

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

Minister for Health

Minister for Families and Community Services

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Member for Kurrajong

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**Questions on Notice Paper No 36****27 October 2023****Question No. 1478**Asked by **MRS ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA** –

- 1) What is the estimated daily consumption in the ACT, as of 28 October 2023, of the substances of (a) MDMA, (b) amphetamines, (c) cocaine, (d) methylamphetamine, (e) heroin, (f) lysergic acid, (g) lysergide, (h) psilocybine and (i) cannabis.
- 2) How many illicit drug related presentations were recorded daily at ACT medical facilities, since 1 January 2023.

MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- 1) The best available source of regularly updated data on consumption of illicit drugs at the population level is the national wastewater drug monitoring program conducted by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC).

ACIC data is useful for identifying differences in levels of drug consumption between regions. However, wastewater data is only one parameter and the ACIC notes that it complements other Australian drug data collections. Other data illustrate that consumption of the respective drugs varies considerably at different sites. ACIC notes it is important that Australian drug datasets are interpreted holistically.

The estimated number of doses of the requested illicit drugs consumed per 1,000 people per day in the ACT in April 2023 is shown in the table below, where data was available. These dose amounts are estimated from data presented only in graph format from the ACIC wastewater report, so caution should be exercised in interpreting the results.

Drug of interest	Estimated doses consumed per 1,000 people per day - ACT
(a) MDMA (ecstasy)	0.5
(b) Amphetamines (speed etc)	Not available
(c) Cocaine	4
(d) Methylamphetamine (ice)	20
(e) Heroin	4.5

(f) Lysergic Acid	Not available
(g) Lysergide (LSD)	Not available
(h) Psilocybine	Not available
(i) Cannabis	210

Research indicates that population-level drug consumption data is likely to be disproportionately influenced by high levels of use by a minority of users, who are also more likely to experience harms. The illegal nature of drug use means that production and sales figures cannot be used to estimate consumption, as occurs with alcohol.

The National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019, the most recent survey data currently available, indicated that only 1.2 per cent of the ACT population reported using a hallucinogen (such as LSD, lysergic acid or psilocybin) in the last 12 months.

2) Since 1 January 2023, there were 105 emergency department presentations with a poisoning or exposure related principal diagnosis. This includes the following illicit substances:

- Opium
- Heroin
- Codeine, morphine or other opioids
- Methadone
- Other synthetic narcotics
- Cocaine
- Other unspecified other narcotics
- Cannabis (derivatives)
- Lysergide (LSD)
- Hallucinogens
- Gamma hydroxybutyrate
- Ketamine
- Barbiturates
- Benzodiazepines
- Methamphetamine
- Methylenedioxy methamphetamine (MDMA)
- Other psychotropic drug

This data is accurate as of 22 September 2023 and may not match data published previously as the quality and completeness of emergency department data continues to improve over time. This data was drawn from the ACT Non-admitted Patient Emergency Department Care National Minimum Data Set 2022-23. The total presentations for each diagnosis were calculated using the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority Emergency Department Principal Diagnosis Short Code list v11 and the date range determined by the date the patient physically departed from the emergency department.

It should be noted that the available data does not differentiate between accidental and intentional poisoning (overdose), and a number of the above substances are available legally via prescription (i.e.

methadone/barbiturates/benzodiazepines) so the above numbers for emergency department presentations where illegal use occurred may be inflated.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



**Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health**

Date:.....28/11/23.....

This response required 9 hours and 15 minutes to complete, at an approximate cost of \$823.13.