

Drug use in Serbia, results of the first general population survey in 2014 according to the EMCDDA methodology

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Background

- * National Survey on Lifestyles of citizens in Serbia
- * Institute of Public Health of Serbia
- * EMCDDA (expert support, field study)
- * Twinning project (expert and administrative support, printing)

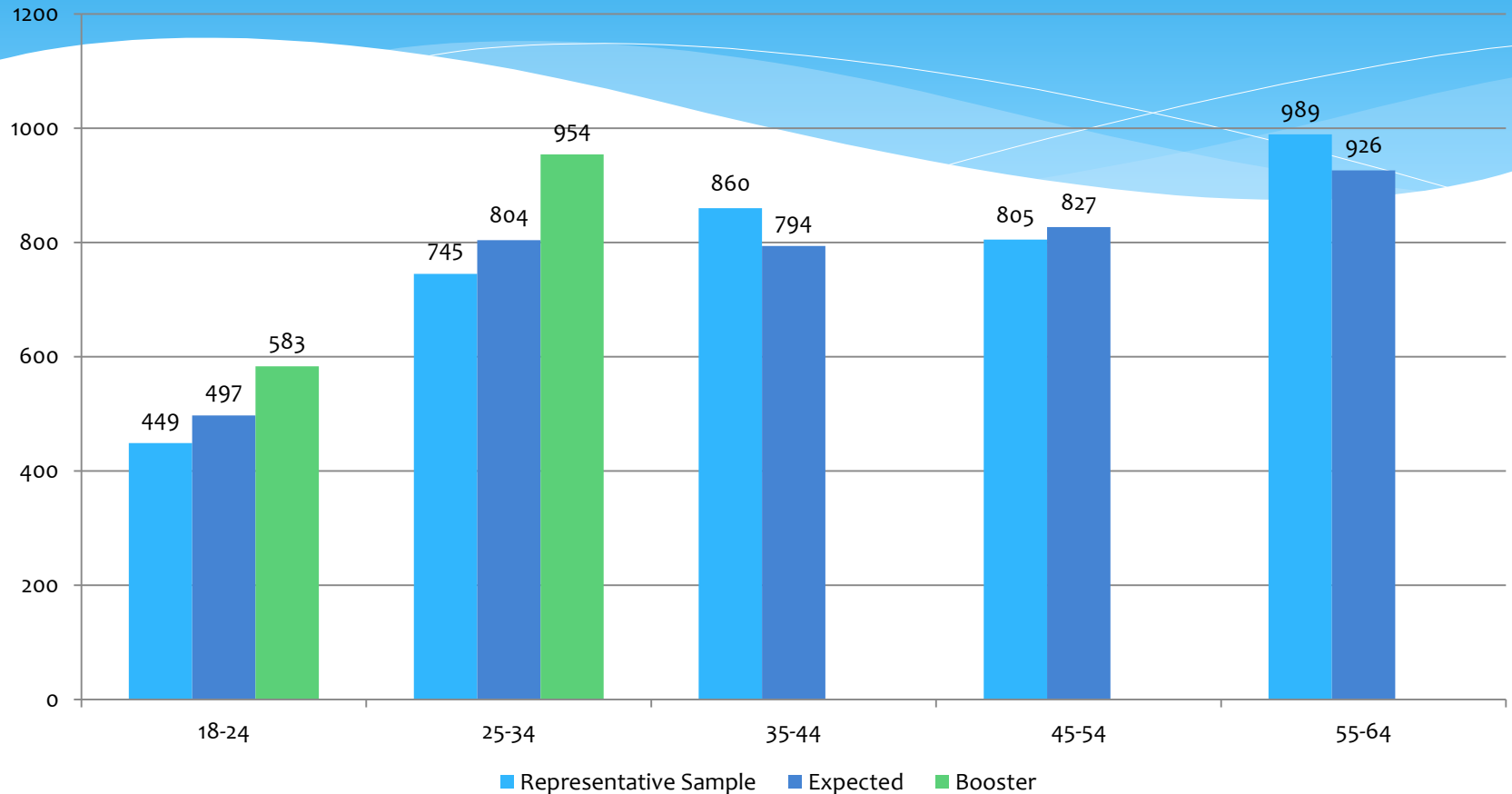
Methodology

- * Cross-sectional survey on a representative sample of the adult population of the Republic of Serbia
- * The target population - inhabitants of the Republic of Serbia aged 18-64 years
- * **Exclusion criteria**
 - People living in prison or other institutions such as hospitals, therapeutic communities, orphanages, nursing home
 - Homeless and people living in illegal settlements were also not covered.

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- * Two variables were used for the stratification and estimation of the sample size and its structure so that the sample was stratified in two dimensions:
 - according to 4 geo-economical strata used by the Serbian Statistical Office: (1) Belgrade, (2) Vojvodina, (3) Šumadija and Western Serbia, (4) Southern and Eastern Serbia,
 - urban/rural type of population

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- * The probabilistic sampling strategy using multi-stage cluster sampling design was employed.
 - * In a first step, small territorial units were randomly selected with probabilities proportional to the population size.
 - * Next the households were randomly selected within each unit – the national household register was used as sample frame.
 - * The last stage was the random selection of the respondent within the household using Kish grid.

Representative Sample, Expected Sample and Booster Sample by age groups



Representative sample N= 3 848, 49.0% male, 51.0% female (expected 49.7% male, 50.3 female)
Booster sample N= 1537, 48.1% male, 51.9% female (expected 51.1% male, 48.9% female)

Questionnaire I

- * The questionnaire was developed on the basis of the EMCDDA EMQ
- * SMART
- * SMART project outcomes concerning alcohol issues including BSQF technique and RAPS tool,
- * Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (6 items) for mental health issues
- * Cannabis abuse screening test – CAST
- * Apart from substance abuse, the questionnaire includes a gambling section with Problem Gambling Screening Index and Lie/bet screen

Questionnaire II

Questionnaire included following sections:

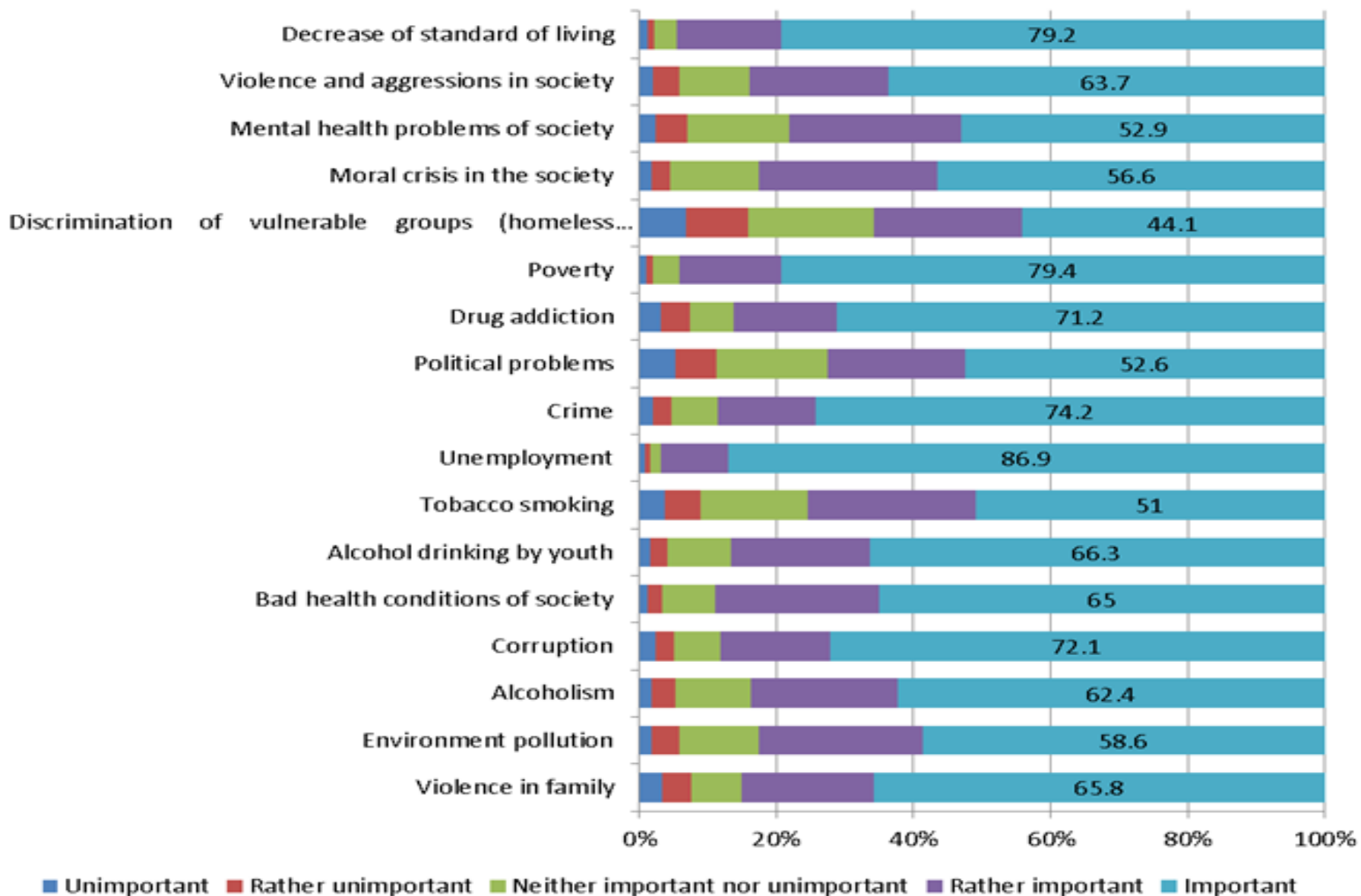
- * Introductory section (warming up) about level of satisfaction with various aspects of everyday life and ranking of problems in the Serbian society
- * Tobacco and electronic cigarettes
- * Alcohol consumption and attitude toward alcohol
- * Use of psychoactive medicines
- * Illicit drug use and availability
- * New psychoactive substances - use and availability
- * Gambling
- * Opinions on drug use and related risk
- * Mental health assessment
- * Data for the benchmark method of estimating the number of problem drug users (setting up multipliers)
- * Socio-demographic section

