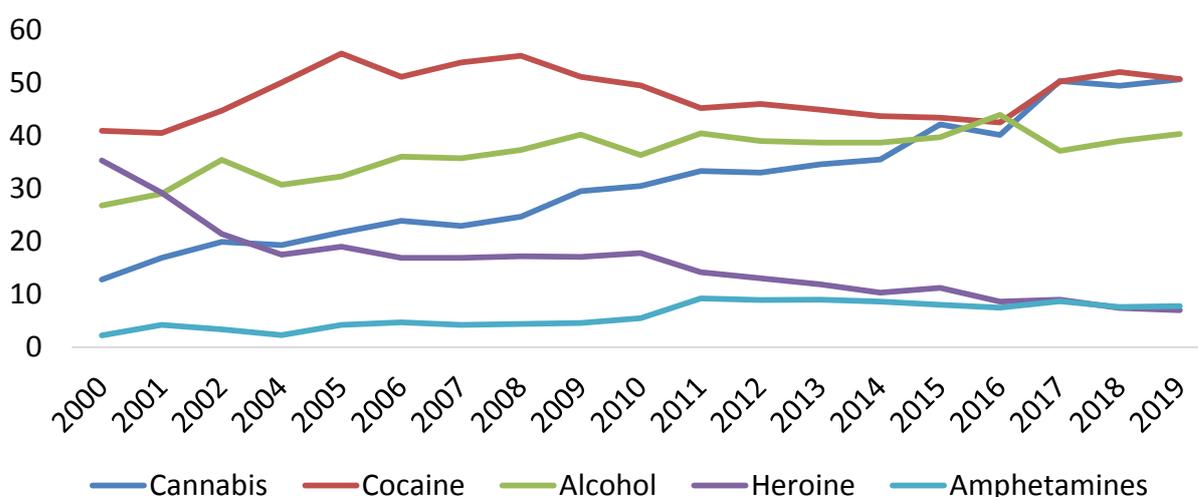
emergencies for **amphetamines, heroin, other opioids, hypnosedatives and cannabis**. Transfers to other centers in emergencies are more frequent in emergencies related to hypnosedatives (5.2%) and there are more voluntary discharges among ecstasy users (13.2%).

In 2019, 50.7% of the emergencies were related to cocaine, which together with cannabis (50.6%) are the illegal substances with the highest presence in this indicator. 15.2% were related to other opioids, including methadone, fentanyl, tramadol and codeine. Heroin ranked fourth (7.0%).

Although alcohol is only registered in these emergency episodes when it is found together with another drug, it stands at the third place among detected substances (40.3% of all the episodes in 2019).

Regarding new psychoactive substances, 9 emergencies related to **mephedrone** have been reported (16 in 2018). New psychoactive substances are currently monitored in Spain through the Spanish Early Warning System.

Drug-related emergencies by psychoactive substance (%). Spain, 2000-2019



Note: Alcohol is only registered when it is found together with another drug.
Source: Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions. Drug-related hospital emergencies indicator.



DRUG-RELATED DEATHS. SPAIN, 2019.

In 2019, 920 deaths were reported to the Specific Register of Deaths due to acute reactions to psychoactive substances. Of these, toxicological information disaggregated by type of substance is available for 819 cases.

In 2019, the average age of the deceased was 44.4 years, similar to that shown in 2018, but continuing the upward trend seen since 2003. This trend could be related to the fact that opioids are present in the majority of deaths and the ageing cohort of opioid users is well known. Thus, in 2019 more than half of the fatalities were over 40 years of age, although the percentage has slightly decreased in 2019 compared to 2018 (69.7% and 72.3%, respectively).

In 2019, 80.8% of deaths were male, a fact that has been present throughout the entire historical series. 23.2% showed evidence of suicide, a percentage that has been stable over the last 4 years.

Taking into account the limitations of the approximation, it could be said that, in 2019, the profile of people who died due to an acute reaction to psychoactive substances, as has been observed since 2014, is that of a man over 44 years of age, single, who has used more than one substance but did not die due to previous pathology aggravated by the consumption of psychoactive substances, with negative HIV serology, who has recently consumed a psychoactive substance (preferably hypnotics, cocaine and opioids), but who does not show recent signs of venipuncture. It should be noted that, prior to 2014, the deceased persons were younger on average, had a much higher percentage of HIV-positive serology and showed more recent signs of venipuncture.



In terms of trends, there was an increase in the presence of hypnotosedatives, which were detected in 66.8% of the deceased, and a decrease in cocaine, which appeared in 60.3% of them. Opioids continue to be present, being detected in 59.0% of the cases reported. The presence of alcohol among fatalities decreased in 2019 (39.7%), returning to the values obtained in 2015 (it should be noted that alcohol is only recorded when found together with another substance). Finally, cannabis is detected in 25.5% of fatalities, showing a slight upward trend (highest value recorded in the historical series). It is important to note that more than one drug has been found in 90.2% of cases.

