RECENT TRENDS IN ILLEGAL DRUG MARKETS IN NEW ZEALAND, 2005-2007

Findings from the 2005, 2006 and 2007 Illicit Drug Monitoring System (IDMS)

C.Wilkins
P. Sweetsur
M. Girling

Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation
& Te Ropu Whariki
Massey University, P O Box 6137, Wellesley St

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Correspondence

Dr Chris Wilkins, Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE), Massey University, PO Box 6137, Wellesley Street, Auckland, New Zealand, tel. 00 64 9 366 6136, mob. 027 242 2265, email: c.wilkins@massey.ac.nz

Executive Summary

Introduction

An important aim of the Illicit Drug Monitoring System (IDMS) is to document social disruption related to illegal drug markets. This report compares aspects of illegal drug markets from the 2006 and 2007 IDMS. In the case of frequent methamphetamine users, comparisons of illegal drug markets are able to be made for the 2005, 2006 and 2007 IDMS. The 2007 IDMS interviewed 324 frequent drug users (similar to the 318 interviewed in 2006) in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch using purposive sampling and snowballing.

Dollar expenditure on illegal drugs

The frequent methamphetamine users spent more on illegal drugs during a six month period in 2007 compared to 2005 (a median dollar amount of $8,205 in 2007 compared to $2,845 in 2005) and in 2006 compared to 2005 ($6,810 vs. $2,845). There was no change in the level of spending on illegal drug use among the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users or frequent injecting drug users between 2006 and 2007.

Sources used to pay for drug use

The frequent methamphetamine users were less likely to have used paid employment to pay for their drug use in 2007 compared to 2005. The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have used property crime and drug dealing to pay for their drug use in 2007 compared to 2005. The frequent methamphetamine users were also more likely to have used social welfare benefits, to have borrowed money from friends, to have bartered goods and services, and to have used credit to pay for drug use in 2007 compared to 2005.

The frequent injecting drug users were more likely to have used drug dealing to pay for drug use in 2007 compared to 2006. The frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users were more likely to have used social welfare benefits and have borrowed money from parents to pay for their drug use in 2007 compared to 2006.

Frequency of drug purchase

A higher proportion of the frequent methamphetamine users had purchased methamphetamine weekly or more often in 2007 compared to 2006 and in 2006 compared to 2005. There were no changes in the frequency at which other drug types were purchased between the survey waves.

Property crime

The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have committed a property crime in 2007 compared to 2005. There was no change in the level of property crime committed by the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users or the frequent injecting drug users in 2007 compared to 2006.

Violent crime

The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have committed a violent crime in 2007 compared to 2005. There was no change in the level of violent committed by the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users or the frequent injecting drug users in 2007 compared to 2006.

Arrest and conviction history

The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have been arrested in the past year in 2007 compared to 2005. The frequent methamphetamine users were also more likely to have been convicted of a crime in 2007 compared to 2006. There was no statistically significant change in the arrest or conviction history of the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) or frequent injecting drug users.

1. Introduction

1.1 Study aims

The Illicit Drug Monitoring System (IDMS) is intended to serve as a strategic drug monitoring system to inform policy responses to illegal drug use and drug related harm. An important aim of the IDMS is to monitor trends in illegal drug markets and to document social disruption related to illegal drug markets, such as property crime and violence. This report presents findings from the 2007 IDMS on features of illegal drug markets and related drug enforcement issues. The findings from the 2007 IDMS are compared back to the 2006 IDMS (see Wilkins et al., 2008; Wilkins et al., 2006b). In the case of the frequent methamphetamine users, comparisons are able to be made for the 2005, 2006 and 2007 IDMS.

1.2 Methodology

A total of 324 frequent drug users were interviewed nationwide for the 2007 IDMS, including 110 frequent methamphetamine users, 105 frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users and 109 frequent injecting drug users (IDU). The frequent drug users interviewed for the study participated in an hour long interview which included questions concerning the purchase and selling of illegal drugs.

Recruitment of the frequent drug users for the 2007 IDMS was carried out in the three main centres (i.e. Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch) from July to October 2007. In order to be eligible to be interviewed for the study a respondent had to be 16 years or older, have used one of the main drugs of interest approximately monthly or more often in the last six months, and have resided in the site location for the past 12 months. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling and 'snowballing' (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, Watters and Biernacki, 1989). Purposive sampling involves the use of targeted recruitment strategies and is used to reach hard-to-reach populations, such as illegal drug users, when general population sampling is not feasible. 'Snowballing' is a peer recruitment strategy where interviewers ask those who have recently been interviewed to recommend the study to their friends and social acquaintances.

In order to ensure that a broadly representative sample of frequent drug users is interviewed for the study, a range of 'start points' for recruitment are chosen, based on the demographic profile of users and an understanding of the venues and locations where they are likely to congregate in a given site (see Wilkins et al., 2004, Wilkins et al., 2005a, Wilkins et al., 2005b). The information collected in the IDMS is not intended to be representative of drug use in the general New Zealand population, but rather to be indicative of emerging trends in drug use and drug related harm in New Zealand.

Participants were informed that all the information provided was strictly confidential and anonymous, and that the results would only be presented in aggregate. The project was designed so that no individual participant could be identified at any later date. The protocols and procedures used to collect and store the data for IDMS were approved by the Massey University Human Subjects Ethics Committee. All participants were offered a $20 food or music voucher to compensate them for their time. Further details of the methodology of the IDMS can be found in the main report of the 2007 IDMS (Wilkins et al., 2008).

1.3 Analysis

Statistical testing was carried out to identify differences between the frequent methamphetamine users, frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users and frequent injecting drug users for drug measures of interest. Statistical testing was also carried out to identify differences in findings between the 2007, 2006 and 2005 IDMS. Testing for differences in proportions (e.g. yes/no questions) was done using Fisher's exact test. A p-value of greater than 0.05 was defined as indicating no evidence of any differences between the three groups. If a p-value of less than 0.05 was obtained, three Fisher's exact tests were used to test for differences between each pair-wise combination of modules. The three p-values were adjusted for using Holm's step-down procedure to maintain an overall alpha level of 0.05. One-way ANOVAs with Tukey-Kramer post-hoc adjustments were used to test for differences between means. Differences between medians were tested using non-parametric one-way ANOVAs. If a p-value of less than 0.05 was obtained, three -parametric one-way ANOVAs were used to test for differences between each pair-wise combination of modules. The three p-values were adjusted for using Holm's step-down procedure to maintain an overall alpha level of 0.05. Scale-type questions, such as perceptions of changes in police activity, were allocated scores (e.g. less activity =1, stable activity = 2 and more activity = 3). Differences between the mean scores were tested using one-way ANOVAs. One-way ANOVAs assume the samples tested form a normal distribution. With scale-type questions such an assumption can never be met as the scores are based on discrete data however frequency tables show the distribution of data as being mound shaped, providing an approximation of a normal probability distribution. Testing of scale-type questions is intended to be indicative of trends in the data and is not completely statistically rigorous. All analysis was run using SAS software.

