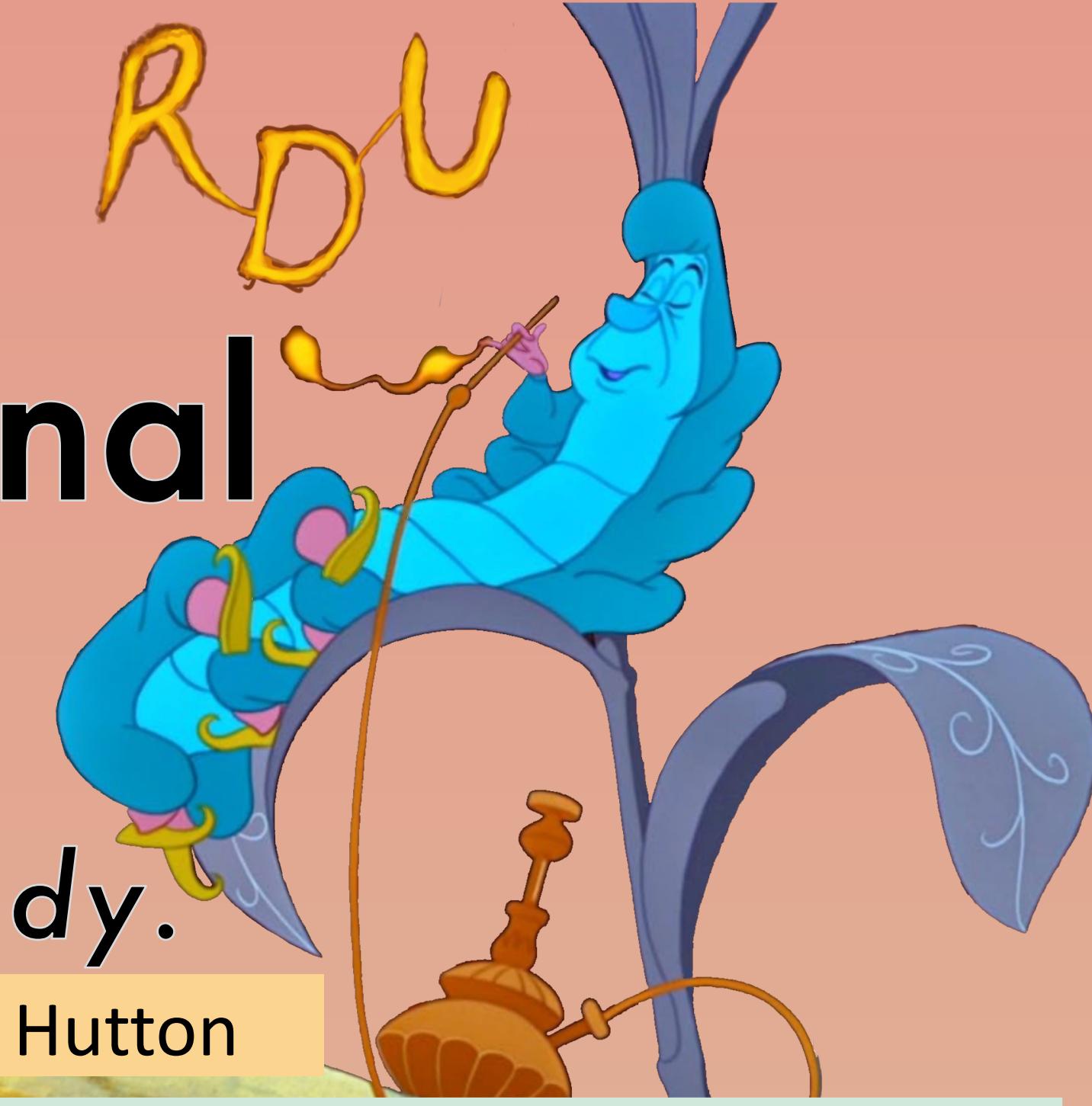


Motivational Characteristics of Initiation & Continued Recreational Drug Use by Emerging Adults.