357 items for respondents, plus 54 additional items for interviewers to describe non respondents and respondents

Opinions about social problems and alcohol policy measures in Serbia

- * The purpose of the question is the assessment of the importance of various social problems in Serbia and how the alcohol and drug problems are located in the ranking of problems.
- * Respondents were asked for assessing importance of each of 17 problems presented in the questionnaire on the 5 point scale from very important to unimportant.
- * Summarizing psychoactive substance use seems to be recognised as not one of the most important problem. Among substances drug addiction is seen as more important than alcohol, although it is less prevalent. Tobacco smoking is at the end of ranking.

Assessment of importance of selected problems in Serbia, GPS 201

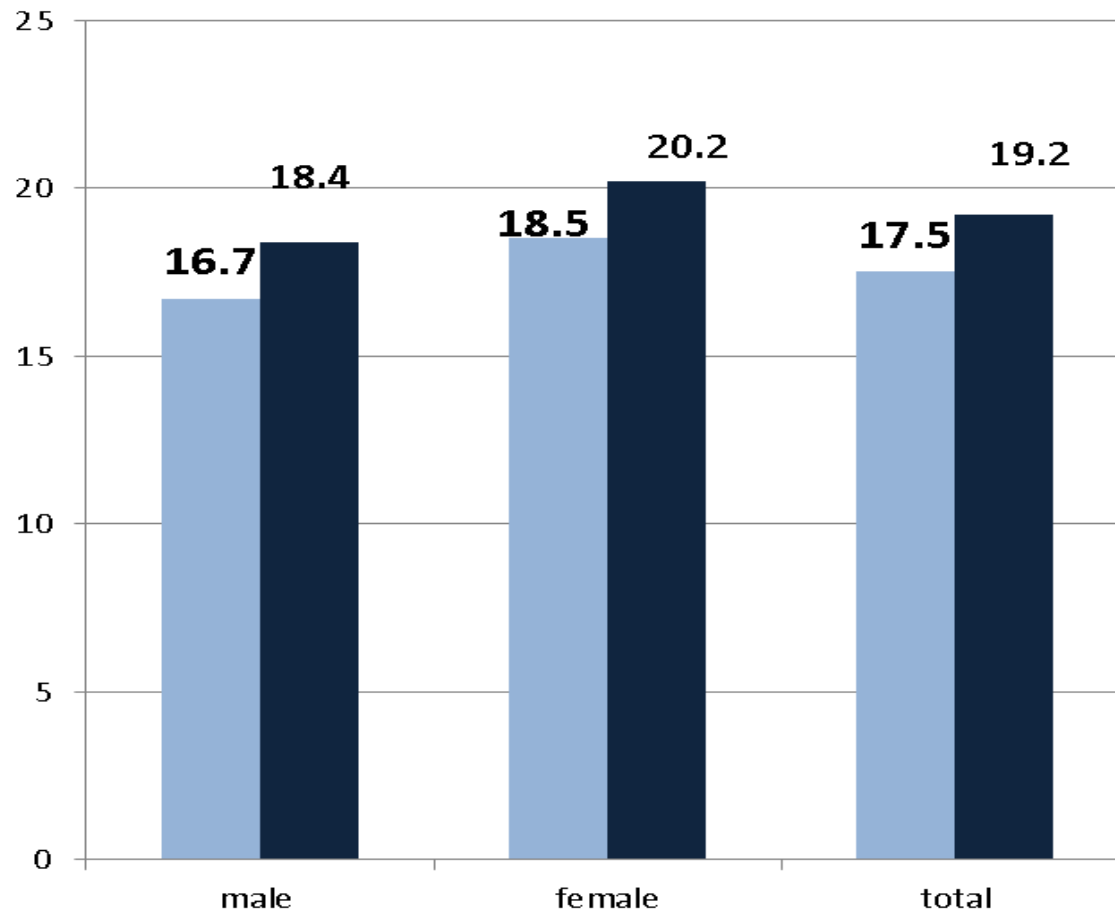


Key findings – legal PAS

- * **Alcohol** had been consumed by a total of 72.2% of the adult respondents in the last 12 months (82.1% of the men and 62.4% of the women)
- * **The lifetime use of tobacco** in the form of cigarettes, cigars or pipes was reported by 64.5% of the respondents in the age 18–64
- * **40.2% of the individuals had smoked tobacco in the last 30 days** (44.3% of the men and 36.2% of the women).
- * **Electronic cigarettes** were ever used by 9.6 respondents
- * Daily use of electronic cigarette is 1.0%, occasionally 1.4%

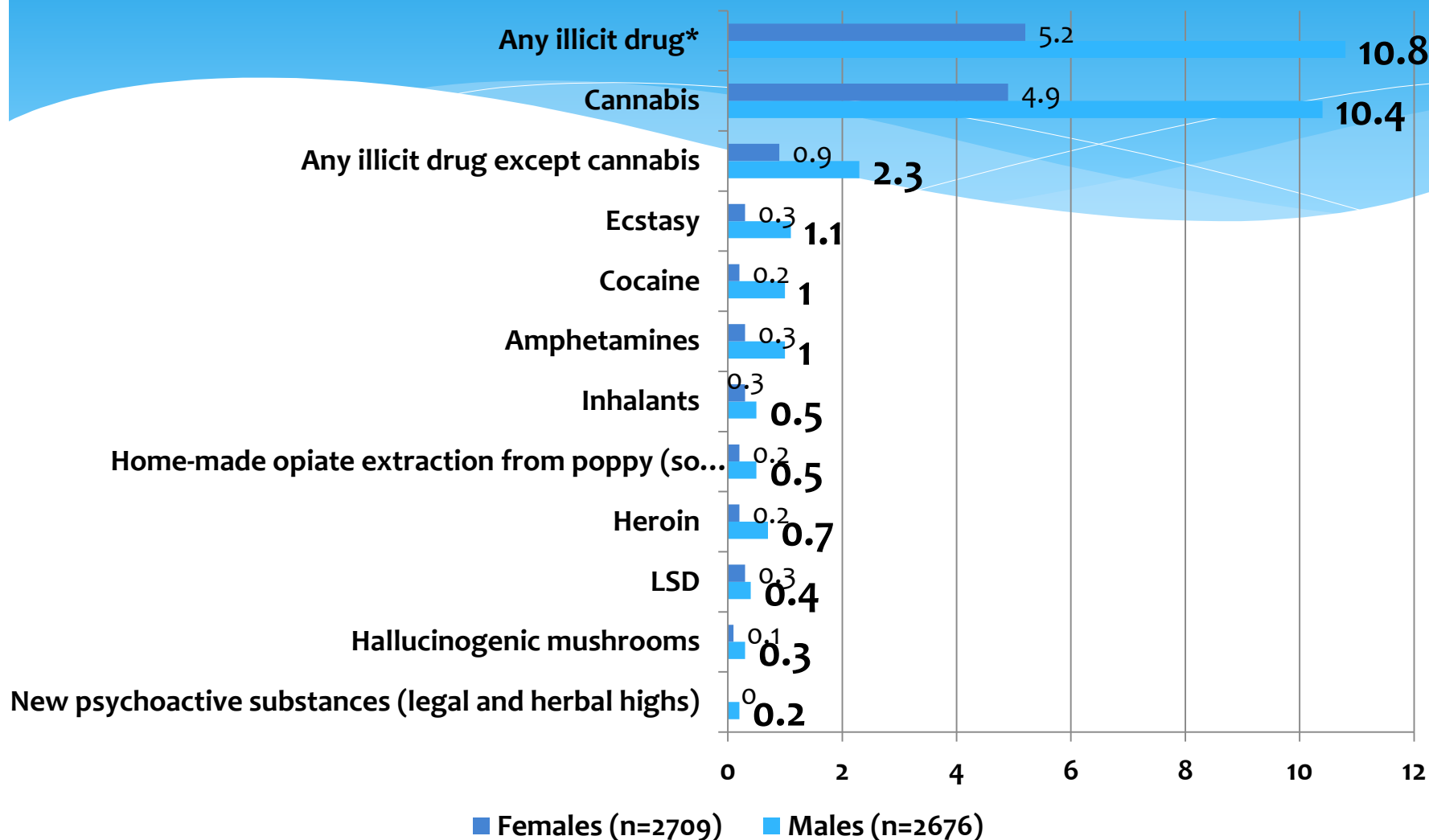
GPS 2014

Age of first use and onset of daily smoking (median)