2. Expenditure and sources of income for illegal drugs

2.1 Individual dollar expenditures on illegal drugs

The frequent drug users who reported purchasing methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine, cannabis, LSD, ecstasy (MDMA) and opiates were asked how much they would spend on these drugs on a typical occasion, and how often they had purchased these drugs in the past six months. This data allowed us to calculate total individual dollar expenditures on these illegal drugs types for the past six months. In 2007, the frequent drug users spent a mean of $15,882 each on illegal drugs in the past six months (Table 2.1). There was considerable variation in the dollar amounts spent on drugs among the frequent drug users, with some frequent drug users spending extremely large dollar amounts on drugs (i.e. range $30-$959,120). The extremely skewed nature of spending on illegal drugs means the median rather than the mean provides a better indication of typical spending on drug use (i.e. median $3,640). There was no statistically significant difference in the median individual dollar expenditure on illegal drugs by the frequent injecting drug users and frequent ecstasy users between 2006 and 2007. The frequent methamphetamine users spent a higher median individual dollar amount on drugs in 2007 compared to 2005 ($8,205 vs. $2,845, p=0.0006). The frequent methamphetamine users also spent a higher median individual dollar amount on drugs in 2006 compared to 2005 ($6,810 vs. $2,845, p=0.0128).

Table 2.1: Individual dollar expenditure on illegal drugs in the past six months by frequent drug user group ($NZ), 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Expend	**Meth users (n=56)**	**Meth users (n=102)**	**Meth users (n=101)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=104)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=96)**	**IDU (n=84)**	**IDU (n=87)**	**Combined modules (n=290)**	**Combined modules (n=284)**
Mean	$22,545	$23,676	$31,089	$2,041	$2,406	$9,421	$13,099	$11,788	$15,882
Median	$2,845	$6,810	$8,205	$920	$795	$5,065	$6,775	$3,054	$3,640
Range	$150-$810,000	$75-$371,800	$38-$959,120	$105-$25,000	$45-$65,150	$150-$55,450	$30-$145,600	$75-$371,800	$30-$959,120

2.2 Means used to pay for illegal drugs

The frequent drug users were read a list of 14 different ways to pay for drugs and were asked if they had used each way to pay for their drug use in the past six months. The frequent drug users had generally used more than one way to pay for their drug use in the past six months. In 2007, the most common ways the frequent drug users had used to pay for their drugs were 'paid employment' (59%), 'social welfare benefits' (53%) and 'bartered drugs or goods' (47%) (Table 2.2). Thirty-three percent of the frequent drug users had sold illegal drugs to obtain money to pay for their drugs, and 15% had committed property crimes to pay for their drugs, in the past six months in 2007. Over three quarters of the frequent drug users had received drugs as 'gifts' in the past six months.

Table 2.2: Means used to pay for drugs in the past six months by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Means of payment	**Meth users (n=68)**	**Meth users (n=112)**	**Meth users (n=109)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=108)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=105)**	**IDU (n=92)**	**IDU (n=108)**	**Combined modules (n=312)**	**Combined modules (n=322)**
Gift from friends	78%	80%	86%	79%	80%	79%	69%	79%	78%
Paid employment	75%	63%	56%	91%	80%	47%	42%	68%	59%
Unemployment benefit/ social welfare benefit	24%	40%	53%	17%	30%	71%	77%	41%	53%
Bartering drugs/ goods	43%	45%	61%	13%	18%	57%	60%	37%	47%
Selling drugs to provide personal supply	37%	46%	49%	18%	16%	39%	33%	34%	33%
Borrowed money from friends	24%	30%	49%	22%	33%	48%	45%	33%	43%
Credit from drug dealers	29%	36%	51%	16%	17%	48%	46%	32%	39%
Selling drugs for cash profit	28%	36%	47%	17%	17%	38%	26%	30%	30%
Pawning property	13%	23%	42%	2%	7%	40%	41%	21%	30%
Money from parents (given, borrowed)	16%	20%	28%	14%	24%	27%	24%	20%	25%
Property crime (e.g. burglary, shoplifting, stealing cars)	6%	13%	21%	2%	1%	21%	21%	12%	15%
Fraud	7%	10%	17%	0%	2%	10%	12%	6%	10%
Sex work (i.e. prostitution)	7%	4%	14%	1%	3%	12%	13%	5%	10%
Exchange for sexual favours	4%	6%	14%	1%	4%	5%	7%	4%	8%

In 2007, the frequent ecstasy users were more likely than the frequent methamphetamine users to have;

- Paid for drugs with paid employment (80% vs. 56%, p=0.0004)

In 2007, the frequent ecstasy users were also more likely than the frequent injecting drug users to have;

- Paid for drugs with paid employment (80% vs. 42%, p<0.0001)

In 2007, the frequent methamphetamine users were more likely than the frequent ecstasy users to have;

- Paid for drugs through commercial drug dealing (i.e. for cash profit) (47% vs. 17%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs through personal drug dealing (i.e. to provide personal supply) (49% vs. 16%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with property crime (21% vs. 1%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with social welfare benefits (53% vs. 30%, p=0.0006)
- Paid for drugs with fraud (17% vs. 2%, p=0.0006)
- Paid for drugs through bartering drugs and/or goods (61% vs. 18%, p=0.0006)
- Paid for drugs through pawning property (42% vs. 7%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with credit from drug dealers (51% vs. 17%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with sex work (14% vs. 3%, p=0.0165)
- Paid for drugs with sexual favours (14% vs. 4%, p=0.0441)

In 2007, the frequent methamphetamine users were more likely than the frequent injecting drug users to have;

- Paid for drugs with paid employment (56% vs. 42%, p=0.0335
- Received drugs as gifts (86% vs. 69%, p=0.0060)
- Paid for drugs through commercial drug dealing (i.e. for cash profit) (47% vs. 26%, p=0.0036)
- Paid for drugs through personal drug dealing (i.e. to provide personal supply) (49% vs. 33%, p=0.0272)

In 2007, the frequent injecting drug users were more likely than the frequent ecstasy users to have;

- Paid for drugs with property crime (21% vs. 1%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with social welfare benefits (77% vs. 30%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with fraud (12% vs. 2%, p=0.0112)
- Paid for drugs through bartering drugs and/or goods (60% vs. 18%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs through pawning property (41% vs. 7%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with credit from drug dealers (46% vs. 17%, p<0.0001)
- Paid for drugs with sex work (13% vs. 3%, p<0.0001)

- Paid for drugs through personal drug dealing (i.e. to provide personal supply) (33% vs. 16%, p=0.009)

In 2007, the frequent injecting drug users were more likely than the frequent methamphetamine users to have;

- Paid for drugs with social welfare benefits (77% vs. 53%, p=0.0006)

The frequent methamphetamine users were statistically significantly more likely to have;