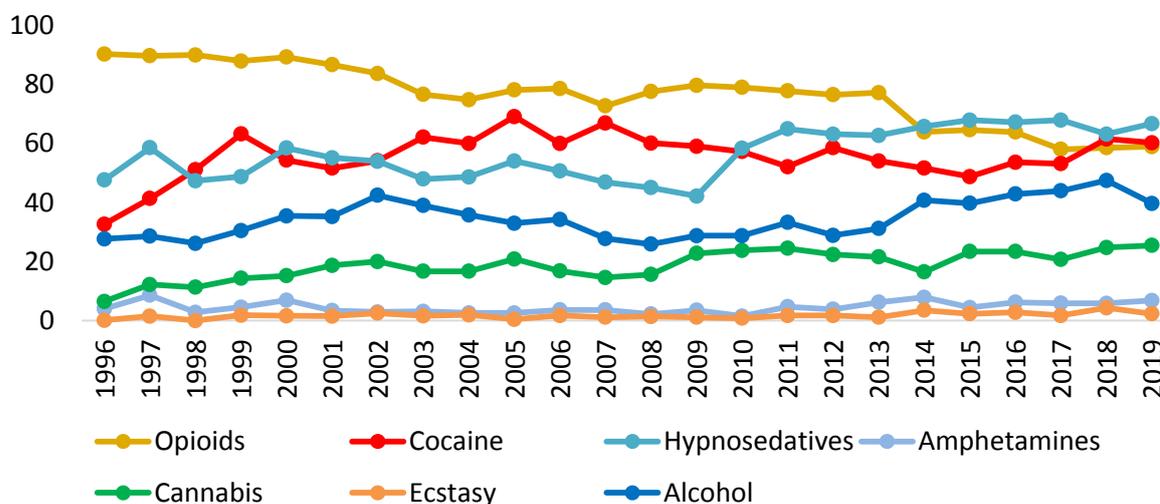
Hypnotosedatives in 2019 appear together with other substances, generally opioids, cocaine and alcohol. In only 2.5% of deaths hypnotosedatives were the only substance detected, 76% of which were cases reported as suicides.

In 2019, **opioids** were detected in 59.3% of deaths due to acute drug reaction. Methadone was present in 28.8% of deaths in 2019, being the only opioid in 11.7% of cases, regardless of whether other substances from other groups were identified. Opioids, identified as the sole substance in fatalities, have been on a general downward trend that has stabilized at around 2% (1.8% in 2018 and 2.1% in 2019).

Cocaine is present in 60.3% of acute drug-related deaths in 2019. Among those deaths in which cocaine is identified, opioids are present in 56.9%. In only 9.1% of deaths in which cocaine is detected, cocaine is the only substance detected.



Drug-related deaths by psychoactive substance (%). Spain, 1996-2019



Note: Alcohol is only registered when it is found together with another drug.
Source: Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions. Drug-related deaths indicator.

For another year, the percentage of deaths in which cocaine and non-opioids substances are detected together (26.8% in 2018 and 26% in 2019) is higher than the percentage of deaths in which opioids and non-cocaine substances are detected together (23.7% in 2018 and 24.7% in 2019), confirming the decreasing weight of opioids in this deaths.

Cannabis is present in 28.6% of acute drug-related deaths in 2019. In 2019, 209 deaths were reported in which cannabis was present, in 2 cases as the sole substance and, irrespective of the detection of other substances, with alcohol in 25.4% of these cases, with cocaine in 59.8%, with hypnosedatives in 67% and with opioids in 89.0%.

According to the General Mortality Register, in 2019 there were 546 deaths in Spain with a cause among the selected ICD-10 drug-related diagnostic codes. The male predominance is maintained throughout the historical series (in 2019, 81.8% are men). The distribution of deaths according to age shows an upward trend in the average age of the deceased (in 2019,



79.6% were aged 35 or over). No substance analysis can be obtained from this general registry.

DRUG-RELATED INFECTIOUS DISEASES. SPAIN, 2019.

In 2019, 2,698 new cases of HIV were diagnosed in Spain (estimated rate, after adjustment for underreporting, 7.46/100,000 population). The most frequent transmission mechanism was risky sex between men with men (56.6%) and risky sex between heterosexuals (32.3%), with infection as a result of injecting drug use being much less frequent (2.6%). In the last 7 years, injecting drug use has represented a low percentage compared to other transmission mechanisms of HIV infection.

In 2019, the prevalence of infection, among the total number of those admitted to treatment for drug use is 3.2% for HIV, 5.5% for hepatitis C virus and 0.5% for hepatitis B virus (HBsAg positive-chronic carrier).