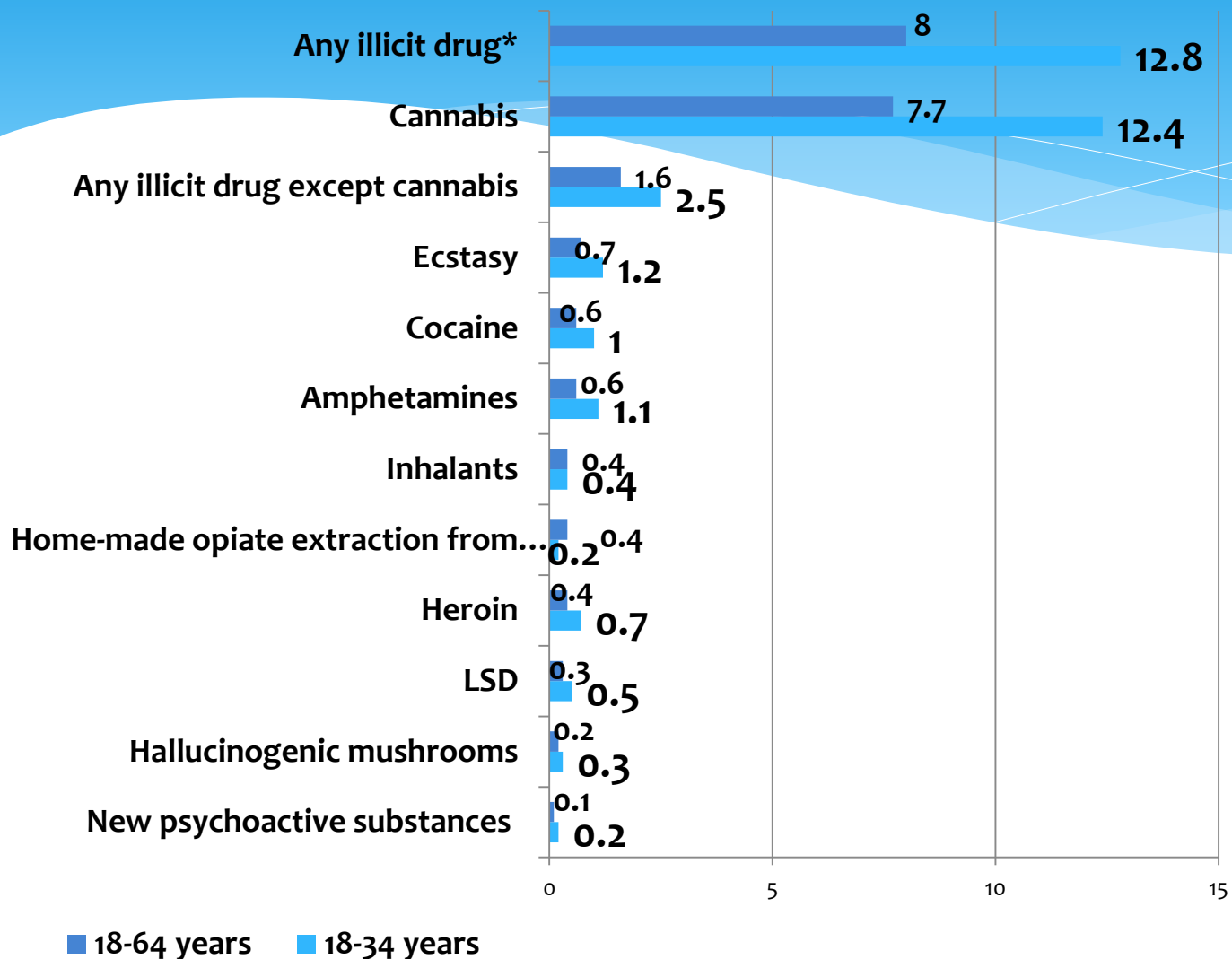
- At what age did you smoke first cigarettes or other tobacco product like cigars or a pipe?
- At what age did you start smoking tobacco, such as cigarettes, cigars or a pipe daily?

Lifetime prevalence of illicit substance use by gender



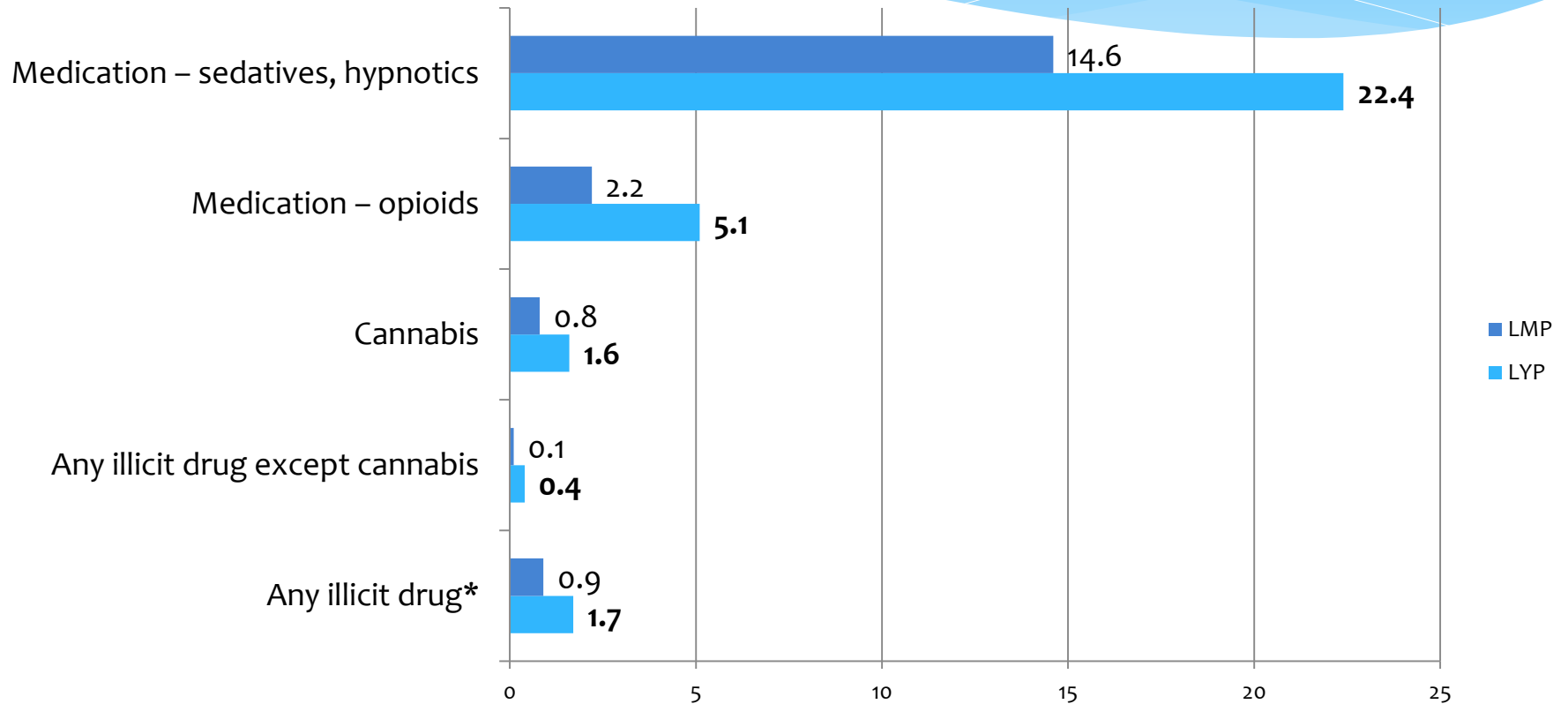
* Includes cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, home-made opiate extraction from poppy (poppy tea), LSD and magic mushrooms