- Used social welfare benefits to pay for drugs in 2006 compared to 2005 (40% vs. 24%, p=0.0478)
- Used social welfare benefits to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2005 (53% vs. 24%, p<0.0001)
- Bartered drugs and goods to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2006 (61% vs. 45%, p=0.0456)
- Bartered drugs and goods to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2005 (61% vs. 43%, p=0.0456)
- Borrowed money from friends to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2006 (49% vs. 30%, p=0.0183)
- Borrowed money from friends to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2005 (49% vs. 24%, p=0.025)
- Used credit to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2006 (51% vs. 36%, p=0.0428)
- Used credit to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2005 (51% vs. 29%, p=0.0147)
- Used commercial drug dealing to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2005 (47% vs. 28%) and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0525)
- Used property crime to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2005 (21% vs. 6%, p=0.0162)
- Used sex work to pay for drugs in 2007 compared to 2006 (14% vs. 4%, p=0.0237)

The frequent ecstasy users were statistically significantly more likely to have used social welfare payments to pay for drugs in 2007 than in 2006 (30% vs. 17%, p=0.0339). The frequent ecstasy users were more likely to have borrowed money from parents to pay for drugs in 2007 than in 2006 (24% vs. 14%), and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0793). The frequent ecstasy users were statistically significantly less likely to have used paid employment to pay for drugs in 2007 than in 2006 (80% vs. 91%, p=0.0324).

The frequent injecting drug users were less likely to have used commercial drug dealing to pay for drugs in 2007 than in 2006 (26% vs. 38%), and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0694).

In 2007, the frequent drug users were asked about their main way of paying for drug use in the past six months. The frequent drug users could choose only one of the options from the previous list of payment sources. The ways of paying for drugs most commonly chosen by the frequent methamphetamine users as their main way of paying for their drug use were paid employment (38%), social welfare benefits (17%), and drug dealing [both to fund personal use (8%) and for profit (8%)] (Table 2.3). The ways of paying for drugs most commonly chosen by the frequent ecstasy users as their main way of paying for their drug use were paid employment (69%), social welfare benefits (13%), and gifts from friends (7%). The ways of paying for drugs most commonly chosen by the frequent injecting drug users as their main way of paying for their drug use were social welfare benefits (33%) and paid employment (20%).

Table 2.3: Main way used to pay for drugs in the past six months by frequent drug user group, 2007

Means of payment	Meth users (n=108)	Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=105)	IDU (n=107)	Combined modules (n=320)
Paid employment	38%	69%	20%	42%
Unemployment benefit/ social welfare benefit	17%	13%	33%	21%
Selling drugs to provide personal supply	8%	2%	5%	5%
Selling drugs for cash profit	8%	2%	7%	6%
Gift from friends	7%	6%	6%	6%
Sex work (i.e. prostitution)	6%	1%	7%	5%
Made it	4%	1%	0%	2%
Property crime (e.g. burglary, shoplifting, stealing cars)	3%	1%	7%	4%
Other	3%	3%	5%	3%
Bartering drugs/ goods	2%	0%	5%	2%
Borrowed money from friends	1%	0%	3%	1%
Credit from drug dealers	1%	0%	0%	<1%
Money from parents (given, borrowed)	1%	1%	2%	1%
Exchange for sexual favours	1%	2%	1%	1%
Fraud	0%	0%	1%	<1%
Pawning property	0%	0%	1%	<1%

2.3 Illegal income

In 2007, 38% of the frequent drug users reported they had earned income from illegal sources in the past 12 months (Table 2.4). The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have earned illegal income in the previous 12 months than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users (48% vs. 21%, p=0.0008). The frequent injecting drug users were also more likely to have earned illegal income in the past year than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users (47% vs. 21%, p=0.0006). There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of the frequent drug users who earned illegal income in 2007 compared to 2006.

Table 2.4: Proportion of frequent drug users who earned illegal income in previous 12 months by frequent drug user group, 2006-2007

	2006	**2007**	**2006**	**2007**	**2006**	**2007**	**2006**	**2007**
	Meth users (n=110)	**Meth users (n=103)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=110)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=103**	**IDU (n=91)**	**IDU (n=100)**	**Combined modules (n=311)**	**Combined modules (n=306)**
Earned illegal income in past year	51%	48%	18%	21%	52%	47%	40%	38%

Those frequent drug users who had earned income from illegal sources were asked to estimate what proportion of their income was from illegal sources, and to estimate how much illegal income they had earned in the past 12 months. In 2007, the frequent drug users who had earned illegal income estimated that they had earned a mean of $26,932 in illegal income in the past 12 months (Table 2.5). The frequent drug users reported a wide range in illegal income levels (i.e. $0-$475,000). The frequent methamphetamine users reported a higher proportion of total income from illegal sources and a higher mean dollar amount of illegal income than the other two groups of frequent drug users. The frequent ecstasy users reported a higher proportion of their income coming from illegal sources in 2007 compared to 2006 (26% vs. 19%, p=0.0016).

Table 2.5: Proportion of total income earned from illegal sources and total illegal income earned in the past 12 months by frequent drug user group, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Illegal income	**Meth users (n=48)**	**Meth users (n=41)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=18)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=20)**	**IDU (n=44)**	**IDU (n=41)**	**Combined modules (n=110)**	**Combined modules (n=102)**
Mean % total income from illegal sources (median)	50% (46%)	42% (37%)	19% (14%)	26% (13%)	39% (37%)	42% (40%)	41% (33%)	39% (29%)
Mean annual illegal income (median)	$57,227 ($15,000)	$47,124 ($10,000)	$5,001 ($2,250)	$7,902 ($1,250)	$26,413 ($8,750)	$16,023 ($8,750)	$35,967 ($8,750)	$26,932 ($8,088)
Range of illegal income earned	$75-$540,000	$500-$475,000	$300-$30,000	$40-$42,500	$300-$540,000	$0-$63,750	$75-$540,000	$0-$475,000

3. Frequency of purchase of illegal drugs

The frequent drug users who indicated they had knowledge of the price, purity and availability of a drug were asked how often they had purchased the drug in the past six months. The frequent drug user could also indicate if they had received the drug for 'free' or if they had made or grown the drug themselves over this time. Approximately one in five of the frequent drug users had received methamphetamine (23%), crystal methamphetamine (Ice) (19%), opiates (19%), cannabis (18%), LSD (18%) and ecstasy (MDMA) for free in the past six months. Three percent of the frequent drug users had made methamphetamine and 3% had made crystal methamphetamine. Two percent of the frequent drug users had made opiates and 2% had grown cannabis. None of the frequent drug users reported making ecstasy or LSD.

