



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction



National General Population Survey on drug use and attitudes in Kosovo 2014

according to the EMCDDA protocols

Final Report

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The “National General Population Survey on drug use and attitudes in Kosovo 2014” has been carried out by IQ consulting with the support of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)- within its European Union financed IPA project 2011/280-057, "Preparation of IPA Beneficiaries for their participation with the EMCDDA".

This survey report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

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Acknowledgment

The Research Team would like to express its gratitude for all the contributions made to the benefit of this report. The hard work of all research staff would have not been possible without the willingness and openness of respondents, key informants, as well as, anti-drug enforcement agencies to cooperate and share viewpoints.

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Substance use is among the most serious challenges to overcome in fighting crime, protecting public health by preventing substance use and treating those with problems, and establishing rule of law. The lucrative gains from the illegal trade in psychoactive substances together with human propensity to use such substances have been the drivers. The Government of Kosovo has introduced numerous measures to fight organized crime and combat drug networks, however, the crime and health threats to our society coming from the presence and use of illicit substances, needs long-term planning and strategic address. The national Anti-Drug Strategy and other operational and legal documents provide guidance for all law enforcement and treatment agencies to streamline efforts in addressing the problems associated with substance use.

Collection and analysis of data on substance abuse is essential for monitoring progress and addressing its problems. The survey presented herein is the first time that such a study has been carried out in cooperation with European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addictions – EMCDDA, which provides guidance for collecting comparative and statistically relevant data on different aspects related to drug use at EU level.

The results of the survey provide statistically representative data on the prevalence and patterns of substance use among the Kosovo population aged 16-65 at the national level. The survey was carried out by a research company in full anonymity and in line Kosovo and European standards of personal data protection.

The survey method and instruments were in line with EMCDDA methods that are used for the purpose of comparison with other European countries. In addition to the standard questions regarding illicit substance use, the survey also inquired about tobacco and alcohol consumption. The survey was also used to collect opinions and attitudes of citizens on different phenomena in society, which is key to introducing effective and acceptable public policy measures.

The survey was funded by EMCDDA through the EU funded project “Preparation of the IPA beneficiaries for their participation in the EMCDDA”.

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General Population Survey on drug use (GPS) in Kosovo provides information about the extent and patterns of use of a broad range of substances both licit and illicit. Being the first of its kind to be carried out in Kosovo the GPS survey addressed in this report will be used as baseline information for future similar surveys to be carried out. The added value from applying standardized methodologies is generation of comparable data both in time and with other countries. Such an approach to data on these issues is considered to be a key pre-condition for assessing the performance of policies, strategies and public policy measures. The comparability of results with those obtained from other countries in Europe or the region enables a deeper and more accurate understanding of drug markets.

The results of the GPS in Kosovo can be used by researchers, academics, public health professionals and other interested audiences, but most importantly, the policy makers at national level. The study should be considered as a necessary step to begin routine monitoring of drug use prevalence and alcohol consumption, as well as, identifying public's attitudes toward drug and alcohol problem and those towards drug and alcohol policy.

The study objectives were as follows:

- To provide policy makers with data for informed and evidence based drug policy;
- To apply European standard protocol in the context of a general population survey in Kosovo to contribute to a common understanding of psychoactive substance use and risky behavior;
- To develop standardized comparative methodology for surveys on substance use and addictions, to initiate their monitoring in general population in Kosovo and provide comparable data with those at EU level.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kosovo GPS Survey on substance use prevalence has been carried out by IQ Consulting on behalf of EMCDDA and Kosovo Ministry of Interior in the period May – July 2014. The final sample of completed interviews comprised of 5,148 respondents across Kosovo. The sample selection was random by using the polling stations as the most accurate and reliable administrative division unit for the Kosovo population. The research was carried out in 103 settlements, with each being represented by 50 respondents in the sample.

The survey questionnaire was developed jointly with EMCDDA based on its guidelines and standardized reporting requirements for comparable studies¹. Before the actual survey was conducted, IQ Consulting piloted the instrument with 150 respondents aged 16 – 30 years of age in three major centers of Kosovo (Prishtina, Peja, and Gjilan).

The survey was carried out in the field by 30 surveyors, predominantly with social science backgrounds (psychology and sociology). Given that the survey was carried out through face-to-face interviews, the field staff role in the process was considered crucial for the success of the research. Most interviews were carried out in complete privacy with only the interviewer and the interviewee in the room, while in some isolated cases, some portions were self-completed by respondents (in absence of possibilities for carrying out the interview in private).

The survey interview covers a broad range of substances and aspects of substance use. In terms of substances, the survey interview begins with a section on tobacco as the most culturally accepted substance, to proceed with alcohol as the second most acceptable substance and continues to cover illicit substances according to the order suggested in the European Model Questionnaire (EMQ)². The order of substances was designed to ensure smooth transition from one to another topic, ensuring that participation levels of respondents are maintained high.

Lifetime prevalence of tobacco in Kosovo is lower than the EU 25 average.³ Of all respondents in the GPS Survey sample, 34.1% used tobacco and 65.4% did not. Prevalence among younger population (15-34) has been assessed at 31.1%. The data on tobacco consumption indicates that 27.6% of smokers are habitual smokers with consumption levels of 20 cigarettes per day or more.

Last year prevalence of alcohol consumption appears to be very low in Kosovo. Although culturally, alcohol is a quite acceptable substance, a small percentage of respondents in the GPS Survey actually report having consumed it in the last year. On each beer, wine, and spirits, an average of 32% respondents have respondents that they do not consume that type of alcohol, while an additional 53.8% (average of three types of alcohol) state never to have drunk

¹ EMCDDA, Handbook for surveys on drug use among the general population, EMCDDA project CT.99.EP.08 B, Lisbon, August 2002. <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index58052EN.html>

² Pharmaceuticals (anti-depressants and sedatives), Marijuana, Hashish, Ecstasy, Amphetamines, Cocaine, Heroin, and LSD.

³ Zatoński W, Przewoźniak K, Sulkowska U, West R, Wojtyła A. Tobacco smoking in countries of the European Union.

them. On average, 10% of respondents report to have drunk beer, wine, and spirits during the last year. Women consumption during the last 12 months is much lower than that of men.

Less than 5% of total respondents in the sample report drinking 5 beers on one occasion on weekly basis. The consumption of beer is the highest among all types of alcohol but its frequency of occurrence quite low. Long-term problematic risky behavior on all alcohol indicators measured is rated below 3%. The parameters used to assess long term problematic and risky alcohol use behavior included remorse after drinking, drinking of 12 glasses/units of alcohol per single occasion, presence of memory blackouts due to drinking, failure to complete chores as well as drinking in the morning.

Prescription drugs inquired about in the survey included most frequently encountered antidepressants and sedatives. Across all antidepressants available in the local markets and major international brands, the reported use in the last year was lower than 1%. An average 2% of respondents report having used antidepressants in the past, but not during the last year. Similarly to this, sedatives use is reported to be lower than 1% per each of the drugs inquired about, but total percentage of last year use is estimated to be at 3%. Most of the reported users stated to have bought the drugs with doctors' prescription, but in few instances, the drugs were obtained through informal routes.

