

# 1 Drug use among young people aged 12-18

## 1.1 Prevalence, trends and patterns of use

### 1.1.1 The nationwide study: Drug affinity of young people

The study „Drug affinity of young people in the Federal Republic of Germany“ is an ongoing representative survey on illegal and legal drug use of young persons and young adults (see 2.1.2). The current data are from 2001 and show results for the use of different illicit drugs for the age groups 12-14 and 15-17 (table 46).

**Table 1: Prevalence of illegal drugs under young people 12-18 years old**

Drug	12-month- prevalence		lifetime- prevalence	
	12-14 years	15-17 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
Cannabis	1,5%	16,7%	2,9%	22,7%
Amphetamine	0,3%	0,9%	0,3%	1,1%
Ecstasy	0,1%	0,9%	0,3%	1,7%
Cocaine	0,1%	0,1%	0,3%	0,2%
Heroin	-	-	-	0,2%
LSD	-	0,4%	0,2%	0,6%
Total n	647	644	647	644

Source: Drug Affinity Study 2001 (BzGA 2002, personal communication)

Cannabis is the most common drug used by young people. Compared both investigated age groups, the use of the age group 15-17 is higher. While 2,9% 12-14 years old people used cannabis at least once through out the last year, these were already 22,7% in the age group 15-17. The last month before the interview took place, 1,5% of the 12-14 years old and 16,7% of the 15-17 years old people used cannabis. Amphetamine and ecstasy are rarely used within the age group 12-14. Rates for the 15-17 years old are a bit higher (Amphetamine: lifetime-prevalence: 1,1%, 12-month-prevalence: 0,9%, Ecstasy: lifetime-prevalence: 1,7%, 12-month-prevalence: 0,9%). Cocaine seems to play no or only a marginal role within these age groups. The calculated rates for amphetamines, ecstasy, cocaine, heroin and LSD have to be interpreted carefully due to the few numbers of cases. For this substances it is not possible to make a reliable statement.

### 1.1.2 Studies on regional and local level

#### EDSP

The „Early Developmental Stages of Psychopathology-Study“ (EDSP), is an epidemiological follow-up study, in which a representative sample of adolescents and young adults were investigated prospectively concerning the development of substance use and disorders. The

sample was drawn randomly from the government registries of residents in metropolitan Munich and includes 14 to 24 years old adolescents and young adults. Diagnostic assessments were based on the Munich version of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (M-CIDI). In the frame of this investigation the association between parental alcohol use disorders and children's substance use was evaluated.

For the age group 14 to 17 it was discovered that adolescents with parental alcohol use show over all investigated categories a tendency to follow higher categories of use. Taking age and gender into consideration, the odds ratio was 1,5 (95% CI<sup>1</sup>: 1,1-2,1). This means that this adolescents have a 50% higher risk for practising harmful and regular alcohol use. A similar tendency appears for the use of illegal drugs: Adolescents with parental alcohol use compared to adolescents without parental alcohol use have twice the risk (Lieb et al.2001).

The „Early Developmental Stages of Psychopathology-Study“ includes also trend data about use, abuse and dependence of alcohol and illegal drugs. In the following some main results were introduced for the age group 14-17 (Lieb et al. 2001).

Use: At baseline (1995) approximately a third of the 14 to 17 years old drank alcohol ever in their live (see table 2). Higher categories of use were reported rarely at this time. During the following two years over all substances a considerable number of people consumed drugs. More than 60% of the young people which didn't consume yet at baseline or very seldom, now report the first time about an occasional alcohol use. To this time nearly every tenth person reports about a regular (7,6%) or harmful alcohol use (8,8%) for the first time. 14% of the non-users at baseline became occasional drug users (one to four times). Approximately a fourth (23,8%) of the persons, classified at baseline as non-users or occasional users now report the first time from a regular use of illegal drugs.

DSM-IV-abuse and dependence: At baseline 5,1% of the adolescents fulfilled the criteria for alcohol abuse and 1,8% the criteria for alcohol dependence. With 2,1% disorders caused by illegal drugs are reported rarely. Two years later a considerable number of persons report the first time about alcohol abuse (16,8%), alcohol dependence (5,4%) and abuse or dependence of illegal drugs (8,3%) (table 47).