Table 3.1a presents the frequency at which the different drug types were purchased by the frequent drug users in the past six months. In 2007, opiates were the drug types most frequently purchased, with 28% of the frequent drug users who purchased opiates saying they had purchased opiates daily or more often in the past six months. The high frequency of opiate purchase is likely to reflect the high level of opiate dependency among opiate users. Addiction to opiates makes it difficult for users to delay immediate use and consequently to hold stocks of the drug for any length of time. Approximately half of the frequent drug users who had purchased methamphetamine (57%), crystal methamphetamine (50%) or cannabis (55%) reported purchasing these drugs weekly or more often. LSD was the least frequently purchased illegal drug, with 77% of the frequent drug users who had purchased LSD saying they had purchased LSD four times or less in the previous six months. Similarly, 43% of the frequent drug users who had purchased ecstasy (MDMA) reported purchasing ecstasy four times or less in the past six months. The low frequency of purchase of LSD

and ecstasy (MDMA) may reflect the fact that hallucinogens are often used less frequently. It may also be influenced by the fact that these drug types need to be smuggled into New Zealand across the international border and hence their supply is more irregular than domestically sourced drug types. There was no statistically significant difference with respect to the proportion of the frequent drug users who purchased any of these drug types weekly or more often in 2007 compared to 2006. Table 3.1b presents the frequency at which the frequent methamphetamine users purchased methamphetamine in the past six months for 2005, 2006 and 2007. A higher proportion of the frequent methamphetamine users had purchased methamphetamine weekly or more often in 2007 compared to 2006 (73% vs. 57%, p=0.0497) and in 2006 compared to 2005 (57% vs. 36%, p=0.0304). A higher proportion of the frequent methamphetamine users had purchased methamphetamine on a weekly or more often basis in 2007 compared to 2005 (73% vs. 36%, p<0.0001).

Table 3.1a: Frequency of purchase of different illegal drug types in the past six months, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Frequency of purchase	**Meth (n=112)**	**Meth (n=117)**	**Ice (n=69)**	**Ice (n=52)**	**Cannabis (n=202)**	**Cannabis (n=202)**	**LSD (n=88)**	**LSD (n=65)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=160)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=127)**	**Opiates (n=83)**	**Opiates (n=92)**
1-2 times	16%	16%	25%	19%	14%	13%	48%	52%	23%	22%	14%	8%
3-4 times	13%	9%	7%	15%	7%	6%	28%	25%	28%	21%	2%	10%
Monthly	6%	8%	6%	10%	11%	12%	11%	12%	21%	27%	13%	12%
Twice per month	13%	11%	9%	6%	10%	10%	11%	6%	19%	16%	6%	7%
Once per week	17%	23%	22%	27%	26%	27%	1%	5%	8%	12%	10%	12%
Twice/three times per week	22%	20%	17%	15%	16%	16%	0%	0%	1%	1%	18%	14%
Four/five times per week	5%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%	4%	10%
Once per day	5%	8%	4%	4%	8%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	24%	23%
More than once per day	2%	3%	6%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	5%

Table 3.1b: Frequency of purchase of methamphetamine by the frequent methamphetamine users in the past six months, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007
Frequency of purchase	**Meth (n=53)**	**Meth (n=87)**	**Meth (n=78)**
1-2 times	19%	13%	5%
3-4 times	19%	14%	5%
Monthly	15%	3%	8%
Twice per month	11%	13%	9%
Once per week	21%	21%	31%
Twice/three times per week	9%	23%	24%
Four/five times per week	0%	7%	5%
Once per day	4%	5%	10%
More than once per day	2%	2%	3%

4. Sellers of illegal drugs

Those frequent drug users who reported purchasing an illegal drug in the past six months were asked what types of people they had purchased the drug from in the past six months. The interviewer read a list of possible types of sellers to the frequent drug user. The frequent drugs users generally purchased illegal drugs from more than one type of seller. In 2007, 38% of those frequent drug users purchasing crystal methamphetamine (Ice) had done so from a gang member or gang associate (Table 4.1). In contrast, only 3% of the frequent drug users purchasing ecstasy had done so from a gang member or gang associate in the past six months. The greater involvement of gangs in the selling of methamphetamine appears to reflect the historical involvement of motorcycle gangs in the use and manufacture of methamphetamine, and the access gang members have to manufacturing techniques and chemical precursors through their criminal networks. Approximately six out of 10 of those frequent drug users who had purchased methamphetamine (65%) and crystal methamphetamine (69%) had done so from a 'drug dealer' in the past six months. In contrast, only 29% of the frequent drug users who had purchased LSD and ecstasy (MDMA) said they had purchased these drugs from a 'drug dealer'. Those who had purchased LSD (76%) and ecstasy (MDMA) (80%) were most

likely to report purchasing them from ‘friends’ in the past six months. The greater reliance on ‘friends’ as suppliers of these drug types suggests more personal drug distribution, and may reflect the fact that a lot of sales of these drug types occur within the dance party sub-culture.

Those purchasing methamphetamine were more likely to do so from ‘acquaintances’ in 2007 compared to 2006 (40% vs. 27%) and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0674). Those purchasing crystal methamphetamine were more likely to do so from a ‘family member’ in 2007 compared to 2006 (12% vs. 1%, p=0.0423). Those purchasing cannabis were less likely to do so from ‘friends’ in 2007 compared to 2006 (75% vs. 86%, p=0.0114). Those purchasing opiates were less likely to do so from ‘friends’ in 2007 compared to 2006 (60% vs. 75%) and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0519). Those purchasing opiates were more likely to do so from a ‘gang member or gang associate’ in 2007 compared to 2006 (14% vs. 6%) and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0834).

Table 4.1 Proportion of frequent drug users who purchased drug types from different types of people over the past six months, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Type of person	**Meth (n=108)**	**Meth (n=116)**	**Ice (n=69)**	**Ice (n=52)**	**Cannabis (n=202)**	**Cannabis (n=199)**	**LSD (n=87)**	**LSD (n=63)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=158)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=125)**	**Opiates (n=84)**	**Opiates (n=84)**
Drug dealers	67%	65%	63%	69%	50%	54%	25%	29%	25%	29%	55%	60%
Friends	61%	61%	58%	60%	86%	75%	78%	76%	82%	80%	75%	60%
Gang member/associate	30%	28%	25%	38%	14%	17%	2%	6%	3%	3%	6%	14%
Acquaintances	27%	40%	33%	46%	34%	40%	26%	21%	23%	26%	34%	37%
Workmates	7%	9%	7%	8%	11%	11%	2%	3%	3%	8%	2%	3%
Partner	5%	1%	0%	2%	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%	2%	6%	7%
Family member	5%	7%	1%	12%	14%	12%	1%	3%	1%	1%	4%	6%
Make it myself	4%	7%	3%	4%	6%	8%	0%	0%	1%	1%	10%	7%

5. Locations where illegal drugs were purchased

5.1 Recent purchase locations

Those frequent drug users who reported purchasing an illegal drug in the past six months were asked at what locations they typically purchased the drug in the past six months. The interviewer read a list of possible purchase locations to the frequent drug users. The frequent drug users had generally purchased illegal drugs from more than one location in the past six months. In 2007, 29% of the frequent drug users who had purchased cannabis in the past six months had done so from a 'tinny' house (Table 5.1). Nineteen percent of the frequent drug users who purchased ecstasy in the past six months said they had purchased it from a 'rave or dance party' and a further 17% said they had purchased ecstasy from a 'nightclub'. No frequent drug users reported purchasing any of the illegal drugs from a gym in the past six months. The frequent drug users had often purchased methamphetamine (51%) and crystal methamphetamine (52%) from an agreed public location.