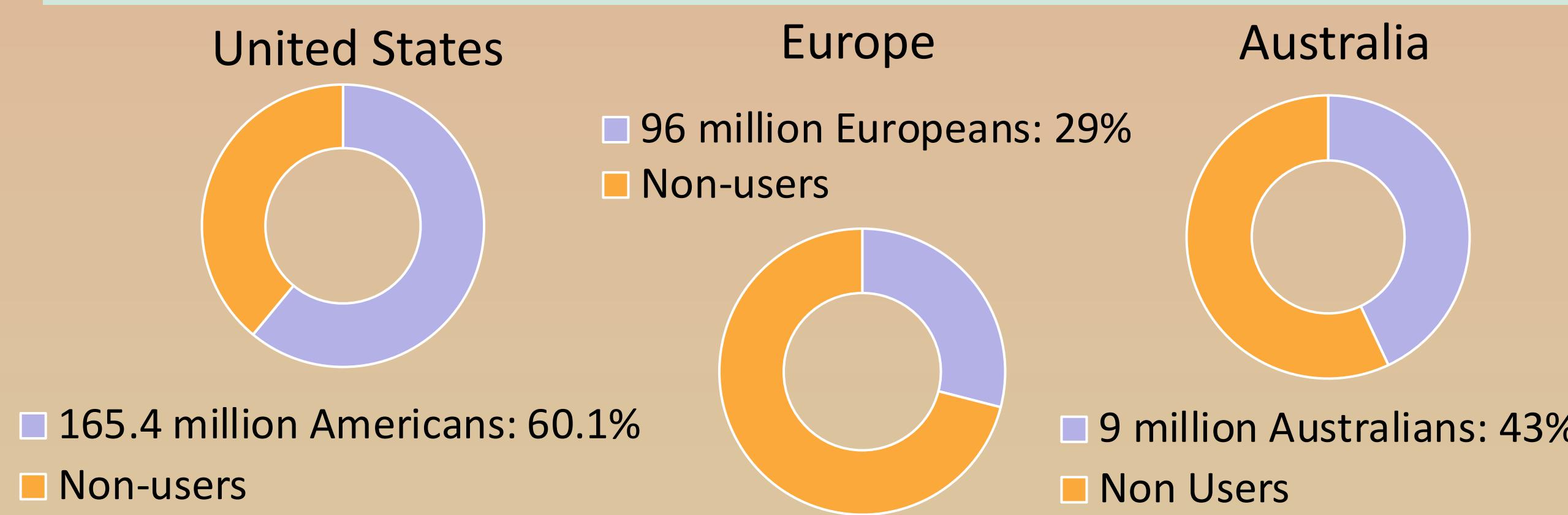


Alicja Lojszczyk (PhD Candidate) | Dr Gary Crowfoot | Prof Rhonda Wilson | Prof Alison Hutton

BACKGROUND

- Recreational drug use is a **normative behaviour** amongst emerging adults when attending social settings and events.
- Recreational drugs are defined as **legal and illegal substances** that are taken for **enjoyment or pleasure** without medical reasoning to induce a **heightened or altered state of consciousness** through **intoxication**.
- There is a **lack of evidence** that evaluates **motivational characteristics** of **recreational drug initiation** and **patterns of continued use** among **emerging adults** in social settings.

GLOBAL DRUG USE STATISTICS – 2019



RESEARCH AIM

Investigate **motivational characteristics** of **initiation** and **continued use** of recreational drugs by emerging adults. Including **age of initiation**, **sources of initiation** and **social settings/environments** of **continued use**.

METHODS & METHODOLOGY

SURVEY TOOLS

National Institute Drug Abuse Quick Screen (NIDA)
World Health Organization – Alcohol, Smoking & Substance Involvement Screening tool (ASSIST V3.0)

Additional Questions: Age of Initiation | Source of Initiation | Social Settings & Environments of Use

PARTICIPANTS

356 Emerging Adults (aged 18-30)
Who participate in **Recreational Drug Use**
Exclusion Criteria: **Having/had problems with Substance Use Disorder**

WHY EMERGING ADULTS?

Emerging Adulthood is a **transitional period of identity exploration and experimentation** formed by **the adaptation of developmental, social, health and environmental influences**. It is recognised that **increased risk-taking** and **impulsivity** occurs in this population. This may **contribute to the statistically normative experimentation with alcohol and illicit drugs** seen in this age group.

REFERENCES

Arnett, J. (2014). *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties* (2nd Edition ed.). New York, New York, United States of America: Oxford University Press.
Lojszczyk, A., Wilson, R., Wood, J & Hutton, A. (2023). Motivational Characteristics of Recreational Drug Use Among Emerging Adults in Social Settings: An Integrative Literature Review. *Frontiers of Public Health*, 11.

