

Beliefs about drugs

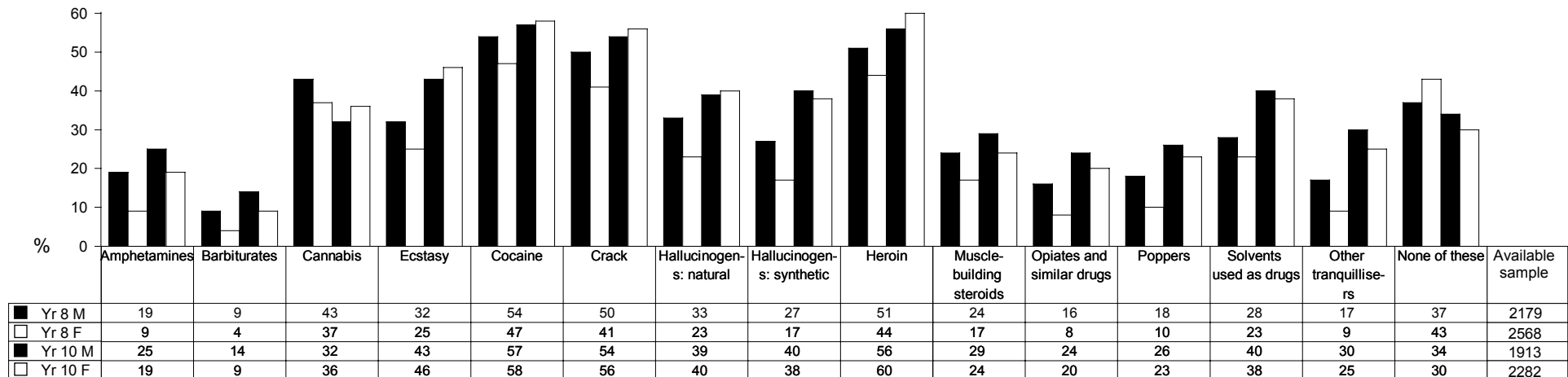
As pupils get older fewer think that cannabis is *always unsafe*

What do you know about these drugs? Response to 'Always unsafe'

1. Around 34% of older pupils think that cannabis *always unsafe*.
2. Up to 60% think heroin is *always unsafe*.

Comments

1. The format of this question has changed in recent years from that used in the past in the following response options: *Never heard of them; Know nothing about them; Safe if used properly*, and *Always unsafe*. Thus it is not easy to say if young people have changed their perceptions of safety of these different drugs, but we are very confident that the response of year 10 pupils are now more complacent than in previous years.
2. We report responses to *Always unsafe* and can say that the relative safety of drugs has not changed, with heroin, cocaine and crack being thought most risky.



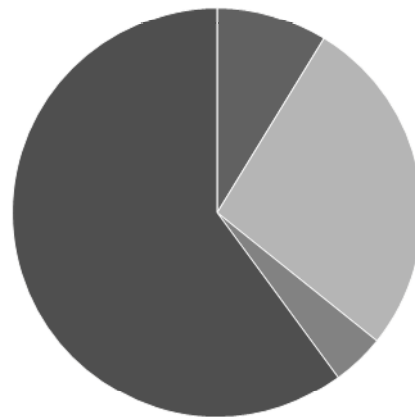
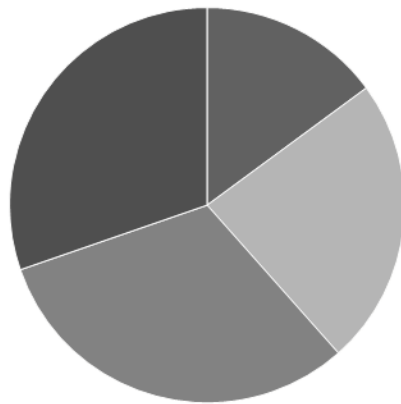
Perceptions of drugs

Comparing the proportions for cannabis and heroin and responses to the option *safe if used properly*

On the previous page, we focussed on just one of the responses: *I think it's always unsafe*. However, the pattern of the other responses is also interesting. On many occasions, we have seen *the safe if used properly* response being strongly associated with actual use. For example, we can compare the proportions of the various options for the drugs cannabis and heroin.

Cannabis

Heroin



Clockwise from 12 o'clock:

- I have never heard of the drug
- Heard of it, but don't know much about it
- I think it is safe if used properly
- I think it is always unsafe

The strong association of the option *safe if used properly* with actual use has led us to monitor this response closely over the years with regard to cannabis. It showed a strong rise in the first years of our exploration, dropped to a lower plateau around the turn of the millennium, and has stuttered since. The two recent lowest points in 2009 and 2011 are likely influenced by the regions of the country most strongly represented in those data sets.

Percentages of Yr 10 males who have responded to the option *safe if used properly* with regard to cannabis. 1991-2013