Among those who had injected in the last 12 months prior to admission to treatment (1,977 injectors), 71.3% were aware of their HIV status and of these 30.1% were HIV-infected. Also, 69.3% of last year injectors were aware of their hepatitis C status, 56.1% of whom had positive serology for hepatitis C. On the other hand, 32.7% of last year injectors knew their hepatitis B status and, of these, 7.4% had positive serology for hepatitis B (HBsAg positive-chronic carrier).

PROBLEMATIC DRUG USE. SPAIN 2019-2020

In 2019/2020, 4.2% of the population aged 15 to 64 years (approximately 1,300,000 people) can be considered risky **alcohol** users, a figure that reaches 5.6% among those who have drink anytime in the last year



(estimations based on AUDIT ≥ 8 points). This **risky consumption** in the last year is higher among men (8.2%) than women (2.5%) and is also higher in the 15-24 age group (9.2%). The profile of the at-risk user is that of a male, single, 38 years old, with secondary education, who is working. 39.7% have also used illegal drugs in the last month.

Problematic consumers in Spain	Alcohol (2019/2020)	Cannabis (2019/2020)	Heroin (2019)
Nº. of problematic users aged 15 to 64 years	1,300,000	591,798	64,983
% of the entire population aged 15 to 64 years	4.2%	1.9%	0.2%

In 2019/2020, approximately 591,798 people aged 15-64 years can be considered a **problematic cannabis user** (score ≥ 4 points on the CAST scale), which corresponds to 1.9% of the entire population aged 15-64 years. The percentage is higher among men (3%) than women (0.9%). Also, it is higher among those under 34 years old (3.4%) than in those over this age (1.2%). The profile of the problematic cannabis user is that of a man under 34 years of age, with secondary education, working and living with his own family, who is a polydrug user of other psychoactive substances and started using cannabis at the age of 16.5 years.

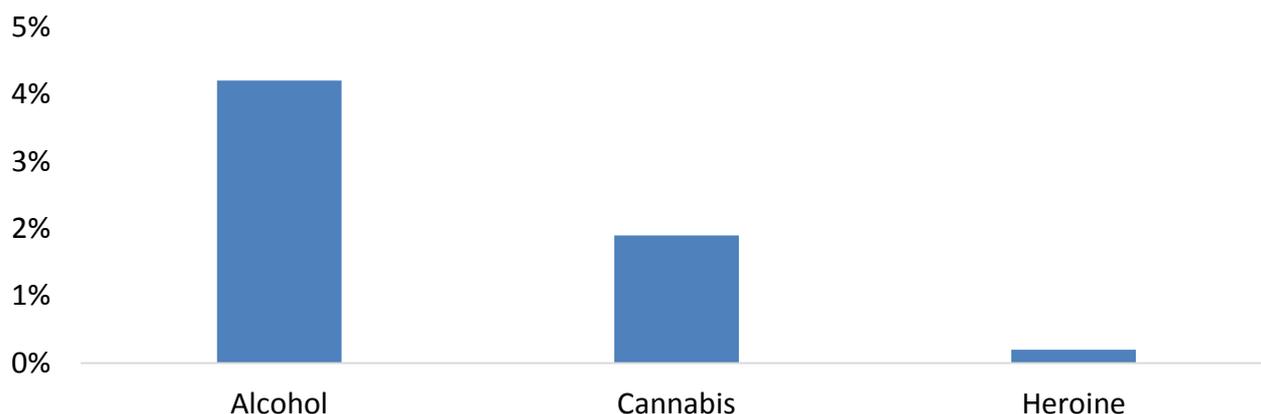
Among the population aged 14-18, an estimated 77,052 young people have a problematic cannabis use, representing 3.4% among the total population in this age range and 15.4% among those who have used cannabis in the last year. The profile of the at-risk cannabis user among students is a boy, aged 16, with a family economic situation and school grades in the average range of people their age, who has missed several days of school for no reason and used legal drugs in the last 30 days.

The estimated number of **problematic heroin users** in Spain in 2019 is 63,660 people (15-64 years), which corresponds to 0.2% of the population in this



age range. Estimates show that in 2019 the data has stabilize, confirming the downward trend that started in 2012.

Problematic drug use by psychoactive substance among 15-64 year old population (%). Spain, 2019



Source: Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions. Problematic drug use indicator.

SPANISH EARLY WARNING SYSTEM ON NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (SEAT)

The Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions (OEDA) is responsible of the coordination of the Spanish early warning system on new psychoactive substances (SEAT) and, together with the Centre for Intelligence against Terrorism and Organised Crime (CITCO), is the Spanish nodal point of the European early warning network (EU-EWS on NPS). SEAT's overall objective is to maintain a rapid system for the detection, information exchange, assessment and response to the emergence of new psychoactive substances.

In 2020, 4 new psychoactive substances have been detected for the first time in Spain, belonging to the following groups: phenethylamines (2) and others (2).