National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2010) Resource guide: screening for drug use in general medical settings. Available at: <https://nida.nih.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/nmassist.pdf>

World Health Organization. (2010). The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/item/978924159938-2>

CONTACT INFORMATION:



Email: alicja.lojszczyk@uon.edu.au

X : [@Rave_Nurse](https://twitter.com/Rave_Nurse)

in : [@Alicja-Loj](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alicja-loj)

RESULTS

INITIATION

Most Commonly Used Drugs & Average Age of initiation*

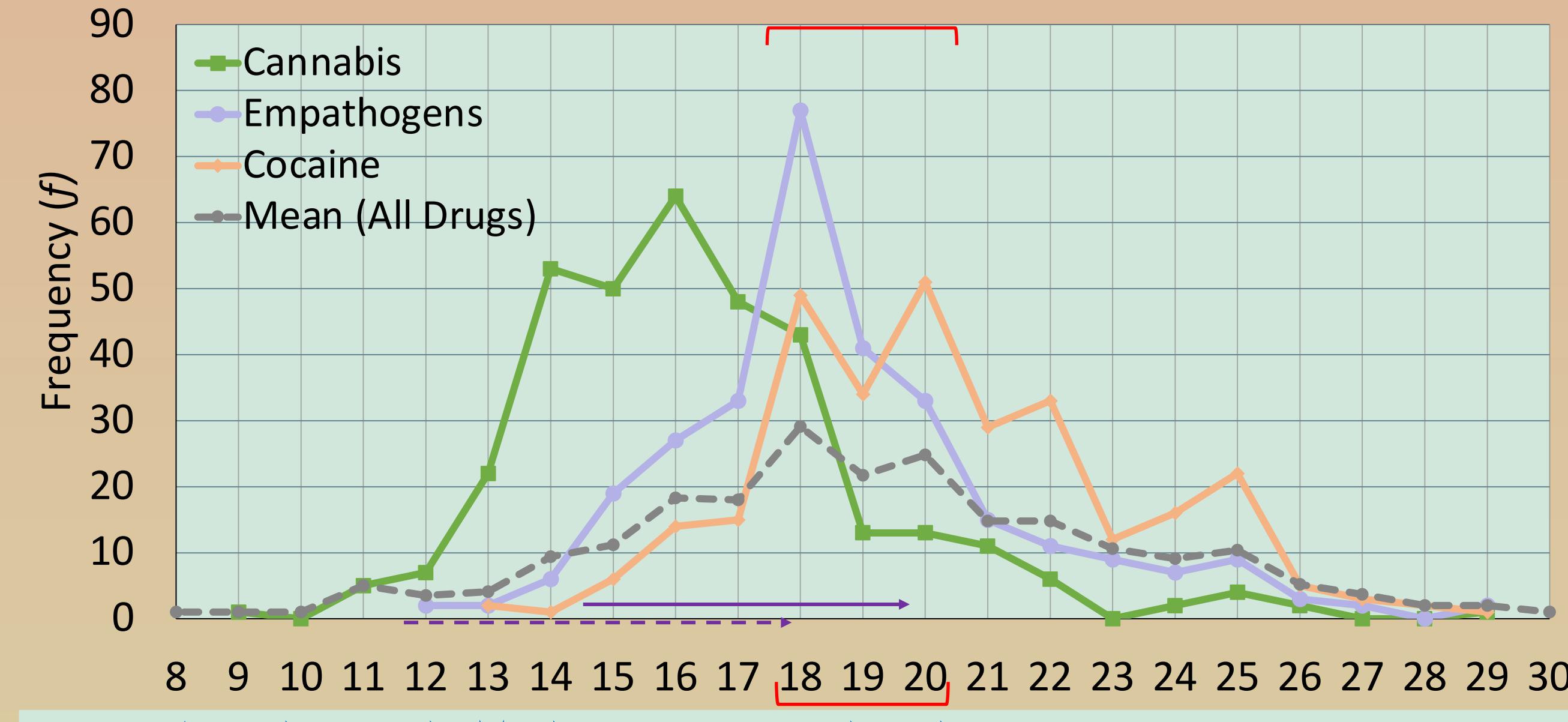
1. Cannabis: 96.9% (n=345) | 16.3 years*
2. Empathogens: 83.7% (n=298) | 18.7 years*
3. Cocaine: 82.9% (n=295) | 20.3 years*