A greater proportion of the frequent drug users had purchased methamphetamine from a 'rave or dance party' (6% vs. 0%, p=0.0144) and from 'private parties' (10% vs. 2%, p=0.0194) in 2007 compared to 2006. A higher proportion of frequent drug users had purchased cannabis from an 'agreed public location' in 2007 compared to 2006 (36% vs. 24%, p=0.0084). A higher proportion of frequent drug users had purchased LSD from the 'street' in 2007 compared to 2006 (10% vs. 0%, p=0.0042). A higher proportion of frequent drug users had purchased ecstasy from their 'home' in 2007 compared to 2006 (10% vs. 2%, p=0.0194). A greater proportion of the frequent drug users had purchased ecstasy from the 'street' in 2007 compared to 2006 (7% vs. 3%) and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0853). A greater proportion of the frequent drug users had purchased opiates from a 'friend's home' in 2007 compared to 2006 (55% vs. 40%) and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0665). A greater proportion of the frequent drug users had purchased opiates from the 'street' in 2007 compared to 2006 (19% vs. 10%) and this was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0874).

Table 5.1: Proportion of frequent drug users who typically purchased drug types from different locations over the past six months, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Location	**Meth (n=109)**	**Meth (n=115)**	**Ice (n=69)**	**Ice (n=52)**	**Cannabis (n=204)**	**Cannabis (n=195)**	**LSD (n=87)**	**LSD (n=61)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=157)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=124)**	**Opiates (n=83)**	**Opiates (n=89)**
Dealer's home	59%	47%	48%	65%	41%	42%	23%	21%	18%	17%	57%	55%
Agreed public location	41%	51%	42%	52%	24%	36%	11%	21%	15%	19%	27%	37%
Friend's home	39%	31%	39%	38%	66%	61%	59%	54%	62%	65%	55%	40%
Home	33%	39%	28%	42%	32%	39%	21%	30%	22%	35%	27%	31%
Acquaintances house	22%	20%	13%	27%	21%	23%	14%	15%	13%	13%	20%	20%
Street	16%	16%	16%	10%	15%	19%	0%	10%	3%	7%	10%	19%
Pubs/bars	10%	12%	7%	15%	8%	14%	3%	5%	11%	10%	6%	6%
'Tinny'/drug house	6%	6%	6%	15%	30%	29%	6%	0%	1%	1%	6%	6%
Work	6%	3%	9%	4%	9%	9%	3%	5%	8%	6%	0%	6%
Nightclubs	4%	4%	4%	6%	5%	5%	7%	5%	24%	23%	0%	0%
Private parties	2%	10%	7%	13%	10%	13%	8%	7%	14%	13%	1%	2%
Raves/dance parties	0%	6%	3%	6%	4%	6%	10%	8%	25%	17%	0%	0%
Gym	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Educational institute	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	4%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%

5.2 Purchasing illegal drugs from public or semi-public locations

The frequent drug users who had purchased an illegal drug in the past six months were asked if they had purchased the drug from a number of public or semi public locations including a 'tinny' house, 'street drug market' or public area such as a park. In 2007, many of the frequent drug users had purchased methamphetamine (32%), crystal methamphetamine (31%) and cannabis (35%) from public areas like parks in the past six months. Twenty-two percent of the frequent drug users had purchased methamphetamine from a 'street drug market' in the past six months. Forty-three percent of the frequent drug users had purchased cannabis from a 'tinny' house in the past six months. LSD and ecstasy were rarely purchased from a 'tinny' house or a street drug market.

Table 5.2: Proportion of frequent drug users who had purchased drug types from public or semi-public locations in the past six months, 2007

Location	Meth (n=114)	Ice (n=52)	Cannabis (n=197)	LSD (n=61)	Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=125)	Opiates (n=90)
Public area (e.g. park)	32%	31%	35%	13%	18%	39%
Street drug market	22%	12%	13%	2%	2%	13%
'Tinny' house	15%	15%	43%	3%	2%	3%

6. Search time for illegal drugs

The frequent drug users who had purchased an illegal drug in the past six months were asked how long it would usually take them to purchase the drug. In 2007, 45% of the frequent drug users said they could purchase cannabis in less than 20 minutes (Table 6.1a). The ease of availability of cannabis reflects the size and extent of the market for cannabis in New Zealand. Forty-two percent of the frequent drug users said they could purchase opiates in less than 20 minutes. The efficiency of the opiate market is likely to reflect the personalised nature of the market and the high proportion of dependent users who require daily purchase of opiates. Over half of the frequent drug users reported they could purchase methamphetamine (65%) or crystal methamphetamine (51%) in one hour or less time. In contrast, 43% of those who had purchased ecstasy and 35% of those who had purchased LSD reported they would require days or weeks to purchase these drug types. The relatively greater difficulties of obtaining ecstasy and LSD may be due to the fact that these drug types must be imported from overseas and consequently can be subject to irregular supply. There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of the frequent drug users who could purchase these drug types in less than 20 minutes in 2007 compared to 2006. There was also no statistically significant difference in the proportion of the frequent methamphetamine users who could purchase methamphetamine in less than 20 minutes in 2007 compared to 2006 and 2005 (Table 6.1b).

Table 6.1a: Time taken to purchase different drug types in the past six months, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Time period	**Meth (n=112)**	**Meth (n=116)**	**Ice (n=66)**	**Ice (n=49)**	**Cannabis (n=203)**	**Cannabis (n=202)**	**LSD (n=86)**	**LSD (n=63)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=159)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=126)**	**Opiates (n=82)**	**Opiates (n=91)**
Months	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Weeks	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	8%	8%	6%	6%	1%	2%
Days	5%	2%	9%	12%	3%	4%	37%	27%	35%	37%	2%	4%
About a day	12%	11%	6%	16%	8%	7%	24%	22%	23%	18%	9%	7%
Hours	27%	21%	26%	20%	14%	18%	10%	16%	15%	16%	12%	20%
1 hour	36%	37%	33%	35%	30%	27%	12%	17%	12%	13%	34%	23%
Less than 20 minutes	21%	28%	24%	16%	45%	45%	8%	8%	9%	10%	41%	42%

Table 6.1b: Time taken to purchase methamphetamine by frequent methamphetamine users in the past six months, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007
Time period	**Meth (n=52)**	**Meth (n=87)**	**Meth (n=78)**
Months	0%	0%	0%
Weeks	8%	0%	1%
Days	0%	5%	1%
About a day	17%	10%	10%
Hours	17%	26%	19%
1 hour	40%	33%	40%
Less than 20 minutes	17%	25%	28%

