

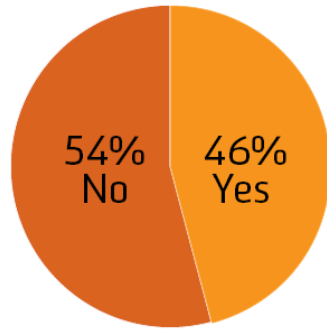
Naloxone knowledge among a sample of people that regularly consume illicit stimulants in Australia, 2022

Julia Uporova, Amy Peacock and Rachel Sutherland

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Key Findings

Have you heard of Narcan/naloxone?

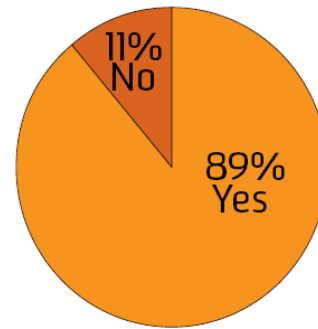


Half of the sample of people who regularly use illicit stimulant drugs reported awareness of naloxone.

Do you know what Narcan/naloxone is used for?

National  EDRS

Among those that heard of Narcan/naloxone



Of those that reported awareness, 9 in 10 participants were able to correctly identify what naloxone is used for.

Introduction

Naloxone (Narcan, Prenoxad and Nyxoid) is an opioid antagonist used to counter the effects of overdose from opioids (1), and is available for [free to anyone who may experience, or witness, an opioid overdose](#). Most research has focused on naloxone knowledge amongst people who inject drugs and/or use opioids (2), with much less known about awareness among other groups of people who use drugs who may be able to provide immediate bystander support.

Results

Using data from the 2022 [Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System \(EDRS\)](#) (N=700) we found that among a sample of people who regularly use ecstasy and/or other illicit stimulants recruited from capital cities:

- Almost half (46%) reported that they had ever heard of naloxone.
- Of those that reported awareness and responded (n=312), the large majority (89%; 40% of the total sample) were able to correctly identify the purpose of naloxone (i.e., to reverse a drug overdose), whereas the remaining 11% (n=35) were unaware of its purpose or nominated an incorrect purpose (e.g., to help stop smoking).

Discussion

Awareness of naloxone among the EDRS sample was lower than has been reported among samples of people who inject drugs ([84% in 2022](#)), which is not surprising given the comparatively higher levels of opioid use among the latter (3). While people who inject drugs and/or use opioids should remain the focus of naloxone distribution programs, there may be benefit in increasing naloxone awareness and uptake among other groups of people who use drugs. This is particularly pertinent given that illicit substances such as cocaine have been found to contain opioids and have in some cases contributed to severe overdoses in Australia (4). Further, people who use illicit stimulants may be more likely to be in settings where overdoses might occur and be around people who intentionally or unintentionally use opioids.

References

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4. NSW Health. Public Drug Warnings (2021). Retrieved January 12, 2023 from <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/public-drug-alerts/Pages/2021.aspx>

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