Lifetime prevalence of substance use among total population and young adults



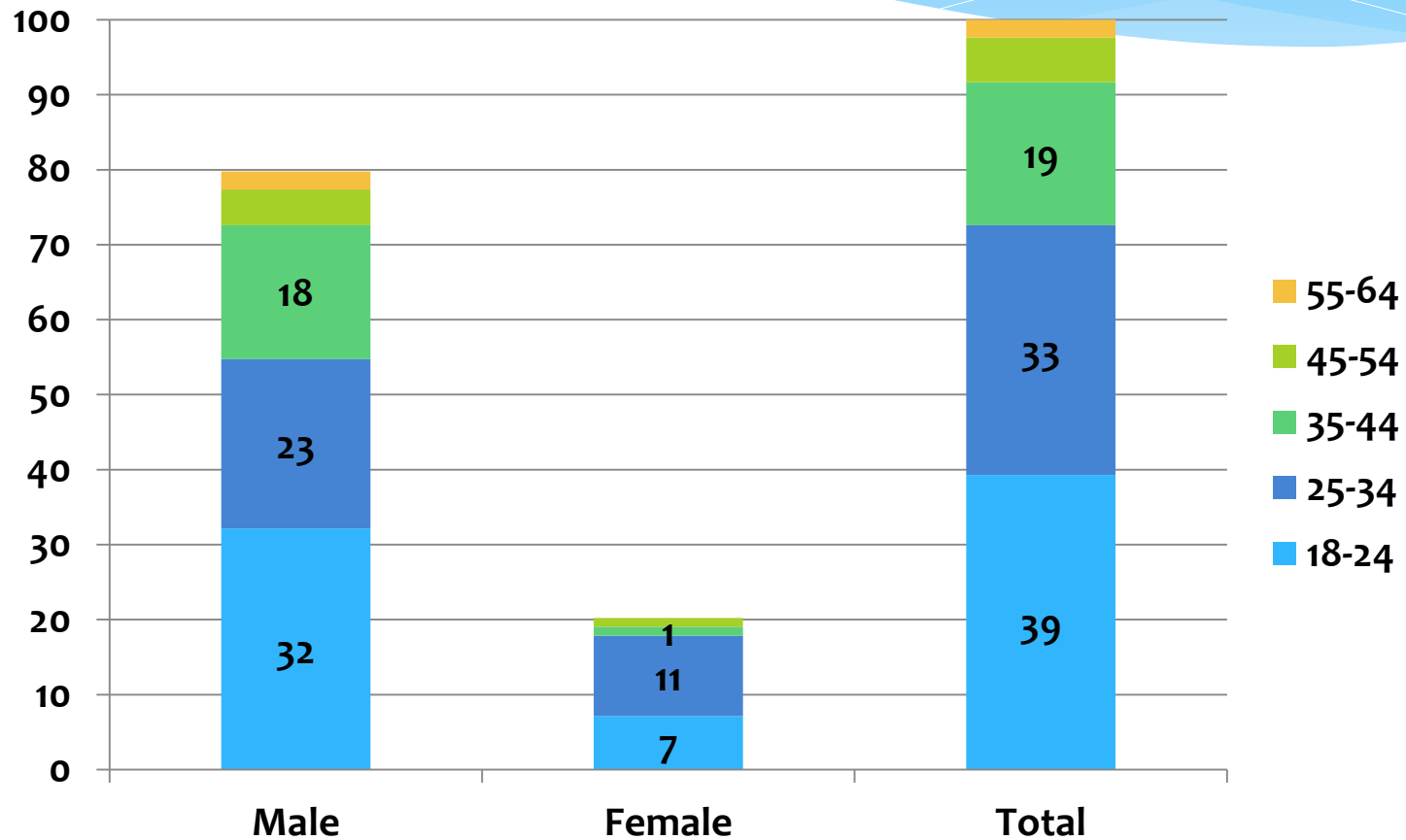
Includes cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, home-made opiate extraction from poppy (poppy tea), LSD and magic mushrooms.

Last year and last month prevalence of substance use




Sedatives LYP male 13.9% and female 30.9%
All other substances –LYP and LMP less than 0.1

Among recent (last 12 months) cannabis users, majority are men (80%) and young adults aged 18–34 (73%)

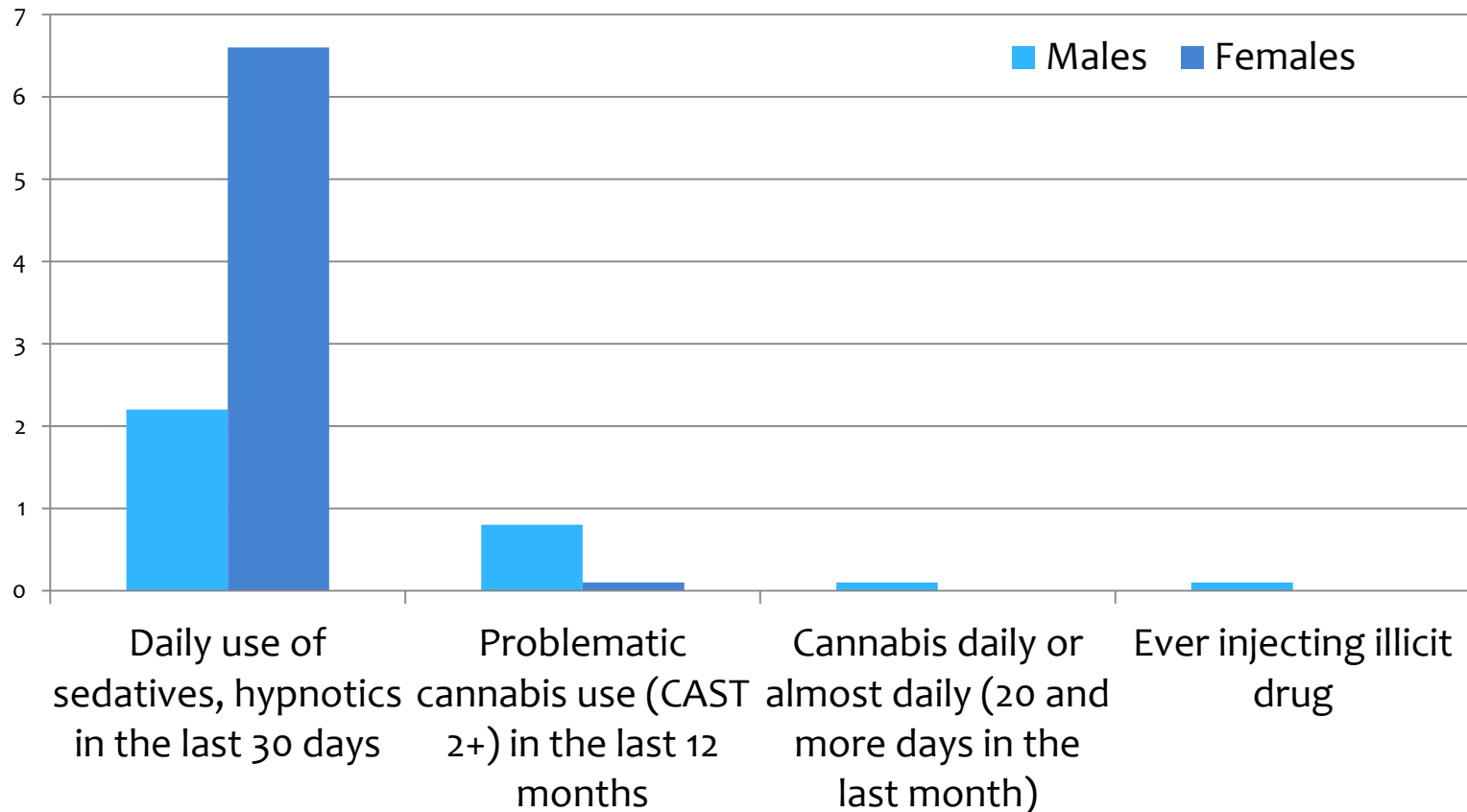


Intensive and problematic forms of substance use

- * A total of 36.4% of the adult population (40.9% of the men and 32.0% of the women) reported regular daily smoking in the last month
- * Binge drinking (drinking of 60 grams and more) at least once a week or more frequently during the last 12 months was reported by a total of 3.7% of the respondents (6.7% of the men and 0.6% of the women).
- * Daily use of sedatives and hypnotics was reported by 4.4% of adult population (2.2% among men and 6.6% among women) with majority of being occurred in the age above 34 years.

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- * Problematic patterns of cannabis use are less frequent in the Serbian population and thus estimates might not be reliable.
 - * Problematic cannabis use in the last 12 months as measured by CAST (2 or more *positive answers on the CAST scale, binary option*) was observed among 0.5% of adult population (0.8% among men and 0.1% among women) with the higher prevalence among young adults aged 18–34 (0.8%)
 - * This corresponds to 14 –28 thousand people, approximately half of them aged 18–34

Intensive and problematic forms of substance use by gender



Estimates of problem drug use

Method 1: Computation of population prevalence rates

2 types of questions:

1. ‘How many members of your extended family (parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren’s, brothers, sisters, cousins) are living in Serbia?’ and a similar question ‘How many people do you recognize as your neighbours?’,
 2. ‘How many of them are drug addicts?’ and modified questions on heroin users and injecting drug users.
- * For controlling the bias: question on number of newborns in family or neighborhood (0.93% in Serbia in 2012)

Family

Question	N	Sum	Proportion (%)	Proportion in population 15-64* (%)
How many members of your close family who live in Serbia are you close with and keep in touch?	5385	98056	-	-
How many of them were born during the last 12 months?	5358	3305	3.371	-
How many of your close family are drug addicts (people who use regularly drugs and experience problems because of it)?	5359	165	0.168	0.246
How many of your close family are heroin addicts (people who use regularly heroin and experience problems because of it)?	5359	50	0.051	0.075
How many of your close family are injecting drug addicts (people who inject regularly drugs and experience problems because of it)?	5359	36	0.037	0.054

Neighbors

Question	N	Sum	Proportion (%)	Proportion in population 15-64* (%)
How many people do you recognize as your neighbours?	5384	56294	-	-
How many of them were born during the last 12 months?	4897	1616	2.871	-
How many of your neighbours are drug addicts (people who use regularly drugs and experience problems because of it)?	4897	248	0.441	0.645
How many of your neighbours are heroin addicts (people who use regularly heroin and experience problems because of it)?	4897	91	0.162	0.237
How many of your neighbours are injecting drug addicts (people who inject regularly drugs and experience problems because of it)	4897	75	0.133	0.195

Estimates: „population prevalence rate“ method

Category of users	Central	95% CI: low	95% CI: high
Based on rates among family members			
Drug addicts	12100	11000	13100
Heroin users	3700	3100	4200
Injecting drug users	2639	2280	2997
Based on rates among neighbours			
Drug addicts	31700	29900	33400
Heroin users	11600	10600	12700
Injecting drug users	9600	8700	10500