Marijuana is the most present illicit substance in Kosovo. 10% of all respondents in the sample acknowledge knowing someone that uses marijuana/hashish. Marijuana also is the most accessible illicit substance with 12.6% respondents in the sample report having very easy or fairly easy access and 2% of respondents confirming to have ever used marijuana themselves. Last year usage totals at 1.1% of the total sample and last month usage of marijuana/hashish reaches 0.8% of the total number of respondents.

For Marijuana but also the other illicit substances, the reported prevalence of use are quite low. This limits the potential for further breakdown or analysis according to age groups and/or other comparisons. Caution is required in interpreting figures based on those low numbers.

Ecstasy presence in Kosovo is primarily limited to larger urban centers with the domination of the capital Prishtina. 21 – 30 year old males are the most exposed age group to this substance. No women in the sample have confirmed use of Ecstasy while no men older than 40 years of age have testified to having tried the substance.

Speed (Amphetamines) is also predominantly present in the capital and is almost exclusively available to younger male market. Last year use of Speed is confirmed by 0.1% of total or 0.2% of the total men in the sample as all positive responses were provided by men. No confirmations were received to the last month use question. The most exposed age group towards this substance is that of 26 – 30 years old of which 0.5% confirming to have tried Speed in their lifetime.

Cocaine has received significant national media attention recently because police actions resulting with the seizure of 16 kg of Cocaine in Kosovo. Being one of the most

expensive drugs in the market, Cocaine is only accessible to a few users that can afford it. While it also appears to be present in the capital, reported presence has also been noted in the rural areas. The age group mostly exposed to this substance appear to be among the group between 26 - 30 years of age (0.6% confirmed lifetime use) and 15 - 20 years old (0.5% confirmed lifetime use).

Lifetime use of heroin has been confirmed by 0.1% of respondents in the GPS Survey sample. Last year use of Heroin is confirmed by 0.1% of total or 0.2% of the total men in the sample as all positive responses were provided by men. There have been no confirmations of last month use of Heroin in the GPS Survey in Kosovo.

It should be noted however, that Heroin is perceived as more easily available than Speed and Cocaine, but less so than Ecstasy. The presence of Heroin in the society is also confirmed by 0.6% of respondents interviewed in the GPS survey who confirm solicitation/offering either for purchase or free of charge with this substance during the last year.

0.7% of respondents in the sample know someone that takes Acid/LSD. 1.4% of respondents from urban areas as opposed to 0.1% of them coming from rural settlements confirm knowing someone that takes LSD. The most exposed age group towards this substance is that of 26 – 30 years old of which 0.6% confirming to have tried LSD in their lifetime. The age group 21 – 25 ranks second with 0.5% of respondents within the group confirming they had tried LSD, followed by the 15 -20 year olds of which 0.2% of total group report to have tried LSD.

1. SURVEY BACKGROUND

The Kosovo GPS Survey on substance prevalence and availability has been carried out by IQ Consulting on behalf of EMCDDA and Kosovo Ministry of Interior in the period May – July 2014. The final sample of completed interviews comprised of 5,148 respondents across Kosovo. The surveyors have attempted a total of 5,635 interviews, hence ensuring a response rate of 91.4% or refusal percentage of 8.6%. The sample selection was random using the polling stations as the most accurate and reliable administrative division unit for the Kosovo population.

Sample	%	%	Tot. Res p	15-24 yrs			25-34 yrs			35-44 yrs			45-54 yrs			55-64 yrs		
				Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
Total	100	%	5000	1250	629	621	1000	503	497	1000	503	497	1000	503	497	750	378	372
Urban	38%	100	1907	466	235	232	373	188	185	373	188	185	373	188	185	572	288	284
K-Albanian		90	1716	392	197	194	336	169	167	336	169	167	336	169	167	1030	518	511
K-Serbian		5	95	23	12	12	19	9	9	19	9	9	19	9	9	57	29	28
Other Non-Albanian		5	95	23	12	12	19	9	9	19	9	9	19	9	9	57	29	28
Rural	62%	100	3094	773	389	384	619	311	307	619	311	307	619	311	307	928	234	230
K-Albanian		90	2784	696	350	346	557	280	277	557	280	277	557	280	277	1670	210	207
K-Serbian		5	155	39	19	19	31	16	15	31	16	15	31	16	15	93	47	46
Other Non-Albanian		5	155	39	19	19	31	16	15	31	16	15	31	16	15	93	47	46

Table 1. GPS Population sample breakdown

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

In line with the ToR, Technical Offer by IQ Consulting and the subsequent contract signed between the two parties on the delivery of research services stipulated above, IQ Consulting team has proceeded with detailing the operational aspects of the implementation of the survey including detailed overview of staffing and resource requirements as well as updated timetable of activities.

The survey questionnaire was developed jointly with EMCDDA based on The European Model Questionnaire (EMQ) and guidelines for standardized reporting requirements used in similar studies⁴. During the preparation phase, the survey questionnaire was piloted with 150 youth in three major centers in Kosovo (Prishtina, Peja, and Gjilan) and the lessons learnt from the pilot were used to optimize the questionnaire further.

The research was carried out in 103 settlements, each being represented by 50 respondents in the sample. The survey was carried out in by 30 interviewers, predominantly with social science backgrounds (psychology and sociology), who were trained beforehand on the field work methodology and sample selection procedures and the contents of the questionnaire. Their work was supervised by 5 field controllers, enabling on average around 10% of all interviews monitored for quality assurance in real time.

⁴ EMCDDA, Handbook for surveys on drug use among the general population, EMCDDA project CT.99.EP.08 B, Lisbon, August 2002. <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index58052EN.html>

Given that the survey was carried out through face-to-face interviews, the role of the interviewers was considered crucial for the success of the research. Most interviews were carried out in complete privacy with only the interviewer and the interviewee in the room, while in some isolated cases, some portions were self-completed by respondents (in absence of possibilities for carrying out the interview in private).

The survey covers a broad range of substances and aspects of substance use. In terms of substances, the survey begins with a section on tobacco as the most culturally accepted substance, to proceed with alcohol as the second most acceptable substance and continues to cover illicit substances in the order according to the order suggested in the European Model Questionnaire (EMQ).

3. GPS SURVEY FINDINGS

The GPS Survey in Kosovo covered a broad range of substances listed in the questionnaire following this order: Tobacco, Alcohol, antidepressants and tranquilizers/sedatives, marijuana and hashish, Ecstasy, Speed, Cocaine, Heroin and LSD. The survey also included questions on the perceived availability of drugs, opinions, attitudes and risks perception. The following table shows the lifetime prevalence of substance use among 15 - 65 year-old population.

Substance	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Tobacco	44.7	27.0	38%
Alcohols			
Beer	27.1%	9.2%	20.3%
Wine	14.8%	9.0%	12.6%
Spirits	12.5%	4.8%	9.6%
Medicines			
Antidepressants	0.2%	0%	0.1%
Sedatives	0.2%	0.1%	0.15%
Cannabis	2.8	0.9	2.1
Ecstasy	0.2	0	0.1
Amphetamines	0.2	0	0.1
Cocaine	0.4	0.1	0.3

Heroin	0.2	0	0.1
LSD	0.3	0.2	0.2

Table 2. Lifetime prevalence of substance use (%)

More detailed findings on each of the substances included in the questionnaire can be found in the next sections. However, for most of the illicit drugs, the prevalence rates are quite low. This limits the possibilities for breakdown and detailed analysis according to age groups and/or other comparisons. In other words, caution is required in interpreting figures based on these low numbers.