7. Reliability of supply of illegal drugs

The frequent drug users who had purchased an illegal drug in the past six months were asked how reliable the supply of the drug had been in the previous six months. In 2007, 58% of the frequent drug users considered cannabis to have been 'always available' over the past six months (Table 7.1). Fifty-one percent of the frequent drug users considered opiates to have been 'always available'. Many of the frequent drug users also considered methamphetamine (48%) and crystal methamphetamine (Ice) (41%) to have been 'always available'. In contrast, LSD was considered to be less reliable in supply, with 47% of those who had purchased LSD in the past six months saying it was only 'sometimes' or 'hardly ever' available. Thirty-five percent of the frequent drug users considered crystal methamphetamine to have been only 'sometimes' or 'hardly ever' available during the past six months. The average scores for the question confirmed that overall cannabis was considered to have had the most reliable supply over the past six months (4.5), followed by opiates (4.4) and methamphetamine (4.3). Crystal methamphetamine (4.0) and LSD (3.6) were considered the least reliable in supply over the past six months. There was no statistically significant change in the reliability of supply of any of the drug types in 2007 compared to 2006.

Table 7.1: Reliability of supply of different drug types in the past six months, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Level of reliability	**Meth (n=112)**	**Meth (n=116)**	**Ice (n=69)**	**Ice (n=49)**	**Cannabis (n=204)**	**Cannabis (n=202)**	**LSD (n=87)**	**LSD (n=63)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=159)**	**Ecstasy (MDMA) (n=127)**	**Opiates (n=81)**	**Opiates (n=89)**
Always some available [5]	41%	48%	36%	41%	57%	58%	18%	16%	28%	34%	44%	51%
Mostly some available [4]	50%	40%	41%	24%	38%	40%	30%	37%	48%	43%	46%	37%
Sometimes some available [3]	7%	10%	16%	29%	3%	2%	44%	34%	21%	21%	9%	10%
Hardly ever some available [2]	2%	2%	7%	6%	1%	0%	7%	13%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Never any available [1]	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Average score (1=never available – 5=always available)	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.5	4.6	3.6	3.6	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.4

8. Perceptions of the risk of purchasing illegal drugs

The frequent drug users were asked to rate the risk of purchasing different drug types on a scale of 1=no risk to 5=extreme risk. The interviewer explained that 'risk' referred to all types of risk involved in buying illegal drugs including legal, personal safety and loss of reputation etc. In 2007, the drug types which the frequent drug users most often rated as an extreme risk to purchase were crystal methamphetamine (36%), methamphetamine (34%) and opiates (27%) (Table 8.1a-c). The drug types which the frequent drug users most often rated as no risk to purchase were BZP party pills (79%) and cannabis (32%). Overall, cannabis was considered the least risky illegal drug to purchase (2.0), followed by ecstasy (MDMA) (2.8) and LSD (2.0). Crystal methamphetamine (3.8) and methamphetamine (3.7) were considered the most risky drugs to purchase, followed by opiates (3.5). The frequent drug users considered methamphetamine to be less risky to purchase in 2007 compared to 2006 (3.7 vs. 3.8, p=0.0302). The frequent drug users also considered crystal methamphetamine to be less risky to purchase in 2007 compared to 2006 (3.8 vs. 3.9, p=0.0138).

Table 8.1a: Perceptions of the risk of purchasing different drug types, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2006	2006	2007
Drug type	**Meth (n=314)**	**Meth (n=311)**	**Ice (n=310)**	**Ice (n=300)**	**Amp-hetamine (n=310)**	**Amp-hetamine (n=305)**	**Ecstasy (n=312)**	**Ecstasy (n=307)**
Extreme risk = 5	31%	34%	33%	36%	22%	18%	10%	10%
Great risk = 4	37%	27%	36%	31%	29%	30%	19%	13%
Moderate risk = 3	21%	21%	22%	17%	32%	27%	37%	33%
Slight risk = 2	8%	13%	5%	10%	12%	18%	25%	32%
No risk =1	4%	5%	4%	6%	5%	7%	10%	12%
Average score of perceived risk of purchase	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.5	3.3	2.9	2.8

Table 8.1b: Perceptions of the risk of purchasing different drug types, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2006	2006	2007
Drug type	**Cannabis (n=317)**	**Cannabis (n=321)**	**LSD (n=311)**	**LSD (n=303)**	**Opiates (n=289)**	**Opiates (n=305)**	**BZP (n=309)**	**BZP (n=307)**
Extreme risk = 5	6%	4%	11%	13%	24%	27%	1%	2%
Great risk = 4	3%	4%	19%	14%	28%	27%	3%	3%
Moderate risk = 3	15%	15%	30%	31%	27%	23%	3%	4%
Slight risk = 2	46%	44%	29%	30%	13%	19%	11%	12%
No risk =1	30%	32%	11%	12%	8%	6%	82%	79%
Average score of perceived risk of purchase	2.1	2.0	2.9	2.9	3.5	3.5	1.3	1.4

Table 8.1c: Perceptions of the risk of purchasing different drug types, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007
Drug type	**GHB (n=260)**	**GHB (n=235)**	**Ketamine (n=248)**	**Ketamine (n=227)**
Extreme risk = 5	21%	17%	20%	16%
Great risk = 4	23%	24%	24%	28%
Moderate risk = 3	28%	25%	27%	23%
Slight risk = 2	22%	25%	20%	24%
No risk =1	6%	9%	10%	8%
Average score of perceived risk of purchase	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2

9. Criminal behaviour of the frequent drug users

9.1 Property crime

The frequent drug users were asked how often they had committed a property crime in the past month. In 2007, 22% of the frequent injecting drug users and 22% of the frequent methamphetamine users reported they had committed a property crime in the past month (Table 9.1). The frequent injecting drug users were more likely to have committed a property crime in the past month than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users (22% vs. 9%, p=0.0225) in 2007. The frequent methamphetamine users were also more likely to have committed a property crime in the past month than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users (22% vs. 9%, p=0.0225) in 2007. There was no statistically significant change in the proportion of the frequent injecting drug users or frequent ecstasy users who had committed a property crime in 2007 compared to 2006. The percentage of frequent methamphetamine users who had committed a property crime increased in 2007 compared to 2005 (22% vs. 9%) and this difference was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0683).