Method 2: Multiplier method

- * Respondent was asked whether ‘knows personally any drug addict living in Serbia (people who use regularly drugs and experience problems)’ and if YES, then
- * nomination form with questions on involvement into 4 different sources (benchmarks):
 - * inpatient treatment
 - * substitution treatment
 - * contact with needle and syringe programs
 - * death due to overdose within the last 12 months

Nomination of IDUs and heroin users

IDUs

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender
- 19	28	3,8%	14	13,2%	42	5,0%
20-29	336	45,4%	58	54,7%	394	46,6%
30-39	319	43,1%	27	25,5%	346	40,9%
40+	57	7,7%	7	6,6%	64	7,6%
Total	740	100,0%	106	100,0%	846	100,0%

Heroin users

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender
- 19	15	1,8%	13	10,8%	28	3,0%
20-29	339	41,6%	62	51,7%	401	42,9%
30-39	403	49,4%	37	30,8%	440	47,1%
40+	58	7,1%	8	6,7%	66	7,1%
Total	815	100,0%	120	100,0%	935	100,0%

Heroin users

Based on 2014 General Population Survey					Benchmarks (administrative data)	
Proportion of known drug addicts	N (excluding missing)	Multiplier			Description	N
		Central estimate	95% CI: low	95% CI: high		
Treated in inpatient drug treatment facility in the last 12 months	656	51.5%	47.7%	55.3%	Inpatients with primary drug opiates in 2012	1306
Treated in substitution treatment (e.g. methadone) for heroin addiction in the last 12 months	414	43.7%	38.9%	48.5%	Clients in OST in 2013	2460
Used syringe and needle exchange facilities in the last 12 months	221	23.1%	17.5%	28.6%	Clients in NEPs in 2013	4285
Died due to drug overdose in the last 12 months	834	11.0%	8.9%	13.2%	Deceased persons due to overdose by opiates and unspecified drugs	49

IDUs

Based on 2014 General Population Survey					Benchmarks (administrative data)	
Proportion of known drug addicts	N (excluding missing)	Multiplier			Description	N
		Central estimate	95% CI: low	95% CI: high		
Treated in inpatient drug treatment facility in the last 12 months	605	49.4%	45.4%	53.4%	Inpatients with primary drug opiates in 2012	1306
Treated in substitution treatment (e.g. methadone) for heroin addiction in the last 12 months	395	39.2%	34.4%	44.1%	Clients in OST in 2013	2460
Used syringe and needle exchange facilities in the last 12 months	215	20.9%	15.5%	26.4%	Clients in NEPs in 2013	4285
Died due to drug overdose in the last 12 months	768	11.7%	9.4%	14.0%	Deceased persons due to overdose by opiates and unspecified drugs	49

Estimates: Multiplier method

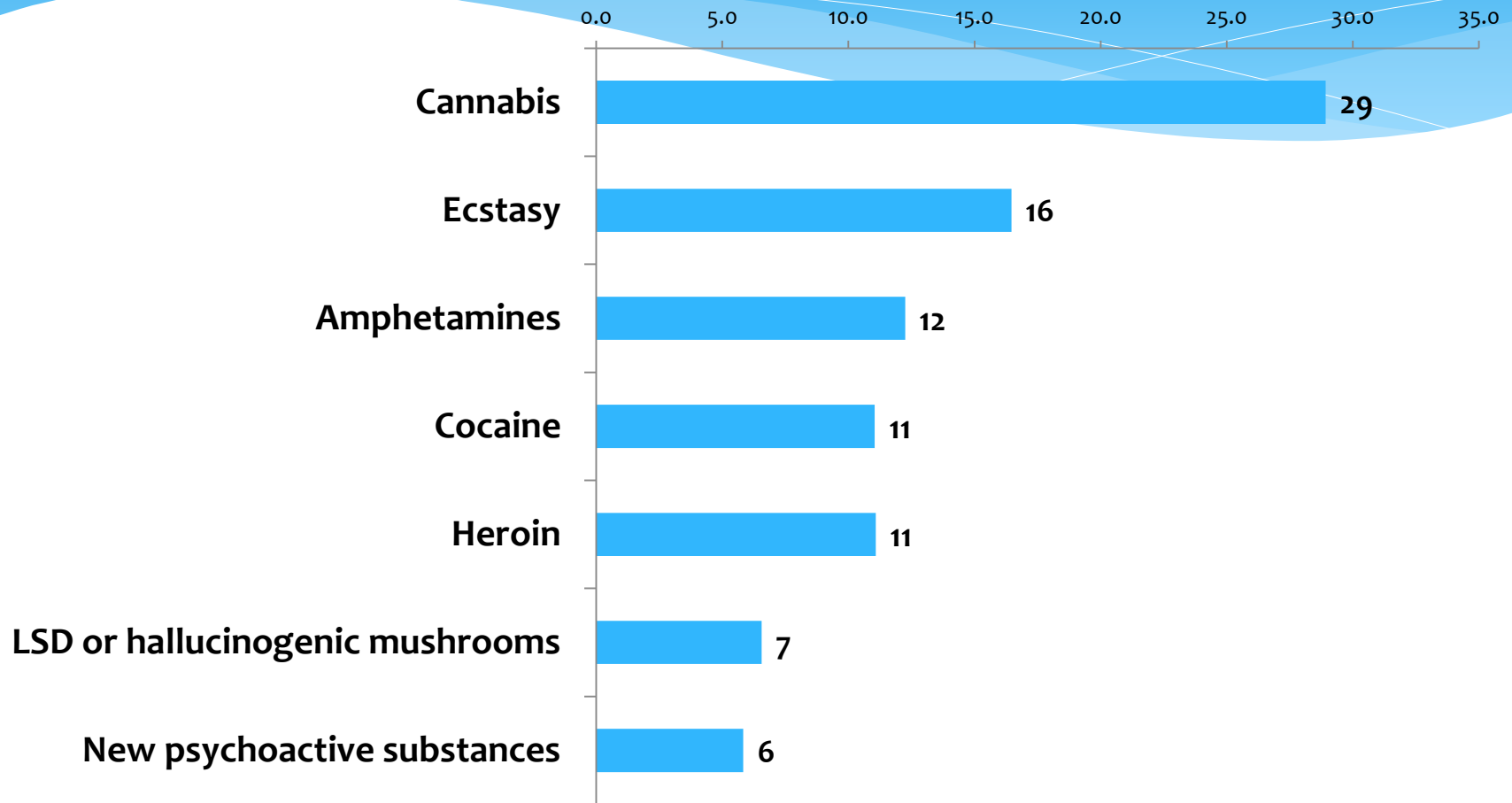
Benchmarks	Central	95% CI: low	95% CI: high
Heroin users			
Inpatients with primary drug opiates in 2012	2535	2360	2738
Clients in OST in 2013	5627	5072	6317
Clients in NEPs in 2013	18568	14966	24455
Fatal overdoses by opiates and unspecified drugs in 2012	444	372	550
Injecting drug users			
Inpatients with primary drug opiates in 2012	2643	2445	2874
Clients in OST in 2013	6269	5584	7146
Clients in NEPs in 2013	20473	16251	27659
Fatal overdoses by opiates and unspecified drugs in 2012	418	350	519

- * It can be assumed that results based on rates among family members are rather underestimated due to the negative perception of drug use in a society and reluctance to admit drug problem in the close family
- * Reasons for overestimation of birth-rate are unclear(although for children up to 3 years birthrate fits)
- * It is obvious that mortality rate was overestimated by respondents (approx. 10-fold)
- * Proportion of hospitalised users might be overestimated since all kind of hospitalisation could be reported
- * The same is likely for substitution treatment


Perceived availability of drugs

- * A perceived availability of individual drugs corresponds with their prevalence rates – those drugs which are used more frequently are more available according to respondents. Proportion of respondents who reported rather easy and easy access to respective drugs within 24 hours was the highest in cannabis (29%)