3.1. Tobacco

Tobacco smoking has often been labeled as one of biggest public health challenges in Europe. Smoking has been identified as a major cause of premature death claiming an estimated 650,000 lives every year.⁵ With 34% of respondents in the survey confirming lifetime experience with tobacco consumption, Kosovo is placed below the EU 25 average of 37%⁶. As compared to other non-EU countries, Kosovo has more smokers as compared to Turkey⁷, but significantly lower percentage than Serbia⁸. Out of all respondents in the sample, 34.1% respondents positively to this question, while 65.4% answering negatively.

Particularly problematic should be seen the prevalence of habitual smoking among younger population (15-34), which accounts for a significant portion of the population, which has been assessed at 31.1%. On the other hand, whole population data on tobacco consumption indicate that 27.6% of smokers are habitual smokers with consumption levels of 20 cigarettes per day or more. Figure 1, provides a complete illustration of results to the queries regarding respondents' smoking status and frequency of smoking.

⁵ Zatoński W, Przewoźniak K, Sulkowska U, West R, Wojtyła A. Tobacco smoking in countries of the European Union.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Turkey's lifetime prevalence was 26.7% (Ilhan, Mustafa, Turkish Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs School Population Survey, 2012);

⁸ Serbia's Lifetime prevalence is 64.5% (Kilibarda, Biljana. Drug use in Serbia, results of the first general population survey in 2014 according to the EMCDDA methodology)

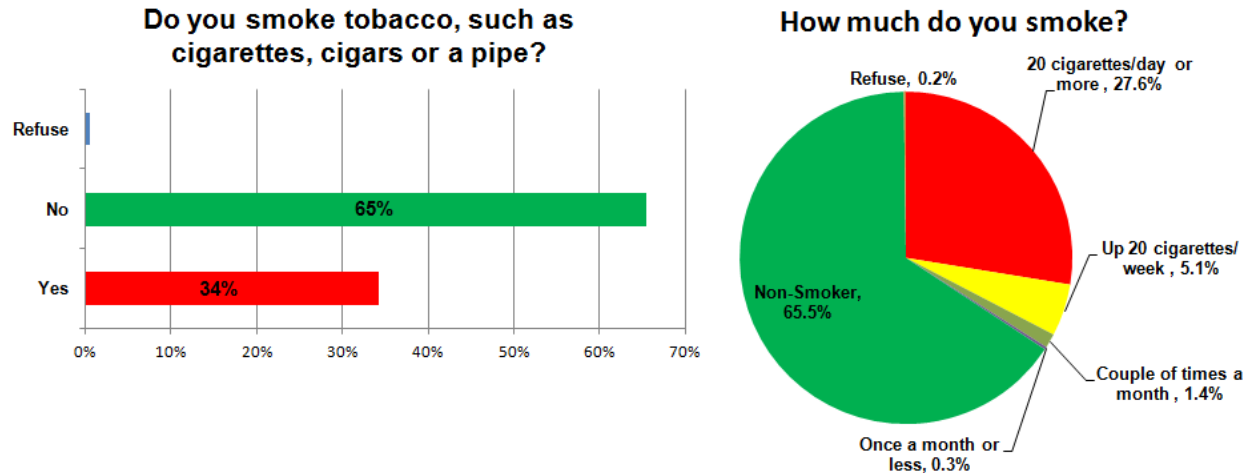


Figure 1. Tobacco prevalence

The lifetime smoking prevalence among women is much lower than that among men. (24.6% of women as compared to 39.9% of men). In terms of age distribution, there seems to be a linear distribution of respondents that is not affected by the age variable.

On another note, Kosovo tobacco imports have represented an average of 3% of all imports' value. The low prevalence observed in the GPS study confirms the assumption that the imported amounts are being re-exported out of Kosovo. This statement is also supported by the Central bank of Kosovo in its Annual Report for 2013, which ascribes the net export growth partly due to the increase of tobacco exports⁹. The relatively low duties and import taxes on tobacco products in Kosovo, are believed to be the primary reason for Kosovo being an import destination. The very limited production of tobacco in Kosovo facilitated primarily in small-scale subsistence farms and traded informally is another reason why the link between the imported and exported tobacco be solidly made.

3.2. Alcohol

The respondents were asked to provide their drinking habits towards three types/groups of alcohols that were broadly categorized as beer, wine and spirits. Show-cards with illustrations were used to present respondents a visual overview of measurements used for each category. For all three types/groups of alcohol different aspects of practices have been inquired through the survey. Lifetime abstinence from alcohol has been included as one of the answering options in the survey, ensuring clear following of cases of abstinence. A separate option was provided for abstinence from one type of alcohol. The alcohol section of the survey included queries about frequency of consumption, consumption habits, practices, and attitudes aimed at identifying problematic and risky behavior while under alcohol influence.

3.2.1. Last year consumption

Last year consumption of alcohol use is reported to be low in Kosovo. Although culturally, alcohol is a quite acceptable substance, a small percentage of respondents in the

⁹ Central Bank of Kosovo. Annual Report 2013. Available at: <http://www.bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2014/BQK-RV-Shqip-2013.pdf>

GPS Survey actually report having consumed it during the last year. When asked whether they had consumed beer, wine and spirits an average of 32% respondents have provided negative answers under the justification that they do not consume that type of alcohol, while an additional 53.8% (average of three types of alcohols) state never to have drunk the type inquired about. If responses are viewed from a gender standpoint, women abstinence from alcohol is much higher than that of men. (92.4% of women as opposed to 73.5% of men).

The Figure 2 below provides for a visual overview of responses broken down by gender and age groups. It should be noted that very similar results were also obtained regarding wine and spirits, with slight increase of women increase reporting to have drunk wine in the last year, while a decline in the percentage of women reporting to have consumed spirits. In terms of age groups, 21 – 25 year olds represent the leading group in all categories, but most concerning is the 3.7% of respondents within this age group reporting to drink 3-5 times/week as well as 2.2% reporting daily consumption of alcohol within this age range.