Main Sources of Initiation

- Friends/partner consensually 60%
- Motivational Curiosity/Self-interest 26%

→ Emerged **from 12 years of age**
 → **Increased from 15+ years**
 → **Curiosity peaked between 18-20 years**

AGE OF INITIATION TRENDS – 3 MOST COMMON DRUGS & MEAN



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS OF CONTINUED USE

Mostly Used in Social Settings with Friends 59.3%

Residential/Home Environment: 36.3%
Non-Residential Environments: Parties 17.3% | Festivals 11% | Nightclubs 9.9%

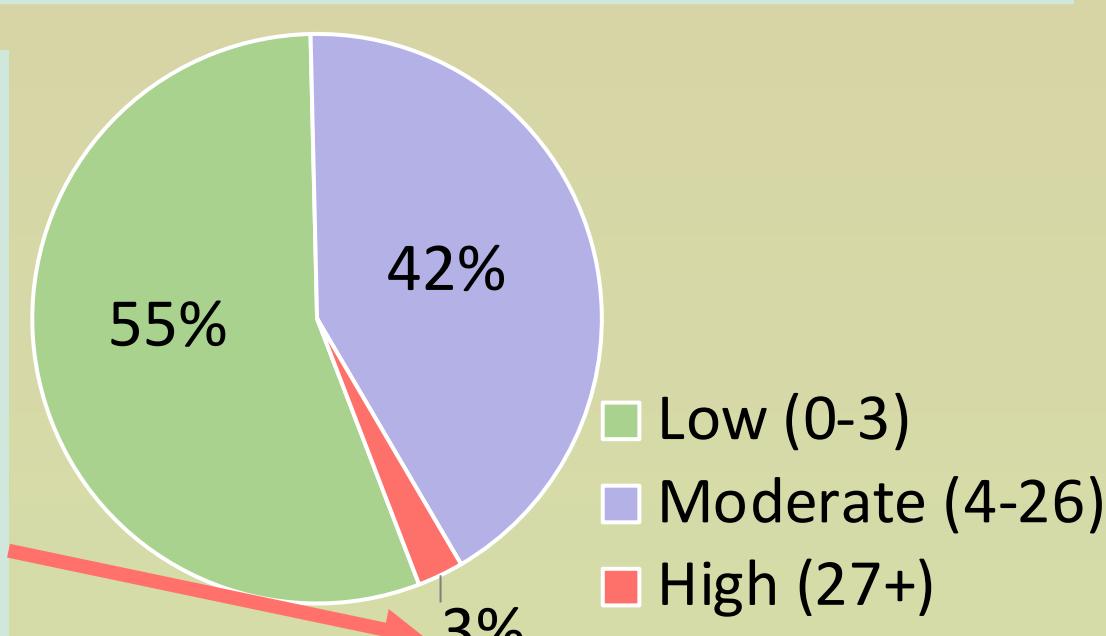
Substances Used "Only Alone": 9%

Drugs with Depressant Effects (Sedatives | Dissociatives | Street & Prescription Opioids) & Prescription Stimulants

SUBSTANCE INVOLVEMENT (SI) SCORING

SI Scoring is used to determine **potential risks associated to continued use**. Including: impact on health, finances and activities of daily living.

High-Risk SI scoring drugs primarily included: Cannabis (8.7%), Prescription (6.3%) & Street Opioids (5.9%)



CONCLUSION

- Age and source of initiation patterns observed in the study **underscores** the **complex interplay** of **individual, social, and environmental factors** surrounding the motivations of recreational drug use initiation and continued use.
- Motivational **curiosity** emerged during **middle-late adolescence** and **continued to develop during emerging adulthood**.
- The development of **curiosity** and **initiation endorsed by friends** (consensually) supported emerging adults to develop patterns of continued use.
- Continued use linked to **socio-recreational goals including pleasure seeking, social bonding & group norms in social environments – including parties, festivals & nightlife venues**.
- Emerging adults commonly used recreational drugs in a **social contexts**.
- Patterns of use had **little negative impact on activities on daily living** and **did not result in significant negative health, social or financial concerns** for most participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Timely harm reduction & health education interventions** during middle-late adolescence and emerging adults to minimise risks.
- Drug testing & health education accessibility** in **settings where recreational drug use is a normative behaviour**.