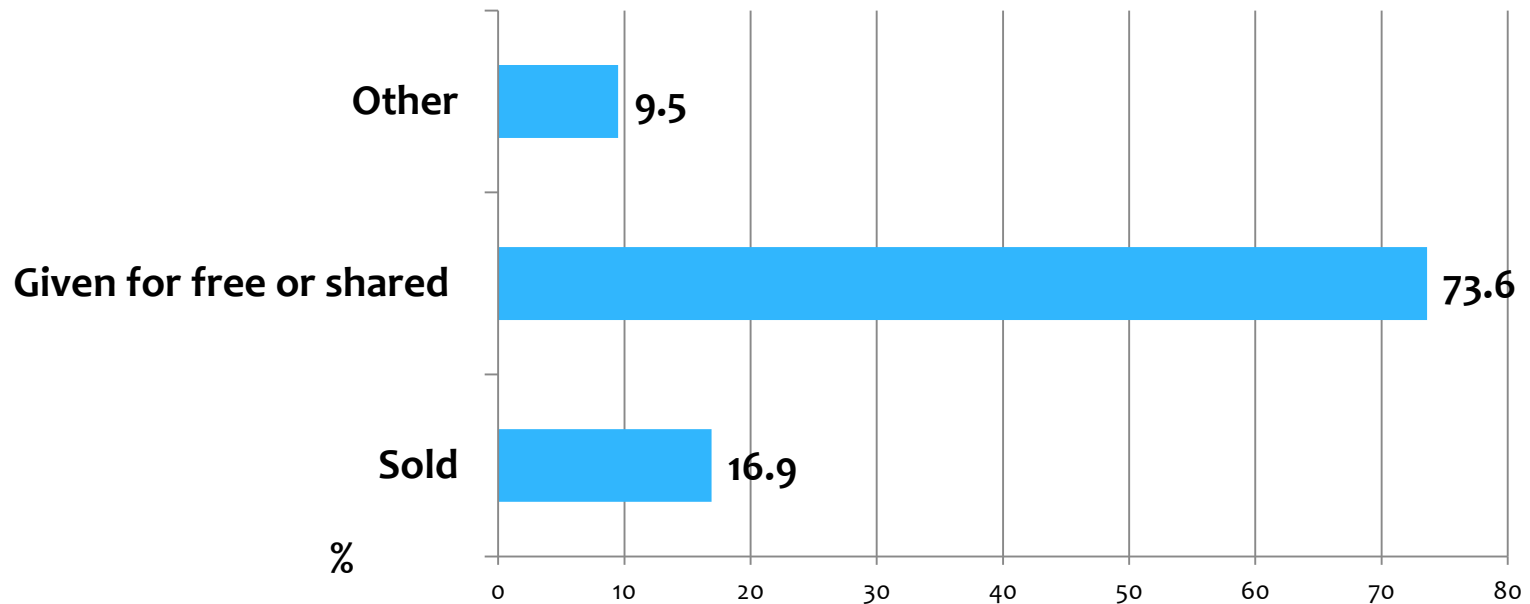
Perceived availability of drugs in 2014 GPS (sum of answers ,rather easy' and ,easy' to the question ,How difficult or easy would be for you personally to get the drug within 24 hours, if you wished to?'), in % (N=5385)



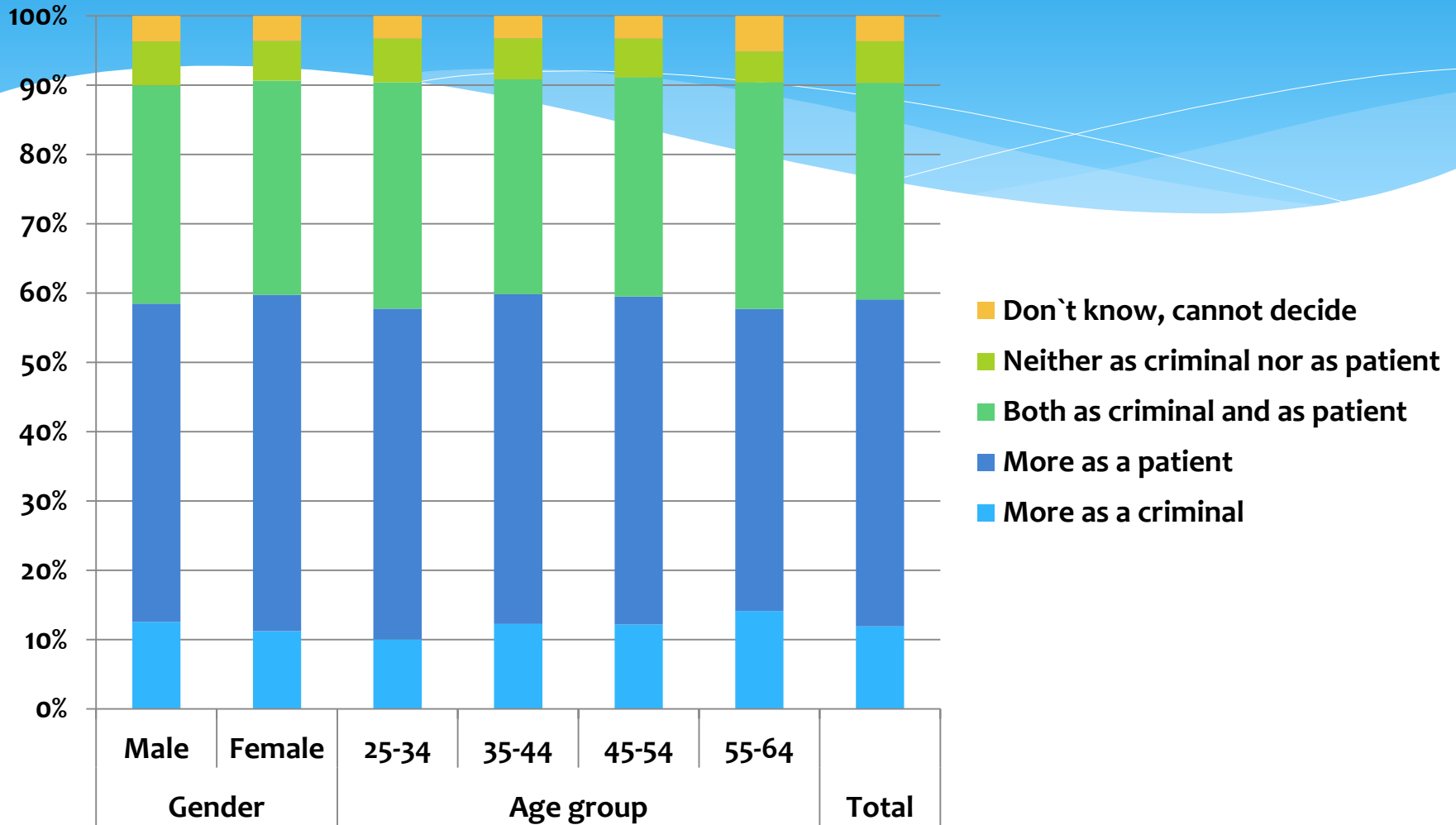
Offered answers were: Impossible, Difficult, Neither easy nor difficult, Rather easy, Easy.


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- * Proportion of respondents who reported being offered with respective drugs in Serbia within 12 months is relatively small, the highest proportion was found in cannabis (4%) and for ecstasy (1%)
 - * For other drugs less than 1%

The way how respondents obtained cannabis last time when they used it *(among those who used it within the last 12 months)*