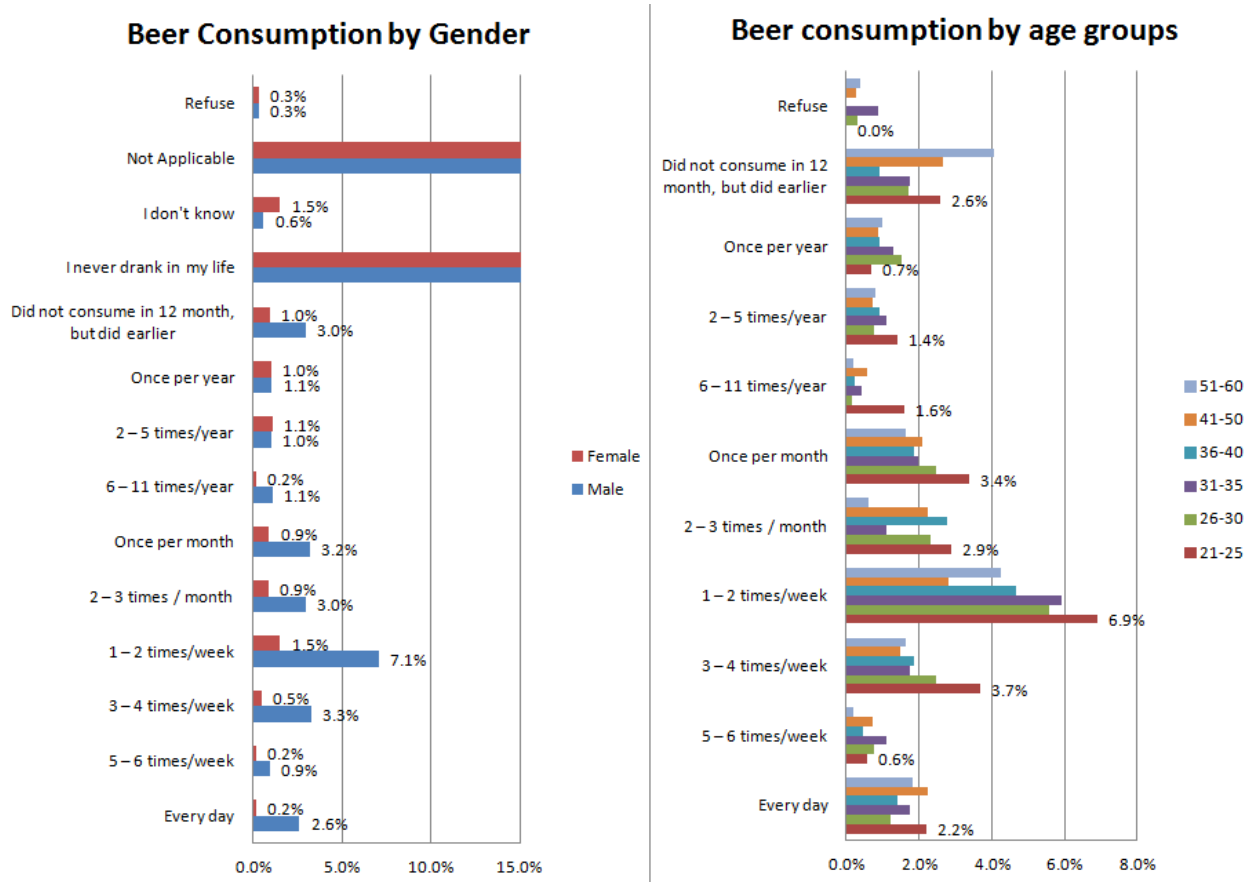


Figure 2. Last year consumption of beer by gender and age group

Last year prevalence of any alcohol consumption is at 7.5% of the total respondents surveyed. Women consumption during the last year is much lower than that of men totaling at 27% as compared to the 44.7% prevalence with men. In terms of age distribution, The sharpest difference in terms of gender comes regarding spirits where women report significantly lower percentages of consumption across all frequencies of use (97% abstinence from spirits as

opposed to 88% of men). 10.6% of Kosovars in the GPS survey report to have drunk beer on an occasion other than with a meal, while 5.8% of respondents have confirmed to have consumed beer with food. Bars, pubs and clubs are the places where beer is most frequently consumed (7.7% of total), with restaurants (4%) and home (3%) as second and third most reported drinking location. Open air drinking is the reported location for 1.7% of respondents and this is believed to be those that drink during the summer in the beach and those attending concerts and other open air events. Other open air (informal street-drinking) is rarely encountered or reported.

3.2.2 Single risky occasion drinking

The single risky occasion drinking variable was measured both in terms of frequency as well as length of events. When the respondents were requested to provide their answers about beer, less than 5% of total respondents in the sample report their consumption of five beers on weekly basis. Other frequencies of use provided as options (even more rarely) also are all 2% and below each.

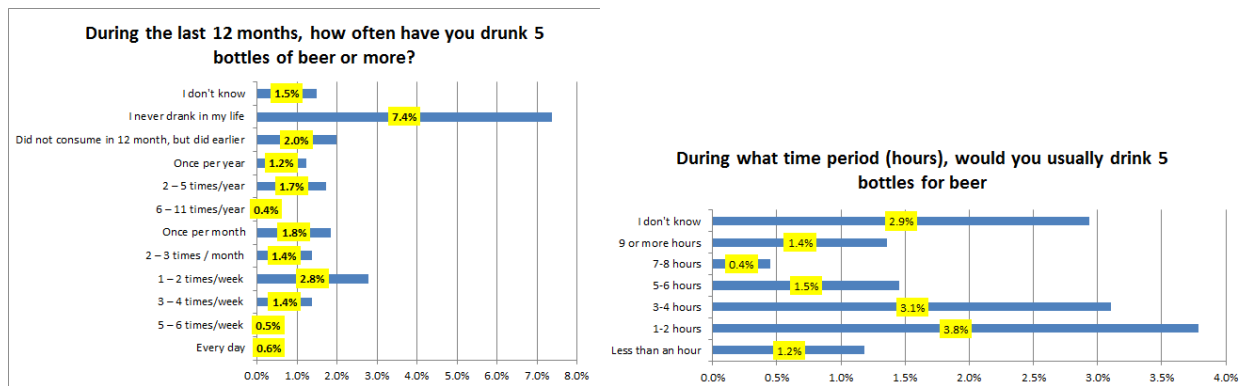


Figure 3. Frequency of drinking 5 beers on a single occasion and length of event

Occasions when respondents have drunk twelve wine glasses or twelve shots of spirits are reported in even lower percentages than five beers.

3.2.4. Long-term problematic risky behavior

To assess the long-term risky problematic behavior, several variables were applied. The first aspect covers the frequency of events when they consumed twelve glasses/units of alcohol during the last year, where below 2%. Similarly, only 2.7% of men and 0.9% of women report to have had cases in the last year when they felt remorse after drinking alcohol. The figure 4 below provides a combined overview of events when respondents have drunk 10 bottles of beer or more and the events when respondents felt remorse after alcohol consumption.

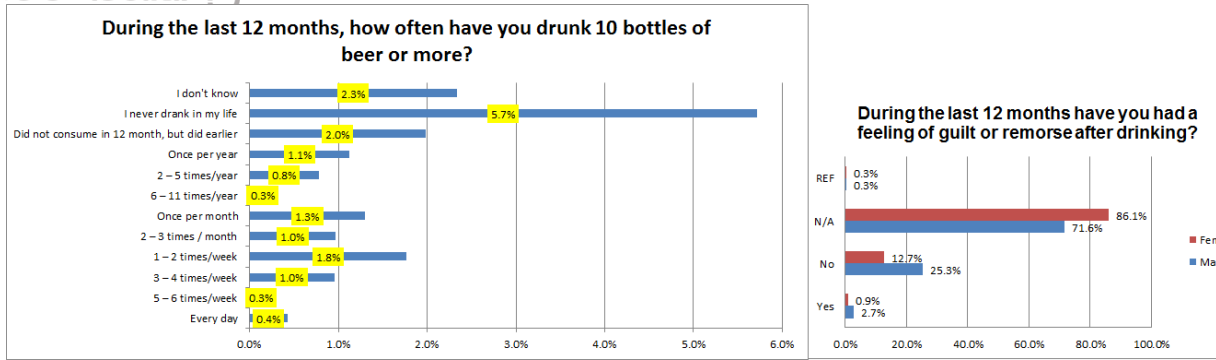


Figure 4. Frequency of drinking 10 beers on a single occasion and alcohol related remorse

A total of 2.1% of all respondents report to have had instances during the last 12 months that they have drunk in the morning. Of this total 3% of men and only 0.7% of women report to have had this practice during the last twelve months. In addition, respondents were asked to recollect whether there was an instance when they have failed to complete normal chores /obligations because of drinking. While 2.1% of respondents report to have drunk in the morning, 1.2% of them report to have failed to complete what was normally expected from them because of drinking. Figure 5 presents these two aspects visually.