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<sup>1</sup> Confidence Interval: with a probability of 95% the real value lies within the determined interval

**Table 2: Use of psychotrop substances under young people (EDSP-Study)**

	Lifetime-prevalence Age:14-17	Follow-up incidence among baseline non- users
<b>Alcohol</b>		
-never use/rare use	67,6%	
-occasional use	28,7%	61,7
-regular use	1,9%	7,6%
-harmful use	1,8%	8,8%
<b>Illegal drugs</b>		
-never use	81,6%	
-occasional use (1-4-times)	11,0%	14,2%
-regular use (5+)	7,5%	23,8%
<b>Abuse/dependence of alcohol*</b>		
-no abuse/dependence	93,2%	
-abuse - yes	5,1%	16,8%
-dependence - yes	1,8%	5,4%
<b>Abuse/dependence of illegal drugs*</b>		
-no abuse/dependence	97,9%	
Abuse or dependence	2,1%	8,3%

source: EDSP-Study: Early Developmental Stages of Psychopathologie-Study (N=917)

*comment:* % = weighted percentages, weighting for age, sex and region. This procedure results in an adjustment to the underlying population

\*according DSM-IV-criteria

## EUREGIO

The study EUREGIO investigated in autumn 2001 17.000 pupils in class 8 (age: approximately 14 years) and 10 (age approximately 16 years) of all higher schools in the Aachen area. They were asked about risk behaviour and drug use. At the same time and with an identic, language adapted questionnaire the investigation took place in the border area of Belgium and the Netherlands.

29% of the young people reported that they have been drunken or tipsy during the last four weeks. In addition 9% of the sample are drinking regularly more than 20 glasses alcohol per week. The last four weeks before the interview took place 13% smoked cannabis. The same time approximately 1,9% adolescents consumed XTC and 3,1% consumed even hard drugs (heroin, cocaine, speed or LSD) (table 48).

As expected risk behavior is more common in the higher classes. Compared to the younger pupils they show higher percentages for different stimulants. 20% of the young people in class 8 reported that they have been drunken or tipsy, so 39% of the pupils in class 10. Cannabis use in class 8 is with 10% lower than in class 10 with 17%.

**Table 3: Use of stimulants and risk behaviour of pupils in all higher schools in the Aachen area**

Risk behaviour indicator	Class 8	Class 10	Total
More than 20 glasses of alcohol per week	5%	15%	9%
Drunken or very tipsy in the last 4 weeks	20%	39%	29%
Cannabis use in the last 4 weeks	10%	17%	13%
XTC use in the last 4 weeks	2%	2%	2%
In the last 4 weeks: use of related drugs	3%	3%	3%

Source: Investigation of young people 2001, health center Aachen area

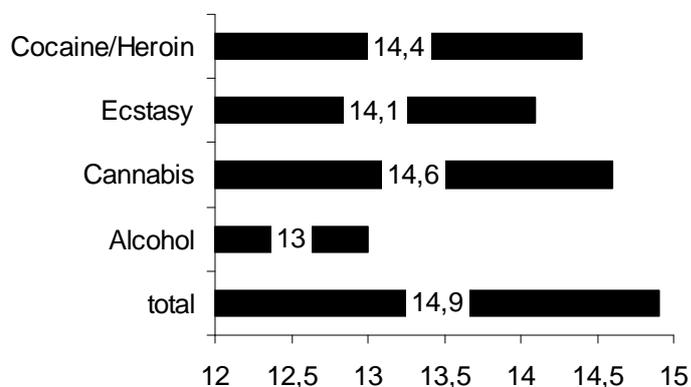
In class 10 there are clear differences between boys and girls: more boys than girls consume the different substances. 6% of the girls and 23 % of the boys reported to drink 20 or more glasses of alcohol per week. Furthermore cannabis, ecstasy and related drugs were used more by boy than girls.

### MODRUS I and II

In the frame of Modrus I and II study in Saxony-Anhalt 2500 (1998) and 3087 (2000) children and adolescents of all classes 4 (age approximately 9 years) were asked about their meaning and drug behaviour, further elder pupils in class 5-12 (age: 10-17) were asked the same way. The written questioning took place in 37 schools countrywide. A follow-up study is planned for 2003.