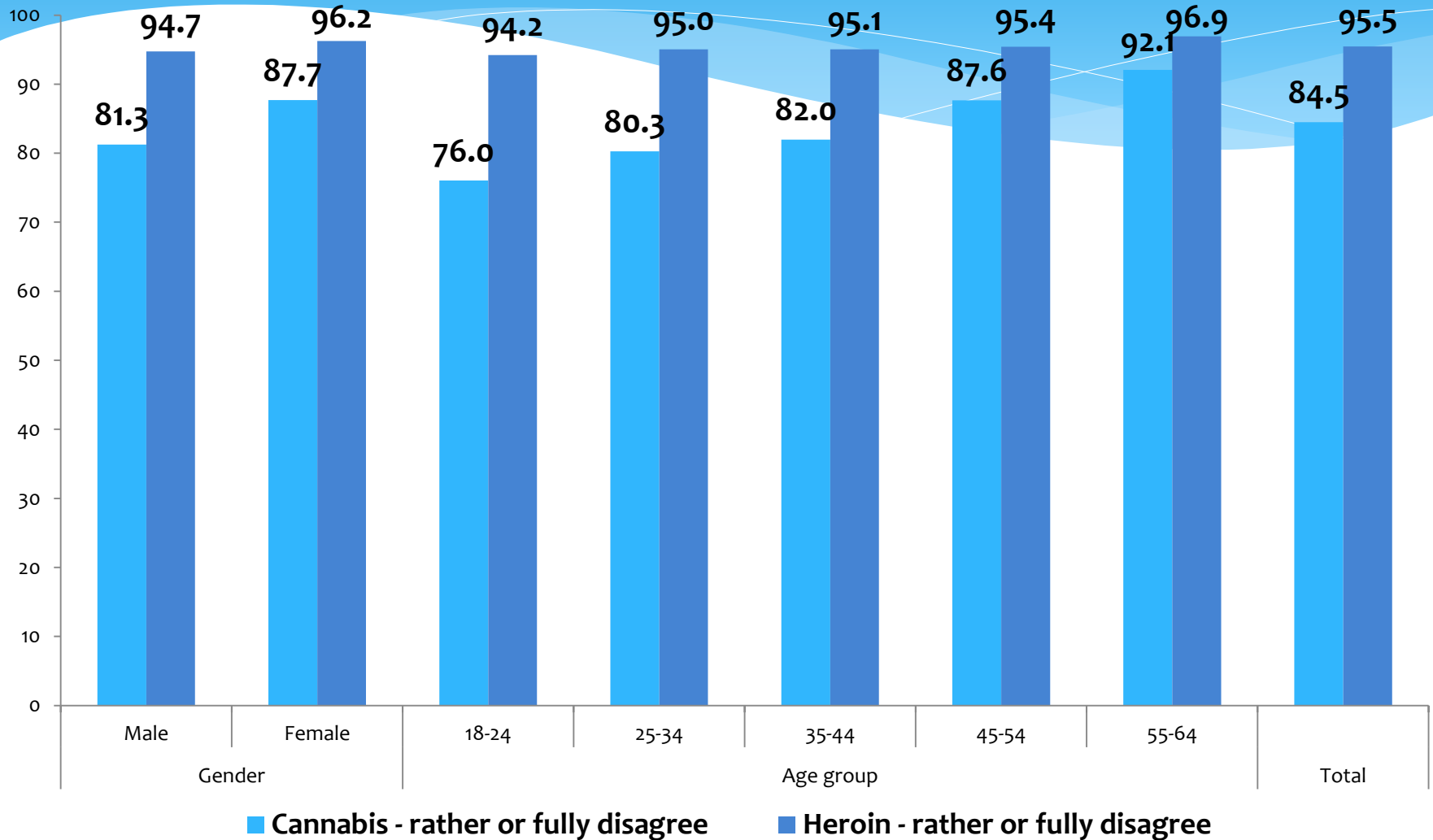



Attitudes towards drug use and drug users



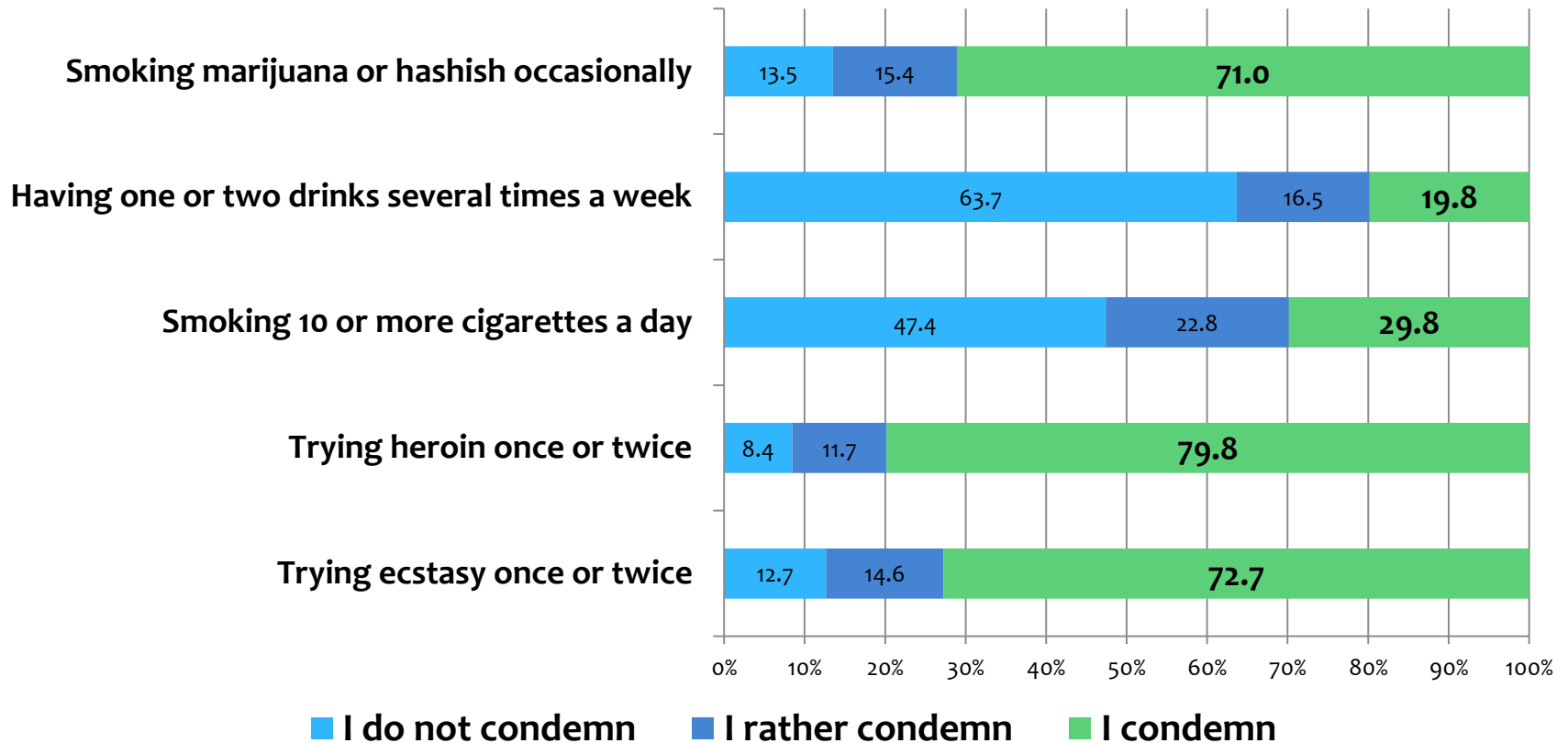
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- * Majority of respondents rather or fully disagree with the statement that people should be allowed to use cannabis or heroin – 84.5% and 95.5%.
 - * The level of disagreement is higher in females and is increasing with age. While level of disagreement with heroin use is very high in all categories, in cannabis the disagreement is significantly lower in younger categories

Proportion of disagreement with the statements that people should be permitted to take cannabis and heroin (%)

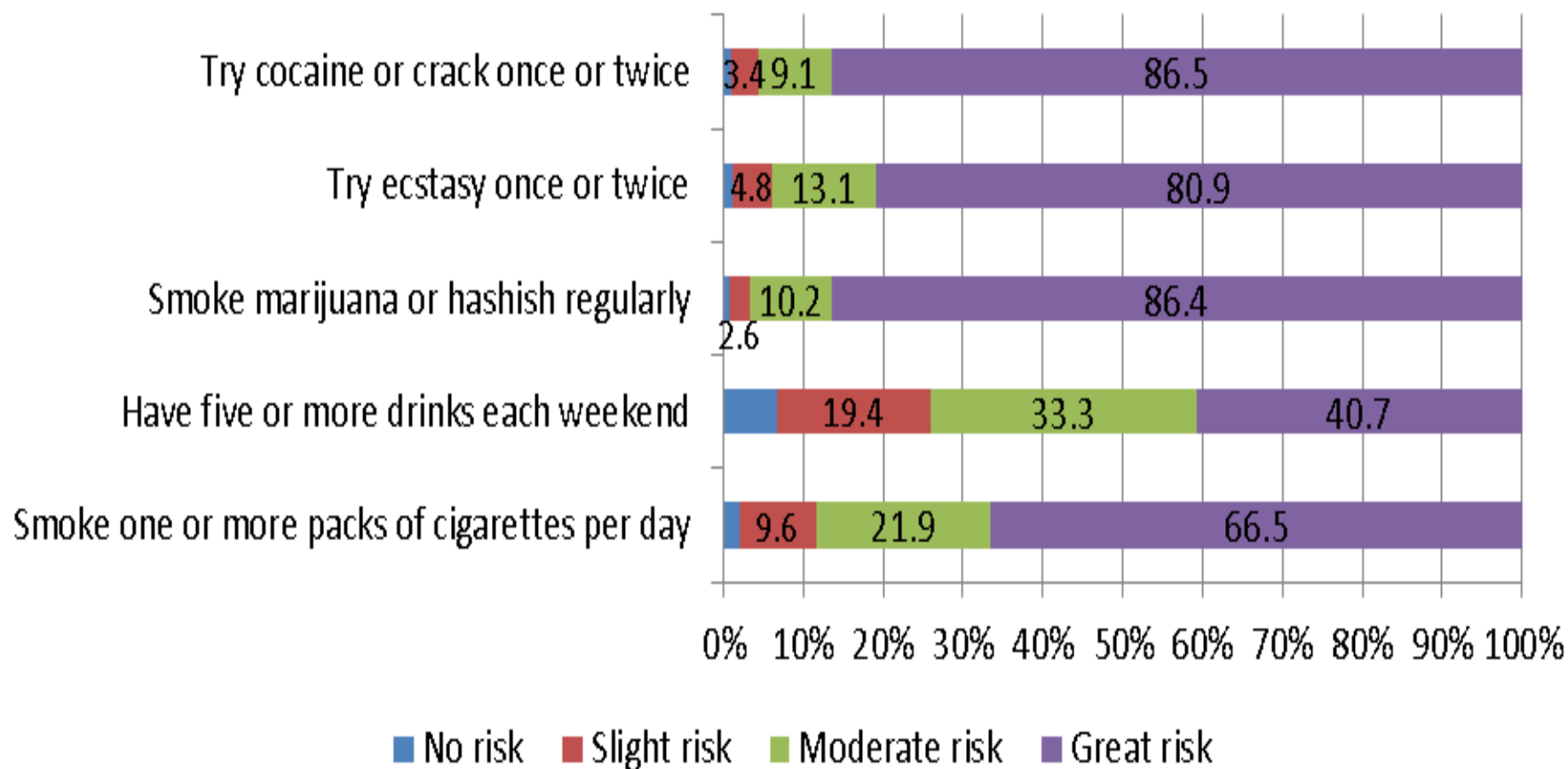


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- * Serbian society has very different level of acceptance with different patterns of substance use. While regular heavy alcohol use is widely accepted and regular daily smoking is accepted by approximately half of the population, occasional patterns of illicit drugs use is widely condemned. Level of unacceptance is higher in females and in older age groups
 - * The perception of health harms related to selected patterns of different substances use is similar – regular heavy use of alcohol or tobacco is perceived much less harmful than regular use of cannabis or occasional use of ecstasy and cocaine