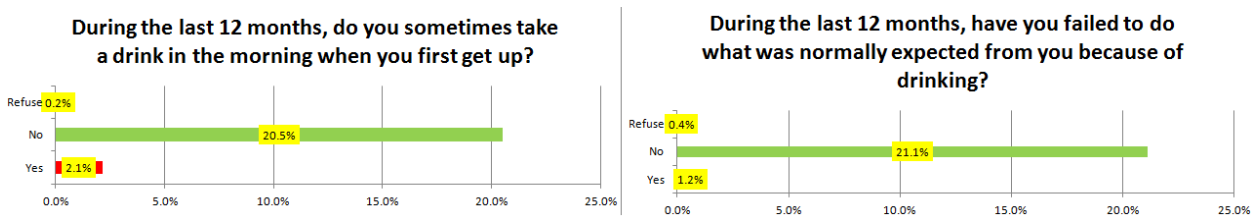


Figure 5. Morning Drinking and failure to complete expected responsibilities

If viewed through the age stratification of the sample the two highest age groups reporting to have failed to complete something that was expected of them is 21 – 25 years (2.1%) and 15 – 20 years (1.6%). All other age groups report to have lower than 1% confirmation of failure to perform normal duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the two aspects of long-term problematic drinking, memory blackouts from drinking have also been inquired about to measure the extent of alcohol related problems within the sample. A total of 2.7% of respondents report to have had alcohol related memory blackouts when other have had to explain them events in which they have participated under the influence of alcohol.

3.3. Pharmaceuticals

The questions about pharmaceutical products have been grouped into two main categories, namely, anti-depressants, and sedatives. For each group the most present types (including visual brand images) were visually shown to respondents for each of the name inquired about. It should be noted that during the pilot study and the visits to the local pharmacies, sedatives and anti-depressants could be purchased without prescription in many locations. Given the fact that some of the pharmacies admitted to offering also sedatives and

anti-depressants that are not officially licensed in Kosovo, the control of sales of these products is rather difficult. Customs and police controls have often resulted in seizure of pharmaceuticals (in general not only sedatives and anti-depressants) primarily originating from Serbia¹⁰ that were entering Kosovo illegally.

3.3.1. Anti-Depressants

The list of antidepressant pharmaceuticals that were inquired about included: Paroxetine, Olanzapine, Escitalopram, Risperidon, Citalopram, Biperidene, and Fluphenazine. Across all antidepressant pills available in the local markets and major international brands, the reported consumption of antidepressants was lower than 1%. An average 2% of respondents included in the GPS Survey report not to have consumed it in the last year, indicating familiarity and prior use of a given anti-depressant. The Figure 6 below provides for an overview of responses for Olanzapine which is very representative of the distribution of responses among other substances. It should be noted that the gender distribution is rather uniform regarding the use of anti-depressants. Similarly, the sample of respondents confirming use of particular substance is so small that no gender differences could be observed.

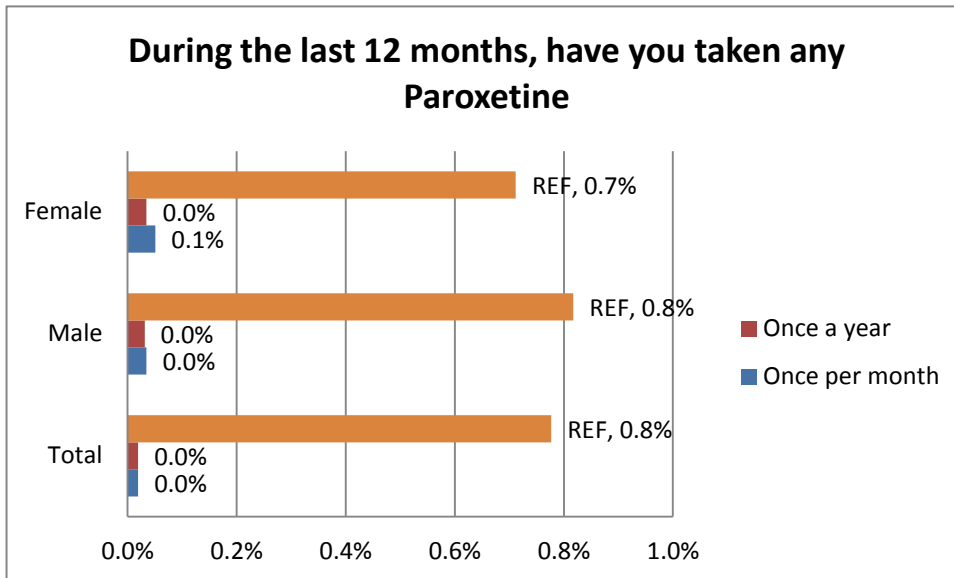


Figure 6. Frequency of use of Paroxetine

Furthermore, when asked how they accessed anti-depressants 0.2% of respondents report to have bought them and an additional 0.2% reports to have acquired it in a manner not listed in the answering options. Figure 7 below provides an overview of access to anti-depressants as reported by respondents in the GPS survey.

¹⁰ See news reports available at: BIRN: <http://gazetajnk.com/?cid=1,979,888>; Kosovo360 live portal: <http://www.kosovalive360.com/barnat-nga-serbia-rezultojne-te-jene-me-regjistrome-falso.html>; KOHA.net: <http://koha.net/arkiva/?page=1,3,70155>

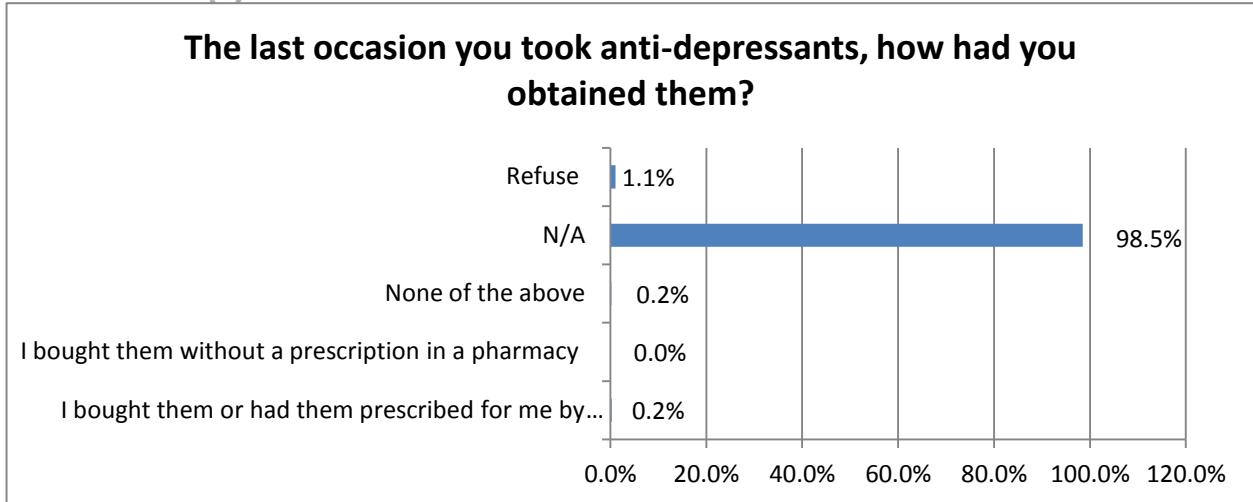


Figure 7. Access to anti-depressants

3.3.2. Sedatives

Sedatives appear to be more widely used than antidepressants, however their reported use continues to be under 1% for each type of sedative inquired about. The list of antidepressant pharmaceuticals that were inquired about included: Valium, Diazepam, Temazepam, Trodon, Alprazolam, Bromazepam, Sulpiride, Xanax, Bensedin, and Loram. While most of the types of sedatives were reported at around 1% of usage by respondents, a total of 3% of the surveyed population have taken sedatives in the last year.

