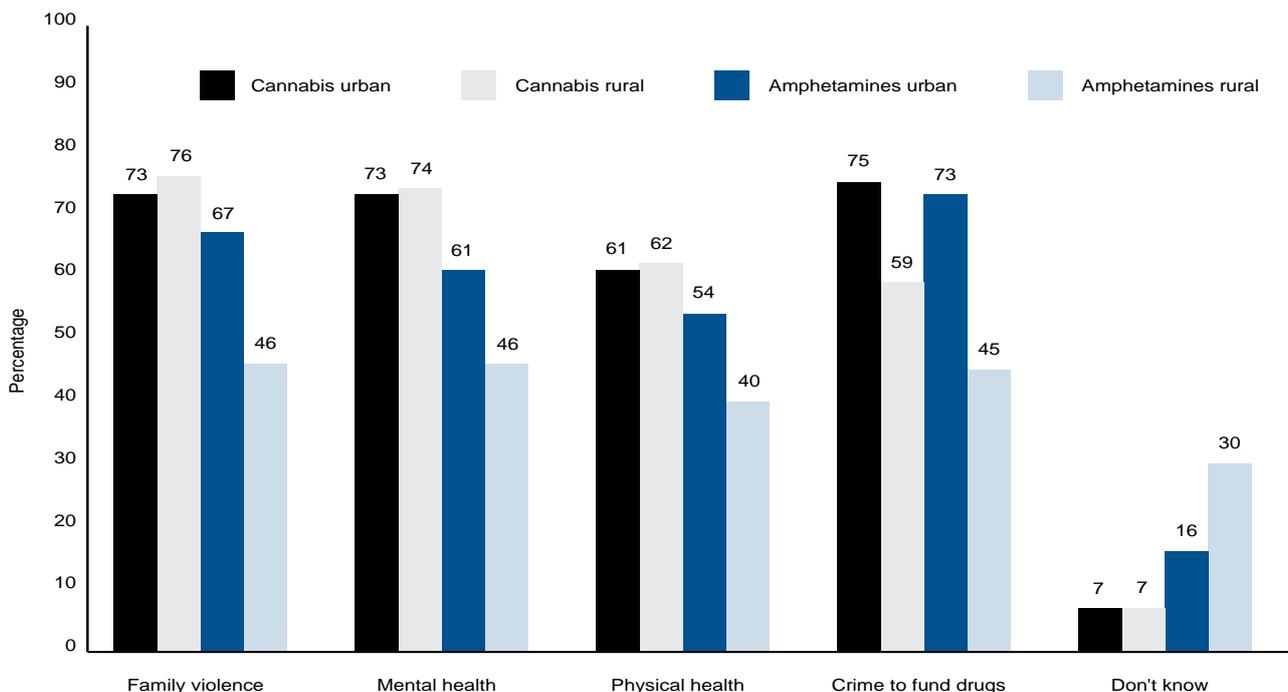


Police perception of negative outcomes due to illicit drugs in Indigenous communities

There has been considerable media coverage about the negative outcomes associated with the abuse of alcohol and inhalants in Indigenous communities. Police in remote areas have also been concerned about the extent to which illicit drug use is having a negative impact in these communities. In 2005, the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund commissioned research into the policing implications of such use in rural and remote Australia. The Australian Institute of Criminology conducted a survey of police in urban and country areas in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland and the figure below reports on perceptions associated with illicit use of cannabis and amphetamines. Overall, a large proportion of police indicated that there were negative outcomes associated with these two drugs in terms of family violence, mental and physical health, and engagement in crime to fund a drug habit. The impact of cannabis use on these various outcomes was generally considered similar in urban and country areas. In contrast, there was more variability in regard to amphetamines, with a greater proportion of police reporting negative consequences in urban areas. The caveat is that a large percentage of police in rural areas indicated 'don't know', which is probably due to the more recent introduction and lower penetration of amphetamines into those communities at the time of the survey.

Police perceptions of negative outcomes associated with illicit drug use in Indigenous communities (percent, n=792)



Further reading:

Putt J & Delahunty B 2006. Illicit drug use in rural and remote Indigenous communities. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no. 322