Table 9.1: Frequency of committing a property crime during the past month by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Frequency of property crime	**Meth users (n=75)**	**Meth users (n=113)**	**Meth users (n=109)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=111)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=105)**	**IDU (n=91)**	**IDU (n=108)**	**Combined modules (n=315)**	**Combined modules (n=322)**
No property crime	91%	85%	78%	95%	91%	73%	78%	85%	82%
Less than once per week	9%	9%	14%	3%	9%	21%	13%	10%	12%
Once per week	0%	0%	6%	1%	0%	1%	6%	1%	4%
More than once per week (not daily)	0%	3%	3%	0%	0%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Daily	0%	4%	0%	2%	0%	2%	1%	3%	1%

9.2 Drug dealing

The frequent drug users were asked how often they had sold illegal drugs in the past month. In 2007, 44% of the frequent methamphetamine users, 26% of the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users and 41% of the frequent injecting drug users had sold illegal drugs in the past month (Table 9.2). These findings support the understanding that heavy drug users often use drug dealing to financially support their heavy drug use (see Wilkins and Sweetsur, 2006a, Wilkins and Sweetsur, 2007). The frequent methamphetamine users (10% vs. 1%, p=0.0104) and frequent injecting drug users (11% vs. 1%, p=0.0081) were more likely to have sold illegal drugs on a daily basis in the past month than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users in 2007. There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of the frequent injecting drug users or frequent ecstasy users who had sold drugs on a daily basis in 2007 compared to 2006. There was also no statistically significant difference in the proportion of the frequent methamphetamine users who had sold drugs on a daily basis in 2007 compared to 2006 and 2005 (p=0.2154).

Table 9.2: Frequency of selling illegal drugs during the past month by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Frequency of selling illegal drugs	**Meth users (n=74)**	**Meth users (n=112)**	**Meth users (n=108)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=111)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=103)**	**IDU (n=92)**	**IDU (n=108)**	**Combined modules (n=315)**	**Combined modules (n=319)**
No drug dealing	55%	64%	56%	62%	74%	53%	59%	60%	63%
Less than once per week	16%	11%	21%	21%	19%	9%	6%	14%	15%
Once per week	12%	3%	6%	9%	3%	13%	16%	8%	8%
More than once per week (not daily)	11%	9%	7%	6%	3%	9%	8%	8%	6%
Daily	5%	13%	10%	2%	1%	16%	11%	10%	8%

9.3 Fraud

The frequent drug users were asked how often they had committed fraud in the past month. In 2007, 7% of the frequent methamphetamine users, 4% of the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users and 6% of the frequent injecting drug users had committed a fraud in the past month (Table 9.3). There was no statistically significant difference in the level of fraud between the three groups of frequent drug users in 2007. There was no statistically significant difference in the level of fraud among the frequent injecting drug users or

frequent ecstasy users in 2007 compared to 2006. There was also no statistically significant difference in the level of fraud among the frequent methamphetamine users in 2007 compared to 2006 and 2005 (p=1).

Table 9.3: Frequency of committing fraud during the past month by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Frequency of fraud	**Meth users (n=113)**	**Meth users (n=113)**	**Meth users (n=110)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=111)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=105)**	**IDU (n=92)**	**IDU (n=108)**	**Combined modules (n=316)**	**Combined modules (n=323)**
No fraud	92%	92%	93%	99%	96%	91%	94%	94%	94%
Less than once per week	4%	7%	5%	1%	2%	9%	2%	5%	3%
Once per week	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%	2%
More than once per week (not daily)	3%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Daily	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

9.4 Crime involving violence

The frequent drug users were asked how often they had committed a crime involving violence in the past month. In 2007, 11% of the frequent methamphetamine users, 2% of the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users and 6% of the frequent injecting drug users had committed a crime involving violence in the past month (Table 9.4). The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have committed a crime involving violence in the past month than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users in 2007 (11% vs. 2%, p=0.0315). There was no statistically significant change in the proportion of the frequent injecting drug users or frequent ecstasy users who had committed a violent crime in 2007 compared to 2006. The percentage of frequent methamphetamine users who had committed a violent crime increased in 2007 compared to 2005 (11% vs. 3%) and this difference was close to being statistically significant (p=0.0774).

Table 9.4: Frequency of committing a crime involving violence during the past month by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Frequency of crime involving violence	**Meth users (n=75)**	**Meth users (n=114)**	**Meth users (n=109)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=111)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=105)**	**IDU (n=92)**	**IDU (n=108)**	**Combined modules (n=317)**	**Combined modules (n=322)**
No violent crime	97%	89%	89%	98%	98%	95%	94%	94%	93%
Less than once per week	3%	9%	8%	2%	2%	4%	6%	5%	6%
Once per week	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
More than once per week (not daily)	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Daily	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

10. Arrest, conviction and prison history of the frequent drug users

10.1 Arrest, conviction and prison history

The frequent drug users were asked a series of questions about their arrest, conviction and prison history. The results are summarised in Table 10.1. In 2007, the frequent methamphetamine users (79% vs. 36%, $p<0.0001$) and frequent injecting drug users (86% vs. 36%, $p<0.0001$) were more likely to have been ever arrested than the frequent ecstasy users. The frequent methamphetamine users (61% vs. 16%, $p<0.0001$) and frequent injecting drug users (74% vs. 16%, $p<0.0001$) were also more likely to have been ever convicted of a crime than the frequent ecstasy users in 2007. The frequent injecting drug users were also more likely than the frequent ecstasy users (50% vs. 4%, $p=0.0037$) and the frequent methamphetamine users (50% vs. 28%, $p=0.0098$) to have ever been imprisoned in 2007. In 2007, 41% of the frequent drug users who had ever been in prison had injected drugs while in prison, including 48% of the frequent injecting drug users and 30% of the frequent methamphetamine users. The high incidence of injecting drug use while in prison indicates appropriate public health measures are required to prevent the transmission of blood borne viruses, such HIV and Hepatitis B and C, among inmates, their sexual partners and the wider community. The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have been ever convicted of a crime in 2007 compared to 2006 (61% vs. 58%, $p=0.0069$). The frequent methamphetamine users were also more likely to have been ever convicted of a crime in 2007 compared to 2005 (61% vs. 41%) and this was close to being statistically significant ($p=0.057$).

Table 10.1: Arrest, conviction and prison history by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
History	**Meth users (n=75)**	**Meth users (n=114)**	**Meth users (n=109)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=111)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=105)**	**IDU (n=92)**	**IDU (n=108)**	**Combined modules (n=317)**	**Combined modules (n=322)**
Ever arrested	68%	71%	79%	39%	36%	84%	86%	63%	67%
Ever convicted of crime	41%	58%	61%	19%	16%	67%	74%	47%	51%
Ever been in prison	21%	31%	28%	2%	4%	38%	50%	23%	27%
Prison in the last 12 months	7%	12%	6%	2%	0%	9%	7%	8%	5%

10.2 Arrest in the past 12 months

The frequent drug users were asked how many times they had been arrested in the past 12 months. The results are presented in Table 10.2. In 2007, the frequent methamphetamine users (51% vs. 16%, p<0.0001) and frequent injecting drug users (39% vs. 16%, p=0.0004) were more likely to have been arrested in the past 12 months than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users. The frequent methamphetamine users had been arrested a mean number of 3.2 times in the past 12 months in 2007 (median 2, range 1-26 times). The frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users had been arrested a mean number of 1.9 times in the past 12 months in 2007 (median 1, range 1-10 times). The frequent injecting drug users had been arrested a mean number of 2.6 times in the past 12 months in 2007 (median 2, range 1-15 times). There was no statistically significant change in the proportion of the frequent injecting drug users or frequent ecstasy users who had been arrested in the past year in 2007 compared to 2006. The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely to have been arrested in 2007 compared to 2005 (51% vs. 31%, p=0.0285).