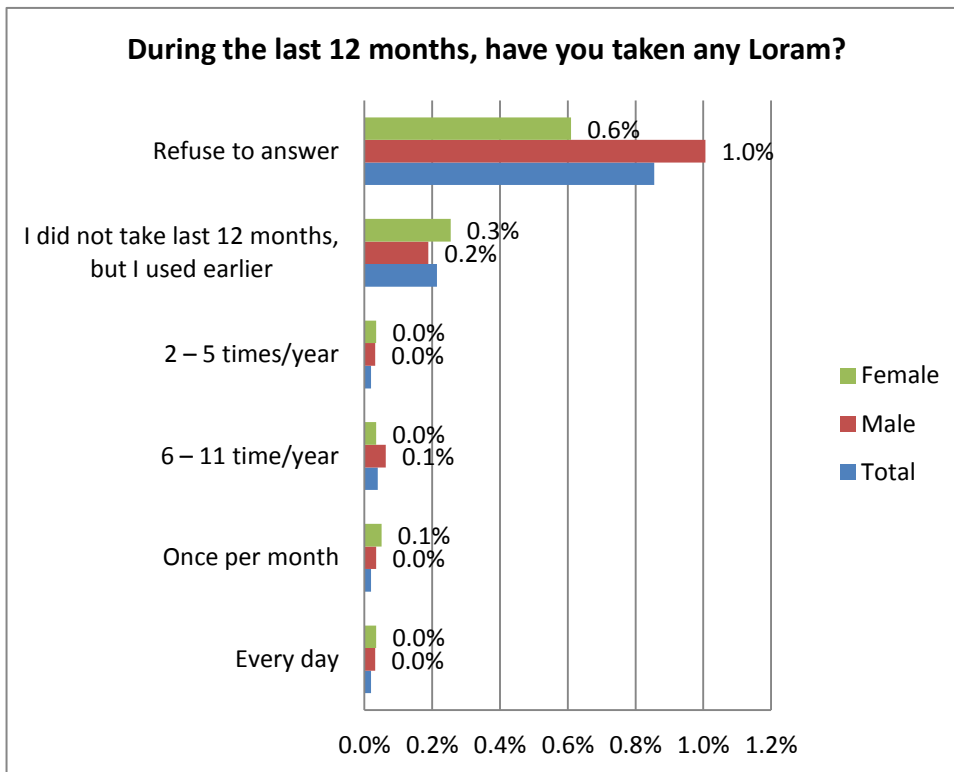
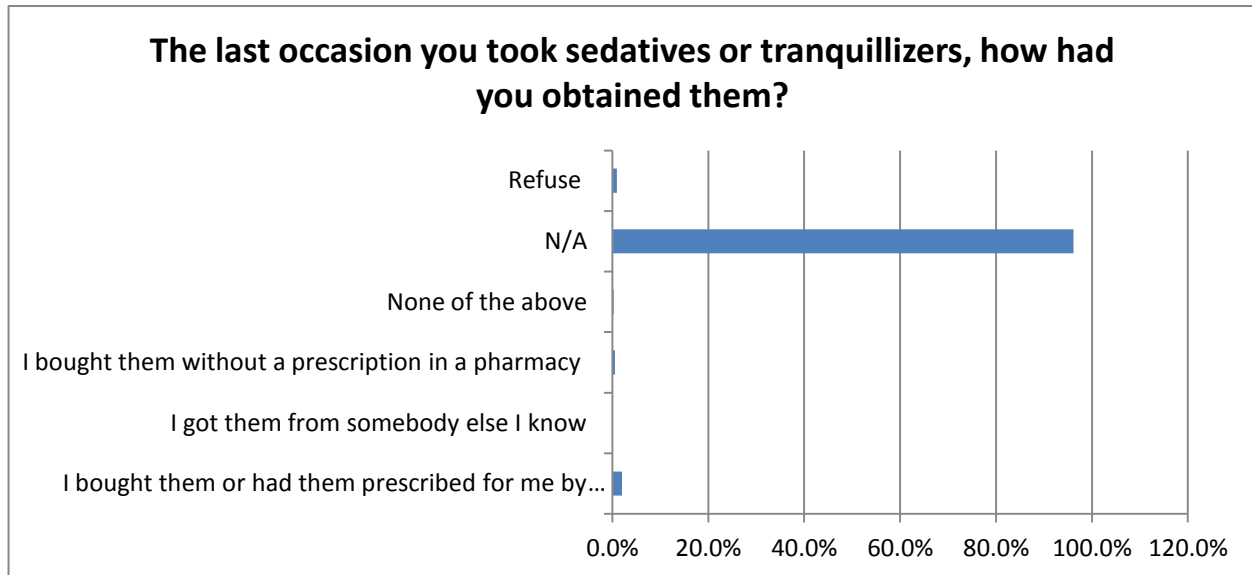


Figure 8. Frequency of usage of Loram in the last year

Similarly to the use of antidepressants, around half of the respondents admitting to have used sedatives have bought them in the pharmacies (2%), bought them without a prescription (0.5%), or by some other mean not provided as an option in the survey (0.3%). The only difference in results as compared to the access to antidepressants, is several respondents reported to have acquired them from someone informally. There are no significant observable differences in terms of age group and gender distribution of responses, and due to the small number of reported users, no major observations can be made with regards to users of sedatives in Kosovo. The Figure 9 below, provides an overview of access to sedatives, as reported by respondents.



5

Figure 9. Access to sedatives

3.4. Marijuana and Hashish

All activities related to marijuana cultivation, possession and distribution/marketing in Kosovo are criminal offences. The Criminal Code of Kosovo does not provide for differentiation in terms of penalties for various types of drugs and is equally harsh towards all of them. The police and other rule of law institutions have confronted cannabis with the same approach as other illicit substances. The approach that anti-drug agencies have adopted thus so far has not been very effective to curb the marijuana presence in Kosovo. One of the approaches selected by the police, namely, raids in night clubs for checking possession among individuals, has resulted with youngsters being apprehended for personal use quantities of marijuana, which also implies that they will be opened criminal records. Education campaigns against drugs have largely been inefficient in preventing the use of drugs particularly among youth. The focus group discussion facilitated as part of the pilot phase indicates that most youngsters participating in the discussion consider awareness raising campaigns to be very inadequate for this target audience.

As part of the pilot survey, the project team also attempted to apply an alternative measurement of marijuana consumption in Kosovo through assessing the market of rolling

papers. Given that the number of tobacco smokers who use rolling paper for non-marijuana smoking is insignificant, the estimation of the papers' market would also represent an accurate estimation of the marijuana consumption. The interesting finding to this end, is that because of the illegality of marijuana, all rolling papers, which is otherwise perfectly legal product to be marketed in Kosovo, are imported and traded illegally.

