

Steroid, illicit and ‘any pharmaceutical’ use...all down, down!

The Australian Crime Commission has pumped up the erroneous impression that Australian sportspeople are gobbling down hormones, steroids and illicit, anti-code drugs all over the place, constantly. Untrue.

Real, factual evidence – not the “intelligence”, based on hearsay, scuttlebutt and gossip that is the ACC’s stock in trade – proves otherwise. Here’s the latest available Australian Institute of Health and Welfare ‘Summary of recent drug use’ report. This is the same agency the ACC quotes in its Illicit Drug Data Report...but selectively, only when the figures suit the ACC. The ACC never presents a balanced report.

Summary of recent drug use: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, Australia, 1993 to 2010

Drug/behaviour	1993	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010
Tobacco	29.1	27.2	24.9	23.2	20.7	19.4	18.1
Alcohol	77.9	78.3	80.7	82.4	83.6	82.9	80.5
Illicit drugs (excluding pharmaceuticals)							
Cannabis	12.7	13.1	17.9	12.9	11.3	9.1	10.3
Ecstasy ^(b)	1.2	0.9	2.4	2.9	3.4	3.5	3.0
Meth/amphetamines ^(c)	2.0	2.1	3.7	3.4	3.2	2.3	2.1
Cocaine	0.5	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.0	1.6	2.1
Hallucinogens	1.3	1.9	3.0	1.1	0.7	0.6	1.4
Inhalants	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6
Heroin	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Ketamine	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.3	0.2	0.2
GHB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.1	0.1	0.1
Injectable drugs	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4
Any illicit ^(d) excluding pharmaceuticals	13.7	14.2	19.0	14.2	12.6	10.9	12.0
Pharmaceuticals							
Pain-killers/analgesics ^(c)	1.7	3.4	5.2	3.1	3.1	2.5	3.0
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(c)	0.9	0.7	3.0	1.1	1.0	1.4	1.5
Steroids ^(c)	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	—	—	0.1
Methadone ^(e) or buprenorphine ^(f)	n.a.	n.a.	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Other opiates/opioids ^(c)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4
Any pharmaceutical ^(g)	n.a.	4.1	6.3	3.9	3.8	3.7	4.2
Any illicit ^{(d)(g)}	14.0	16.7	22.0	16.7	15.3	13.4	14.7
None of the above	21.0	17.8	14.2	14.7	13.7	14.1	16.6

a. Used in the previous 12 months. For tobacco and alcohol 'recent use' means daily, weekly and less than weekly smokers and drinkers.

b. Included 'designer drugs' before 2004.

c. For non-medical purposes.

d. Did not include GHB and Ketamine from 1993 to 2001.

e. Non-maintenance.

f. Did not include buprenorphine before 2007.

g. Included barbiturates up until 2007; did not include methadone in 1993 and 1995; did not include other opiates from 1993 to 1998.

Note: some trend data were updated in 2010.

Source: [2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey](#)

– AIHW: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/recent-patterns-of-alcohol-tobacco-and-other-drug-use/>

Note that, under Pharmaceuticals, the categories of relevance to the Drugs in Sport claims by the ACC, are down over time. It’s a bit like the Coles TV ads: ‘Steroids’: down, down; ‘Any pharmaceuticals’: down, down on 1998; ‘Any illicit’ (pharmaceuticals): down, down on 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2004; ‘None of the above’: down, down on 1993 and 1995. But the ACC screams “Fire, Fire”...when there is barely a hint of smoke.