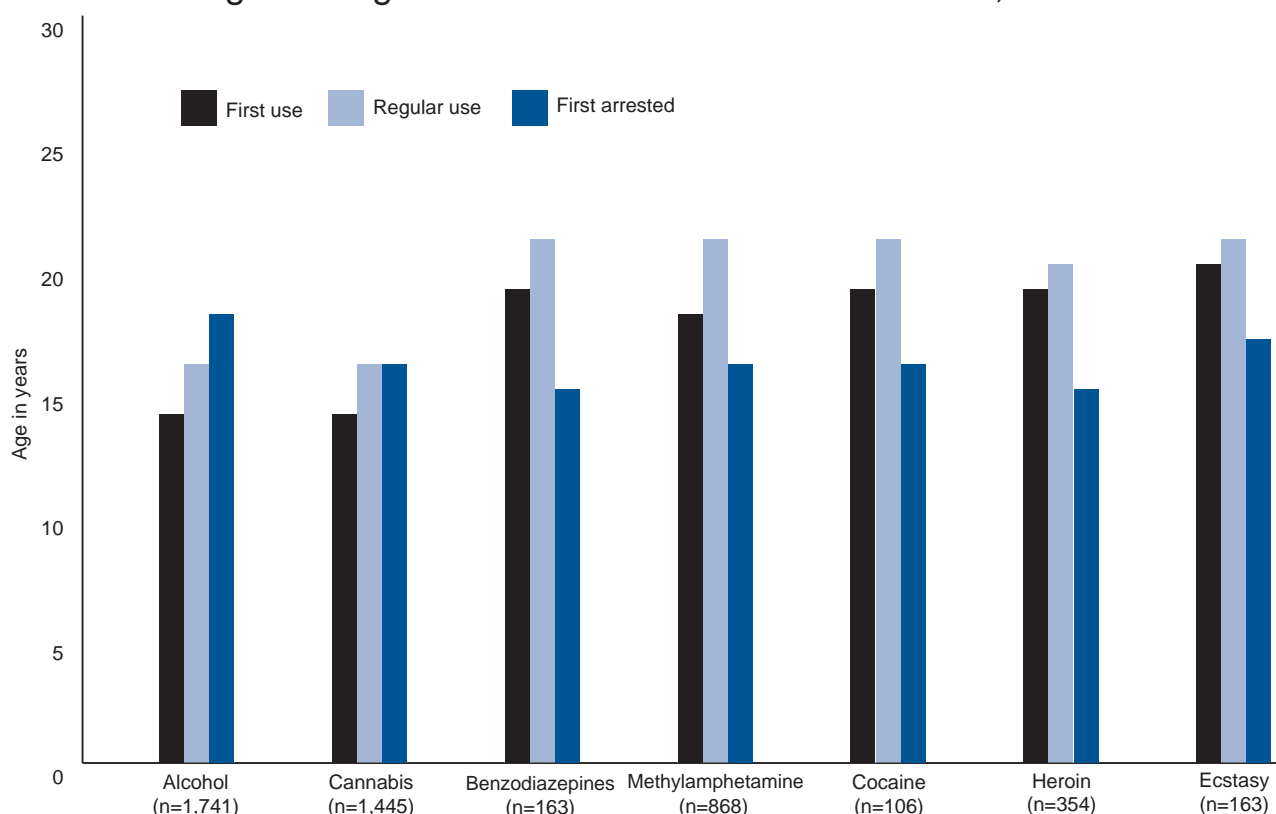


## Drug use and crime

The connection between drug use and criminal activity is frequently debated in the community. The Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (DUMA) program, managed by the Australian Institute of Criminology, is focused on people who come into contact with the criminal justice system, to provide specialised data that cannot be found in routine administrative data collections. As part of its quarterly survey, DUMA collects information on the age of first and regular use of seven classes of drugs, as well as the age of first arrest. The 2005 annual report for DUMA shows the mean age of male offenders' first and regular use of alcohol and cannabis was the same (14 and 16 years respectively), with the mean age of first arrest at 18 and 16 years. Other drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamines, have older ages of first and regular use (19, 19 and 18 years respectively for first use and 21, 20 and 21 years for regular use), but a mean age of first arrest the same or lower than those for alcohol and cannabis (16, 15 and 16 years respectively). This suggests that users of these particular drugs were likely to have been arrested for criminal activities before they self-reported regular use of these drugs.

Age of drug use and of arrest for male offenders, 2005



Source: AIC, DUMA 2005 [computer file]

### Further reading

Mouzos J, Smith L & Hind N 2006. *Drug Use Monitoring in Australia: 2005 annual report on drug use among police detainees*. Research and public policy series no. 70. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/70/index.html>