The survey results indicate that marijuana/hashish is the most consumed illicit drug in Kosovo. The discussion in focus group during the pilot survey indicates that the price of marijuana in the local market ranges from € 10/g – € 15/g. The marijuana section was the longest in the questionnaire and aside from covering the aspects addressed for other substances, it also inquired about age of first time consumption, prevalence among social circles, availability and markets. The first question regarding marijuana asked in the survey inquired whether respondents knew someone that take hashish/marijuana. 10% of respondents in the sample confirm to know personally someone who uses cannabis.

The second question tested the perceived availability of marijuana and the respondents were asked how difficult would it be for them to access marijuana in 24 hours if they wanted. 43.3% of state not to know how difficult it would be for them to find marijuana in one day if they wanted some. 28.3% in the sample state it would be impossible for them to find, with an additional 8.3% of them stating that it would be very difficult. A total of 5.2% of respondents in the sample state that it would be fairly difficult for them to find marijuana within 24 hours, while 3.2% state it would be a fairly easy task for them. 9.4% of respondents assess the task of finding marijuana within 24 hours as very easy to achieve, with an additional 1.9% of respondents who refused to answer the question. The respondents were then asked to reveal whether they have ever taken marijuana themselves and 98% of respondents responded negatively to the question. Full illustration of responses regarding access to marijuana and personal experience with it is presented in the Figure 10 below.

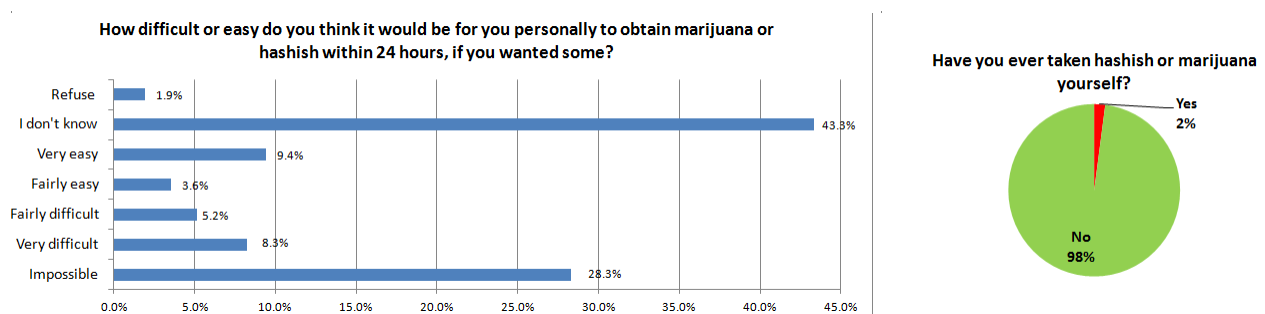


Figure 10. Difficulty in accessing marijuana and personal experience with it

The results obtained in these two questions are both gender and age sensitive. A total of 2.8% of men in the sample as compared to 0.9% of women in the sample admit to have taken marijuana. Similarly, marijuana is more accessible to men than women. 51.7% of women as compared to 31.4% of men state not to know how difficult it would be for them to find marijuana within 24 hours if they wanted. In addition, 8.6% of women as compared to 9.9% of men

consider it would be very easy to find marijuana within 24 hours. In terms of age distribution of responses, the highest reported percentages of personal encounter with marijuana come from the age group 15 -20 years old with 4.5% confirmation rate and age group 21 – 25 years old with 3.6% of them confirming they have taken marijuana. Similarly, 13.5% and 13.4% of respondents in age groups 15-20 and 21 -25 respectively have reported very easy access to marijuana within 24 hours if they wanted. 9.6% of respondents within the age group 26 – 30 believe that they can access marijuana very easily within 24 hours. 55 – 60 year old age group appears to have the lowest access with only 4.5% of respondents confirming access to marijuana within 24 hours.

Unlike other questions regarding tobacco, alcohol, and pharmaceuticals, the responses also appear to be quite different in terms of rural/urban distribution. A total of 13.6% of respondents in urban settlements have reported very easy access to marijuana within 24 hours, as compared to 5.9% of respondents in rural areas who confirm the same. Similarly 4% of urban respondents confirm to have taken marijuana as opposed to 0.4% of respondents from rural settlements who confirm the same.

The respondents in the survey were also asked about their encounter with marijuana during the last year and in the last month. Only 1.1% of respondents in the sample confirm to have taken marijuana/hashish in the last year, while even smaller percentage of respondents report to have consumed it in the last month. In each of the questions, 0.2% of respondents have refused to answer, while 7.8% of them responded negatively. Figure 11 provides for an overview of reported consumption of marijuana during the last year and in the last month.

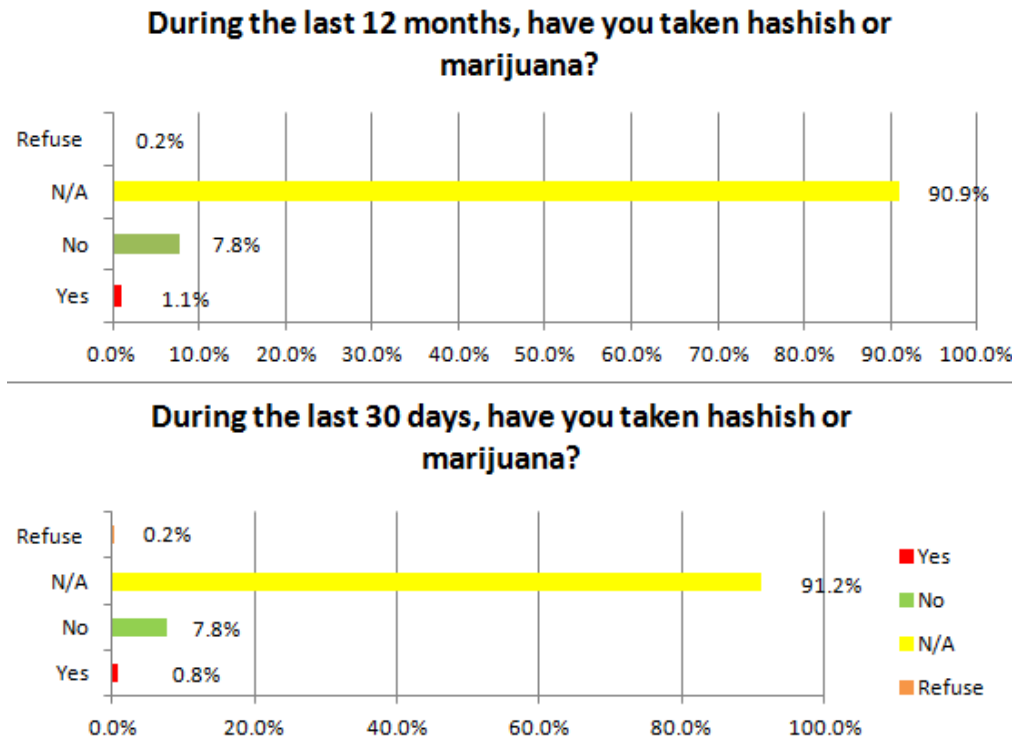


Figure 11. Last year and last month use of marijuana/hashish

When the results are analyzed through a gender lens, it could be observed that the use of marijuana/hashish among men is higher both during the last year period (1.6% of men and 0.3% women confirm use of marijuana within the last year) and last month period (1.2% men and 0.2% women confirm use of marijuana in the last month). Similarly, there are significant age differences when use of marijuana is concerned. The highest percentage of marijuana use during the last year is reported by 15 – 20 year olds 2.8% of which confirm that. Age groups 21 – 25 years old and 26 – 30 years old are second and third rated according to marijuana use in the last year with 1.5% and 1.1% of them respectively who confirm to have smoked. In other age groups the reported use of marijuana is below 0.5%. Similarly, the last month use is also most frequently reported by the three youngest age groups in the sample from youngest to the oldest with 2.0%, 1.1% and 0.9% respectively. Urban/rural differences are also apparent with last year use being reported by 2% of respondents from urban settlements and only 0.3% of rural respondents. Last month use also testifies to the pattern as 1.3% of respondents in urban settlements as compared to 0.3% of respondents in rural areas confirm use of marijuana within the last month.