The condemnation with selected patterns of substance use by levels of condemnation




Perceived health harms of selected patterns of substance use

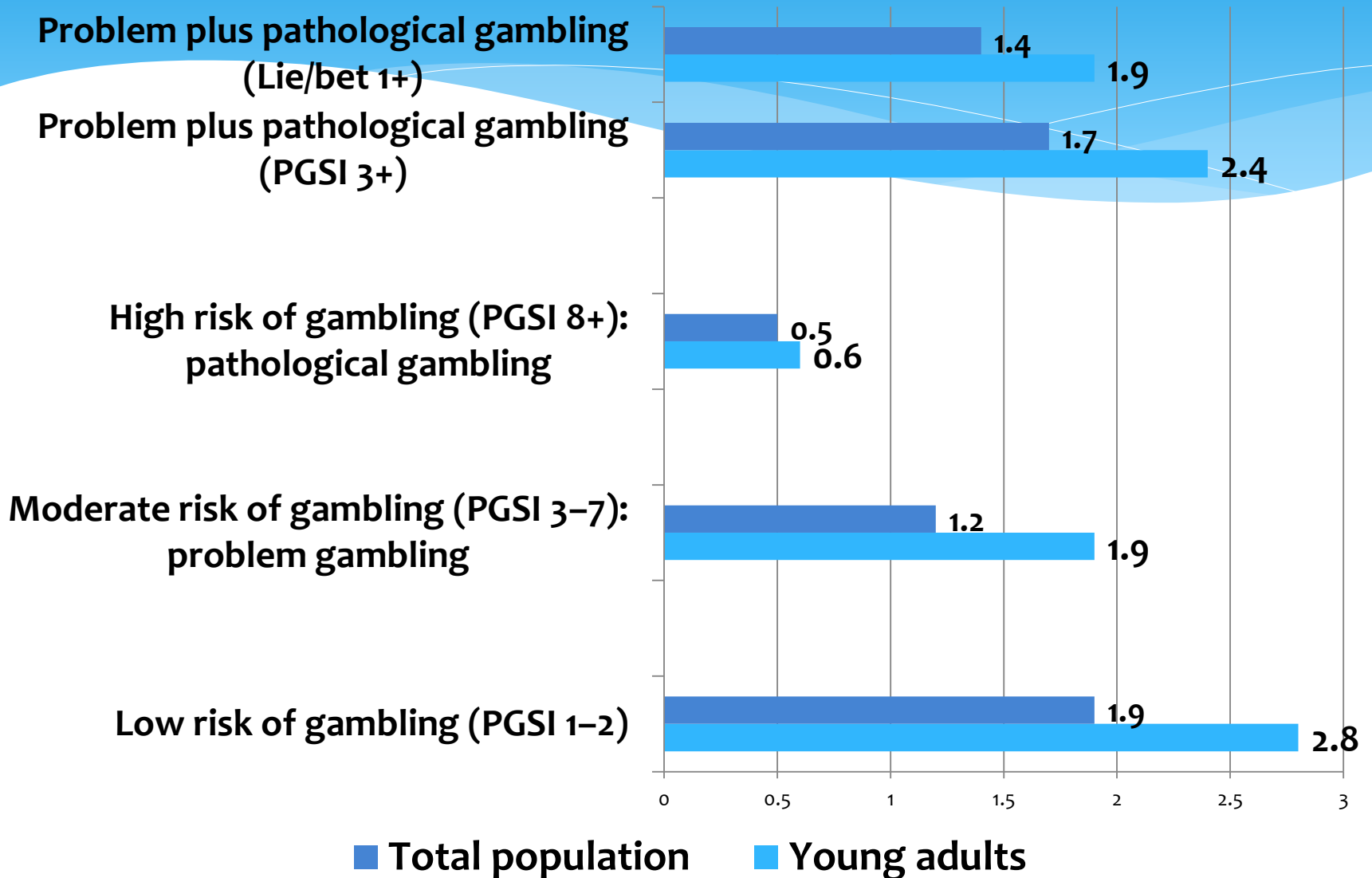


Gambling

- * By far the most prevalent gambling activity in Serbia is lottery (lotto, bingo, scratch ticket) – 54.6% of the adult population have ever gambled some form of lottery, 31.4% of them in the last year and 17.3% in the last months.
- * Sport betting was the second most prevalent with 17.2% of the population gaming it during lifetime, 13.1% and 10.0% in the last year and in the last months
- * Other forms of gambling are less prevalent, slot machines with lifetime prevalence of 5.5% is the third most prevalent form of gambling activity

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- * In total 3.7% of adult Serbian population is in some level of risk of problem gambling, 1.1–2.0% of them are in moderate and higher risk of problem gambling (problem gamblers), of them 0.3–0.7% in the high risk (pathological gambling).
 - * In the highest risk of problem gambling are gamblers of casino games, slot machines and gamblers on-line – approximately 50% of those who gambled those games in the last 12 months are in some level of risk of problem gambling

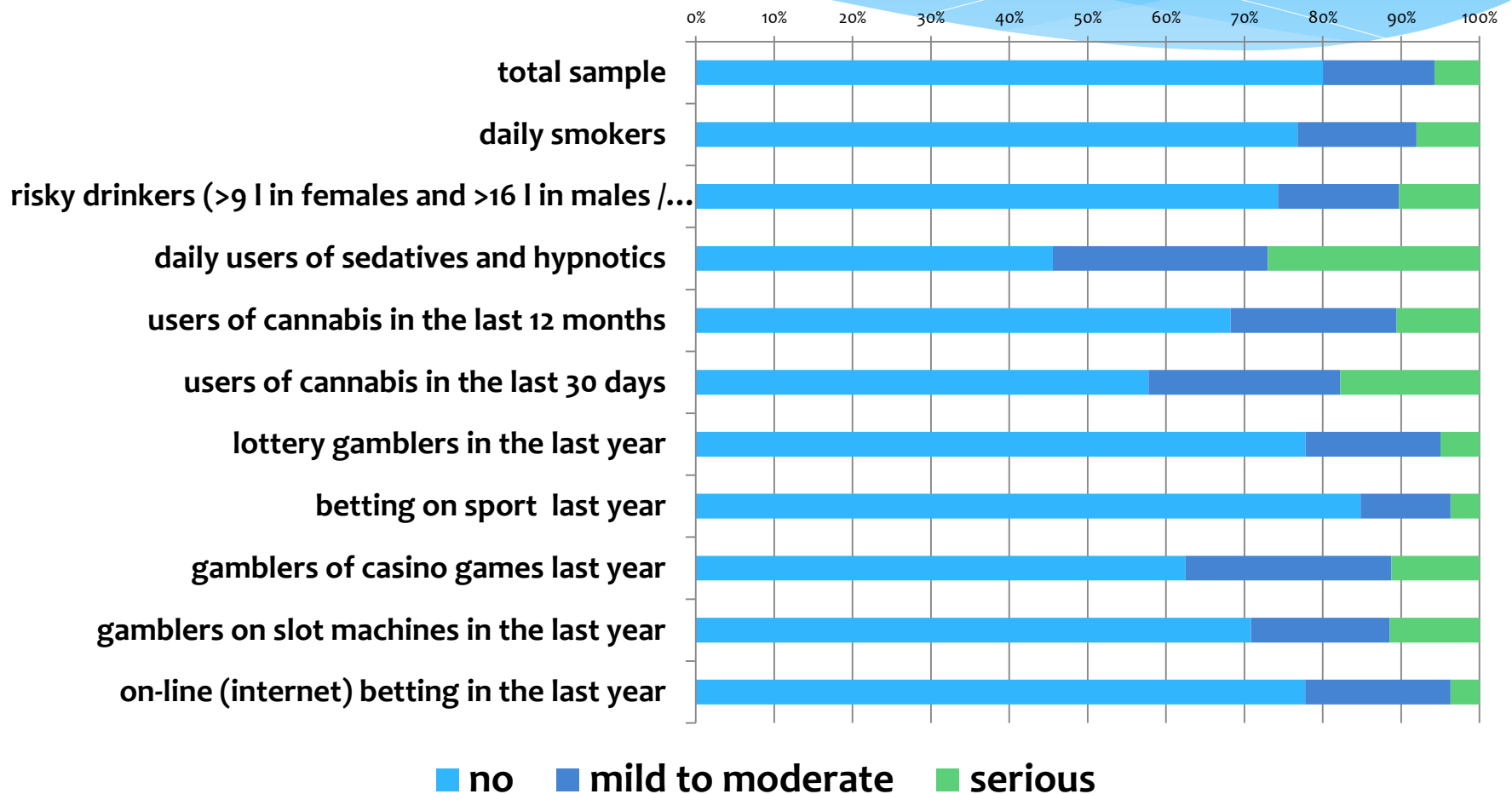
Prevalence of problem forms of gambling in the whole population and young adults




Mental health

- * Psychological distress as measured by Kessler-6 screening tool is present in some form in 20% of adult population, in 5.8% the mood and anxiety disorders can be assessed as serious
- * The level of psychological distress is higher in some subgroups of substance users or gamblers – for example among daily users of sedatives, 54.4% are in some level of psychological distress.
- * The high level of distress can be observed also among cannabis users or casino and slot machine gamblers

Level of psychological distress (mood and anxiety disorders) in the total sample and subgroups of substance users and gamblers (%)





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**