As figure 28 shows, the onset of drug use starts relatively early. Apart from the answers to cannabis the standard deviation of the means were around two years, so one can also speak additionally from a clear scattering downwards. Besides it is surprising that the data for cannabis, ecstasy and cocaine/heroin are close to each other in respect of the range of age. This fact is associated with a censored sample; persons over 17 years are not included (Figure 28).

**Figure 1 Age of onset of use of drugs**



Source: Fokus 2001

### 1.1.3 Perception of risk, use and image of certain drugs

The questions what substance is expected to be a drug and what risk is attributed to the drug were also investigated in the study Modrus I and II. Table 3 shows the comparison of the data from 1998 and 2000.

**Table 4 Drug-understanding and assessment of danger 1998 and 2000**

Substance	1998		2000	
	Is a drug	Is dangerous	Is a drug	Is dangerous
Heroin	93%	89%	94%	89%
Cocaine	93%	79%	94%	83%
Ecstasy	89%	74%	92%	84%
Cannabis	87%	54%	81%	50%
Nicotin	71%	25%	68%	24%
LSD	67%	75%	78%	81%
Alcohol	64%	28%	61%	26%
Medicament	31%	12%	28%	11%

source: FOKUS 2000

There are no major changes from the first to the second investigation. Essentially the character and the danger of the drug is estimated close to reality at both investigations. However results for alcohol and medicaments seems to underestimate the seriousness of the drug. Ecstasy, cocaine and LSD are valued more serious at the second investigation. The knowledge of cannabis as a drug and being dangerous is present in the mind of the pupils. In difference to other named substances cannabis is valued 2000 less serious compared to 1998.

### 1.1.4 Trends of recent years

In the frame of the nationwide „controlled sampling of the use of psychoactive substances“ in Hamburg a nested investigation was carried out (see 2.2.8). Within this sample one can observe trends for the 90ties on local level for the age group 15 - 17, because analyses on regional level took place already in the year 1990.

While at the beginning of the 90ties no one of the adolescents has smoked LSD within the last 12 month, these were 1,4% in 1997. Moreover this investigation shows that amphetamines apart from cannabis are meanwhile the most circulated drugs under young people. With 3,8% the 12-month-prevalence of ecstasy is also high within this age group. Ecstasy was not listed in the questionnaire in 1990 due to the little relevance this substance had at this time. Trends of the last years are therefore not available (table 50).

**Table 5: Use of illegal drugs in Hamburg (15-17 years)**

15-17 years	1990		1997	
	Lifetime	12-month	Lifetime	12-month
Cannabis	9,2%	8,4%	21,2%	17,9%
Amphetamine	0,0%	0,0%	5,2%	3,8%
LSD	0,0%	0,0%	1,4%	0,9%
Opiates <sup>1</sup>	0,8%	0,8%	2,4%	1,9%
cocaine / crack <sup>2</sup>	0,8%	0,8%	1,4%	1,4%

source: controlled sample 1997 (Kraus et al. 1998)

<sup>1</sup> Heroin, Methadon or other opiates

<sup>2</sup> cocaine 1990 without crack

The studies Modrus I and II in Saxony Anhalt (see 2.1.2) investigated also the use of legal and illegal drugs under pupils and adults (parents, teachers). The investigation took place countrywide as a written interview in 1998 and 2000. The following table shows the development of types of consumers, separated in the sample. The most visible increase relates to cannabis (table 51).

**Table 6: Percentages of types of consumers in 1998 and 2000**

Types	1998	2000
Cannabis	7,5%	13,6%
Ecstasy	1,8%	2,5%
Cocaine/Heroin	1,4%	1,5%
Illegal drugs <sup>1</sup>	8,8%	14,3%

Sample size 1998: n=4.045; 2000: n=4.091

Respondents from MODRUS I/ 1998 only

<sup>1</sup> Cannabis or Ecstasy or cocaine/heroin

### 1.1.5 New alternative information sources

In the field of drug help as well as in treatment, counselling and prevention centres more and more target group oriented electronic media are used. Chapter 9.4.5 presents different internet-projects, which approach to and inform specially young people.

