

# METHAMPHETAMINE

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## Prevalence

### General population

- Prevalence of past year methamphetamine use remains stable in Australia at 2.1% in 2010.
- Weekly methamphetamine use has remained stable between 2001 and 2010 (9.3% reported weekly or more use in 2010, with the majority of Australians across all age groups reporting use every few months or less frequently).
- Powder methamphetamine continues to be the form most used in the general population.

### Sentinel groups

- Among IDRS respondents, prevalence of past 6 month methamphetamine use overall remained stable between 2001 and 2011, however a decline was recorded between 2009 and 2010.
- Among regular ecstasy users there was a decline in past 6 month methamphetamine use between 2003 (84%) and 2009 (54%) and a decline in frequency of use. This decline is across all forms of methamphetamine but most marked for crystal methamphetamine. Use has stabilised at a lower level in 2010 and 2011.
- Shorter term trends show that crystal methamphetamine use in particular increased significantly between 2010 and 2011 among both IDRS and EDRS respondents.

## Treatment seeking

- There was a slight increase in outpatient treatment episodes for meth/amphetamine from 12,211 in 2001/02 (10.8% of all treatment episodes) to 16,588 in 2007/08 (11.2%). This figure declined to 12,739 (9.2% of all treatment episodes) in 2008/09, and is consistent with the decline in methamphetamine use seen across sentinel groups and in the general population.
- Hospital presentations for meth/amphetamine problems are second highest after opioids. These have stabilised over the past five years after steady increases during the 1990s. The 20 to 39 year old Australians account for the largest proportion of these presentations.

## Deaths

- Methamphetamine-related deaths remain lower than those for opioids, and have been decreasing since 2000. Much of this decline is driven by the decline in heroin-related deaths, as the majority of methamphetamine deaths are due to multiple drug (often heroin) toxicity.

## Law enforcement

- Numbers of amphetamine-type stimulant seizures detected at the border have fluctuated between 2006/07 and 2009/10 after steady increases between 2001/02 to 2006/07. The weight of seizures has also fluctuated across this time period.
- Arrests for amphetamine-type stimulants have steadily increased since 1999/00, with the 2008/09 figure of 16,407 being the highest on record.
- The number of clandestine laboratories detected in 2009/10 (694) represents the highest on record.

## Market indicators

- There were mixed trends for the median price of a gram of powder base and crystal methamphetamine, with IDRS respondents reporting increases for base and crystal methamphetamine and a decrease for powder methamphetamine. Among EDRS respondents the only change was a decrease in the median price for a gram of crystal methamphetamine.

- Trends in median prices for points of each form were also mixed. Prices for powder and base methamphetamine declined according to EDRS respondents, and remained stable according to IDRS respondents. Both groups reported an increase in the median price for a point of crystal methamphetamine.
- Purity of all three forms appears to have increased between 2008 and 2011, with crystal methamphetamine generally being reported as 'high' in purity among both EDRS and IDRS respondents. Both powder and base methamphetamine were reported as being 'medium' to 'high' in purity.
- With the exception of base methamphetamine, the majority of IDRS and EDRS respondents report methamphetamine as 'easy' or 'very easy' to obtain. Both powder and crystal methamphetamine forms have become increasingly more available according to EDRS respondents between 2009 and 2011. In contrast, approximately one third (38%), and one quarter (25%) of EDRS and IDRS respondents respectively reported base methamphetamine as being 'difficult' to obtain in 2011.