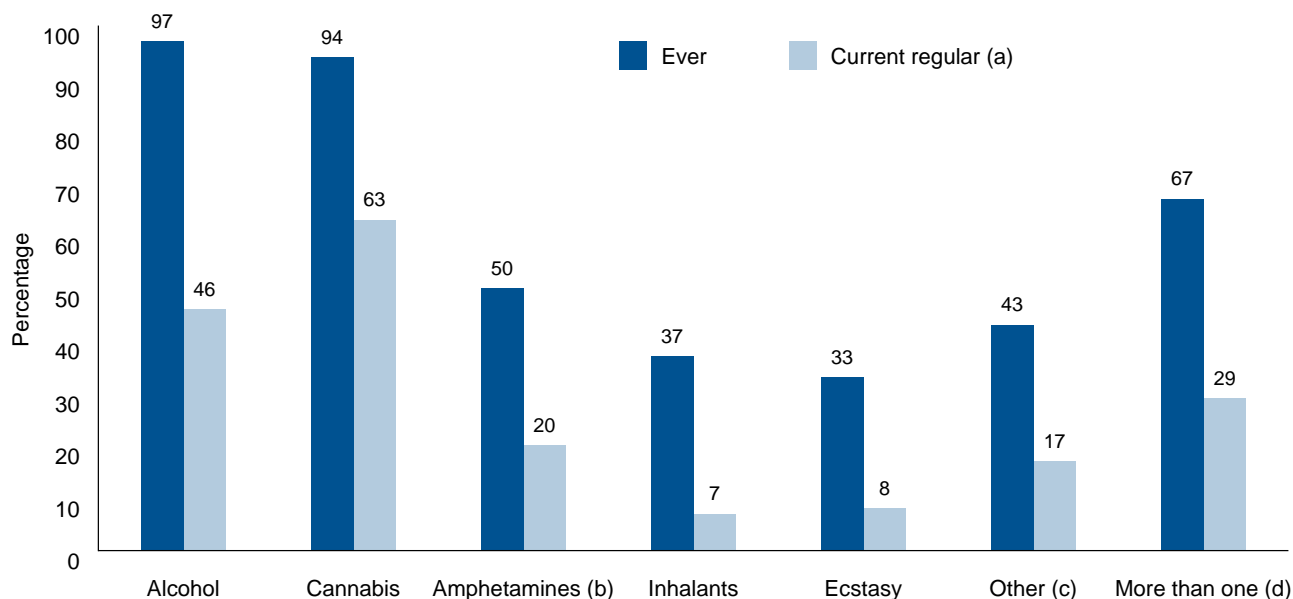


Drug use by young serious offenders

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department funded the Australian Institute of Criminology to undertake the Drug Use Careers of Offenders study. The first two parts of the study looked at men and women in prison. The third part comprised research into the lifetime offending and substance use patterns of 371 juveniles, aged 10 to 17 years, incarcerated in Australian juvenile detention centres. The study confirmed that young people sentenced to detention have extensive offending and drug use histories. Using self-reported prevalence of substance use, the research showed that almost all juvenile detainees had used alcohol (97%) and cannabis (94%), while half had used amphetamines (50%) and one in three had used ecstasy at some stage in their lives. Cannabis was the drug most commonly used on a regular basis by young people in the six months prior to their detention (63%), followed by alcohol (46%) and amphetamines (20%). Nearly one in three juvenile offenders were regular poly-substance users in the six months prior to detention.

Drug use by young serious offenders



(a) Current regular users are those reporting regular use in the six months prior to detention

(b) Excludes the licit use of that drug

(c) Includes heroin, cocaine/crack, street methadone, and morphine as well as illicit use of dexamphetamines and benzodiazepines

(d) Includes alcohol

SOURCE: Prichard J and Payne J 2005. Key findings from the Drug Use Careers of Juvenile Offenders study. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no 304. <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi304.html>