Table 10.2: Number of times arrested in the past 12 months by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Number of arrests	**Meth users (n=74)**	**Meth users (n=114)**	**Meth users (n=109)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=111)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=105)**	**IDU (n=91)**	**IDU (n=108)**	**Combined modules (n=316)**	**Combined modules (n=322)**
None	69%	58%	49%	85%	84%	57%	61%	67%	64%
1	15%	18%	16%	11%	13%	27%	15%	18%	15%
2	8%	11%	13%	3%	0%	11%	9%	8%	7%
3	0%	6%	11%	1%	1%	1%	8%	3%	7%
4	1%	3%	4%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%
5+	7%	4%	7%	1%	2%	2%	6%	3%	5%
Mean number of arrests	2.5	2.9	3.2	1.8	1.9	1.6	2.6	2.2	2.8

10.3 Types of criminal offences

Those frequent drug users who had been arrested in the past 12 months were asked what types of criminal offences they had been arrested for during this time. The interviewer read a list of possible offence types. The results are presented in Table 10.3. In 2007, 36% of the frequent drug users had been arrested for a property crime and 20% had been arrested for a violent crime in the past 12 months. Forty percent of the frequent methamphetamine users had been arrested for a property crime, and 27% had been arrested for a violent crime in the past year in 2007.

Table 10.3: Offence types arrested for in the past 12 months by frequent drug user group, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Offence type	**Meth users (n=48)**	**Meth users (n=55)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=17)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=17)**	**IDU (n=39)**	**IDU (n=41)**	**Combined modules (n=104)**	**Combined modules (n=113)**
Use/possession of drugs	31%	25%	12%	12%	18%	22%	23%	22%
Dealing drugs	4%	4%	0%	0%	5%	0%	4%	2%
Property crime	27%	40%	24%	24%	44%	37%	33%	36%
Fraud	13%	4%	6%	0%	10%	7%	11%	4%
Violent crime	21%	27%	6%	12%	15%	15%	16%	20%
Alcohol and driving	6%	6%	0%	0%	3%	2%	4%	4%
Other drugs and driving	10%	11%	6%	18%	5%	7%	8%	11%
Other driving offence	8%	13%	6%	0%	13%	12%	10%	11%
Other offence	21%	29%	65%	47%	18%	41%	27%	36%

11. Perceptions of drug enforcement

The frequent drug users were asked if they had noticed any change in police activity towards drug users in the past six months. In 2007, 43% of the frequent drug users had not noticed any police activity towards drug users in the previous six months. The frequent methamphetamine users (74% vs. 48%, p=0.0039) and frequent injecting drug users (69% vs. 48%, p=0.0384) were more likely to have noticed police activity toward drug users in the past six months than the frequent ecstasy users in 2007. Of those frequent drug users who had noticed police activity toward drug users in the past six months, 57% had noticed 'more' activity, 37% 'about the same' level of activity and 7% 'less' activity in 2007 (Table 11.1). There was no statistically significant difference between the three groups of frequent drug users with respect to the average change in police activity, with all three groups observing 'more' police activity toward drug users in the past six months in 2007 (p=0.2832).There was statistically significant change in the average score of perception of police activity among the frequent injecting drug users and frequent ecstasy users in 2007 compared to 2006. There was also no statistically significant change in the average score of perception of police activity among the frequent methamphetamine users in 2007 compared to 2006 and 2005.

Table 11.1: Change in police activity in relation to drug users in the past six months by frequent drug user group, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Change in police activity	**Meth users (n=47)**	**Meth users (n=77)**	**Meth users (n=80)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=42)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=50)**	**IDU (n=55)**	**IDU (n=69)**	**Combined modules (n=174)**	**Combined modules (n=199)**
Less activity [1]	2%	8%	5%	5%	8%	5%	7%	6%	7%
Stable [2]	36%	21%	31%	45%	40%	31%	41%	30%	37%
More activity [3]	62%	71%	64%	50%	52%	64%	52%	64%	57%
Average score (1=less activity – 3=more activity)	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.5
Overall recent change	More police activity	More police activity	More police activity	More police activity	More police activity	More police activity	More police activity	More police activity	More police activity

The frequent drug users were also asked if police activity had made it more difficult for them to obtain drugs in the past six months. In 2007, 18% of the frequent drug users indicated that police activity had made it 'more' difficult for them to obtain drugs in the preceding six months (Table 11.2). The frequent methamphetamine users were more likely than the frequent injecting drug users to say that police activity had made it 'harder' for them to get drugs in the past six months in 2007 (27% vs. 10%, p=0.0051).

Table 11.2: Police activity made it more difficult to obtain drugs in the previous six months by frequent drug user group, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
More difficult to get drugs	**Meth users (n=112)**	**Meth users (n=110)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=106)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=100)**	**IDU (n=92)**	**IDU (n=107)**	**Combined modules (n=310)**	**Combined modules (n=317)**
No	77%	73%	88%	84%	80%	90%	82%	82%
Yes	23%	27%	12%	16%	20%	10%	18%	18%

The frequent drug users were asked whether more of their friends had been arrested in the past six months. In 2007, 46% of the frequent drug users had no friends arrested during the past six months. The frequent methamphetamine users (65% vs. 39%, p=0.0009) and the frequent injecting drug users (58% vs. 39%, p=0.0238) were more likely to have had friends arrested in the past six months than the frequent ecstasy (MDMA) users. In 2007, of those frequent drug users who had friends arrested in the past six months, 48% said 'more' of their friends had been arrested, 46% said 'about the same' number had been arrested and 5% said 'less' of their friends had been arrested, in the past six months. There was no statistically significant difference between the three groups of frequent drug users with respect to the average score of the change in the number of friends arrested, with all three groups saying 'more/stable' numbers of their friends had been arrested in the past six months (p=0.3493) (Table 11.3).

Table 11.3: Number of friends arrested in the past six months by frequent drug user groups, 2006-2007

	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Number arrested	**Meth users (n=72)**	**Meth users (n=70)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=25)**	**Ecstasy users (MDMA) (n=41)**	**IDU (n=48)**	**IDU (n=59)**	**Combined modules (n=145)**	**Combined modules (n=170)**
Less [1]	1%	6%	12%	2%	2%	7%	3%	5%
Stable [2]	40%	40%	44%	63%	52%	42%	45%	46%
More [3]	58%	54%	44%	34%	46%	51%	52%	48%
Average score (1=less activity – 3=more activity)	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.4
Overall recent change	More/ stable	More/ stable	Stable/ more	Stable/ more	More/ stable	More/ stable	More/ stable	More/ Stable

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