## 1.2 Health and social consequences

### 1.2.1 Deaths, overdose, emergencies and driving accidents

Current figures for drug-related-deaths under young people were available from the general mortality register (StBA) for the year 2000. The figures are clustered to age groups 15 and 15-19. The age group under 15 contains three female and two male young people which died from the use of illegal drugs. The age group 15-19 includes 79 cases, among them 50 male drug-related deaths. The cause of death according ICD-10 is spread widely over the relevant diagnosis. The age group 15-19 years old shows an accumulation of drug-related deaths for the diagnosis addiction (28 cases) and accidental poisoning (19 cases). There are no informations available about the percentages of drug addicted young people which are somehow involved in accidents.

## 1.2.2 Demand for treatment

For the year 2001 treatment demand data are available from 368 out-patient drug help centres (German Drug Help Statistics). Among the 14 years old young people, contacting drug help facilities cause of problems with psychotropic substances, cannabis (70,1%) plays a far bigger role. In the year 2001 11,6% have been in treatment because of alcohol problems; Opiates and hallucinogens have been on the third place . The situation for the 15-17 years old, taking up an out-patient treatment is similar: 60,9% came due to problems with cannabis, 12,7% due to alcohol problems and around 11% in each case due to problems in the context of opiates, hallucinogens respectively. The whole number of those, taking up a drug-related treatment is with 1302 persons for the age group 15-17 far bigger as for the age groups 14 and below 14 years (table 52).

**Table 7 Main diagnosis for out-patients**

Main diagnosis	Age	
	-14 years	15-17 years
Alcohol	11,6%	12,7%
Opiate	6,7%	10,9%
Cannabis	70,1%	60,9%
Cocaine	0,8%	0,4%
Hypnotics and sedatives	0%	2,1%
Hallucinogens	6,7%	10,8%
Stimulants	0,8%	1,1%
Solvents	2,5%	0,3%
Other psychotrop substances	0,8%	0,8%
total	100%	100%

Source: German Drug Help Statistics 2001 (Strobel et al. 2002)

## 1.3 Demand and harm reduction responses

### 1.3.1 Prevention programs and campaigns

Prevention programs have been represented and described in chapter 9.1-9.4 in the frame of school programs and programs outside schools as well as under the point: other programs. In the field of parties and drug prevention programs outside school, a good number of interventions have been done which suppose to enable young people to a critical and low-risk substance use. Exemplary in the following the „Drogerie Project“ is represented (see 8.2.2).

The „Drogerie Project“ is a facility of the drug help in Thuringia. An investigation to „drug use in the music scene in Thuringia“ found out that drugs play in this field a much bigger role as supposed. The staff of this project tries now new approaches to reach drug users within the music scene of Thuringia. The target group of the project are adolescents and young adults consuming drugs. Aim of the project is to minimize the risks of consuming legal and illegal drugs as far as possible. The sensibility of young people how to handle a drug, shall be

improved. Drug user, which develop problems with her own consume behaviour shall be supported in their attempts to stay drug-free. With a mobile home the project staff drives to different events. The mobile home provides the chance to talk in a quiet atmosphere and eventually arranges further help. Information material about drugs, safer use , safer sex, legal frame of drugs and so on is available. The work of the staff is not only to visit music events. Since October 2000 they are daily reachable through hotline. Furthermore one can contact them direct in their Erfurt office through e-mail ([www.drogerie-project.de](http://www.drogerie-project.de)).

### **1.3.2 Specific harm reduction interventions in parties, techno scene, including pill testing**

„Pill testing“ is offered on regional level mainly in Hannover area in the field of music events. The legal frame is still very difficult. In co-operation with the responsible public prosecutor's offices one tries to find solutions . However the offer is restricted to simple (marquis-) tests and to comparisons of the pills surfaces with reference lists from the Netherlands.

### **1.4 Methodological information**

Due to different reasons the data situation for young drug users is even worse than for elder groups. The legal status requires for interview often the agreement of the parents. As a result for interviews often only adults are taken into consideration. Till now there are no ESPAD data for Germany, however in future some Federal Laender want to participate in the study.