Questions on the frequency of use during the last month were also included in the survey. 20% of those reporting to have smoked in the last month report to have done so during 20 days or more, hence indicating habitual smoking habits in this population. Those reporting 1 - 3 days within the last month during which they have used marijuana/hashish account for the second largest group in the sample with 19% of the last month users. 10 -19 days of use within the last month and 4 -9 days of use are represented with 10% and 11% respectively. As already mentioned earlier in the report, caution is required when interpreting figures based on low numbers.

An interesting angle that should be noted is that of perceived marijuana use among peers. 94.8% of respondents in the sample state that none of their friends uses marijuana. 4.1% of respondents in the sample state that only a few of their friends use marijuana/hashish followed by 0.5% of those reporting half of their friends as marijuana users. Most of my friends and all of my friends are the least selected options with 0.4% and 0.2% respectively. Figure 12 provides an overview of responses on the frequency of last month use and the use of marijuana among peers.

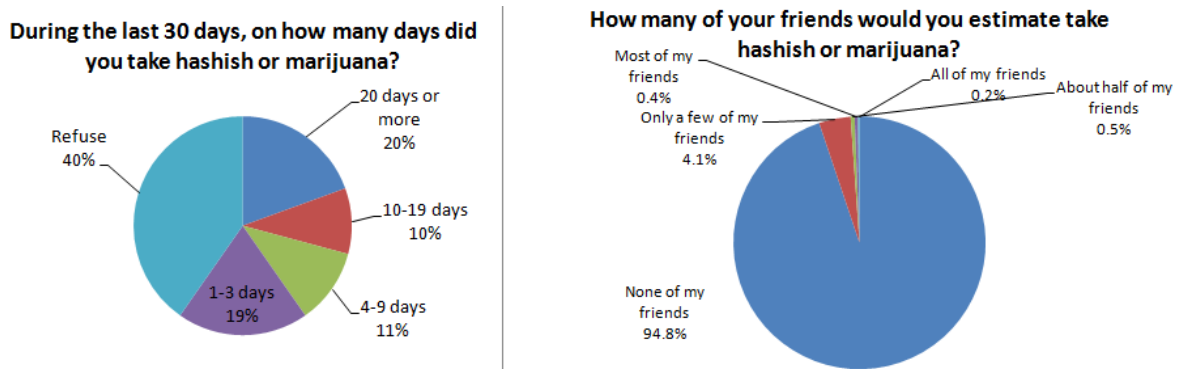


Figure 12. Number of days used marijuana during the last month and estimated number of friends that use marijuana

Additional questions aimed at knowing how marijuana/hashish was obtained during the last episode of use as well as whether respondents have been offered Marijuana (either free of charge or to purchase). With regards to the first aspect, 35.3% of respondents confirming use of marijuana in the last year state that they have bought it. 22.7% of them report to have been given or shared with the marijuana they have taken, while 39.8% of respondents confirming use of marijuana during the last year, refuse to disclose how they got it. 2.3% of all confirmed users in the last year report to grow their own marijuana. On the other hand, almost 97% of respondents in the sample indicate that they have not been solicited for marijuana during the last year either free of charge or to purchase. 1.6% of respondents state to have been offered marijuana once or twice during the last year, while 0.5% of respondents in the sample have been offered marijuana 3-5 times. Figure 13 below, presents a visual overview of both aspects.

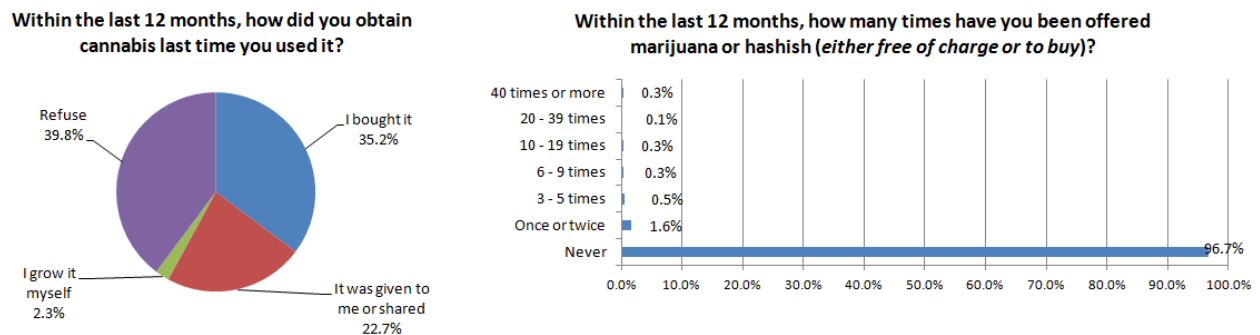


Figure 13. Way of obtaining marijuana in the last year and the number of times offered

3.5. Ecstasy

Ecstasy is the second illicit substance inquired about in the GPS Survey in Kosovo. The prevalence of Ecstasy appears to be limited to a small percentage of respondents in urban centers, with primary focus in the capital Prishtina. The discussion in focus group during the pilot survey indicates that the price of one unit of Ecstasy in the local market ranges from € 7 - € 10. The first question regarding the presence of Ecstasy in Kosovo was aimed at identifying the general presence of the substance in the market, so it inquired whether respondents knew someone that takes Ecstasy. 98.5% of all respondents in the sample denied knowing someone that takes Ecstasy with only 1.5% of respondents confirming it. If viewed across gender lines, 1.7% of men as compared to 1.1% of women report to know someone that takes Ecstasy. Urban/rural distribution is also uneven, with 2.5% of urban-based respondents and 0.6% of rural-based respondents who confirm knowing someone that takes Ecstasy. In terms of age distribution, the knowledge of someone that takes Ecstasy is much more present with younger persons than with the older generation. Given the nature of the drug and that it is usually attached to night-life environments, it is not surprising that the highest percentage of those confirming acquaintances with Ecstasy users, is among age groups 15 -20 years old and 21 -25 years old, where 2.5%, of each reports to know users of this substance. Among older members in the sample, the reported knowledge of users of Ecstasy is below 1%.

Another aspect that respondents were asked about is their personal experience with the substance. To this question, 0.1% of respondents have admitted to have used Ecstasy, with the remaining 99.9% who report never to have tried the substance. The use of Ecstasy is prevalent

among men from 15 – 40 years old. Women across all age groups and men older than 40 have not reported any cases of use of Ecstasy.

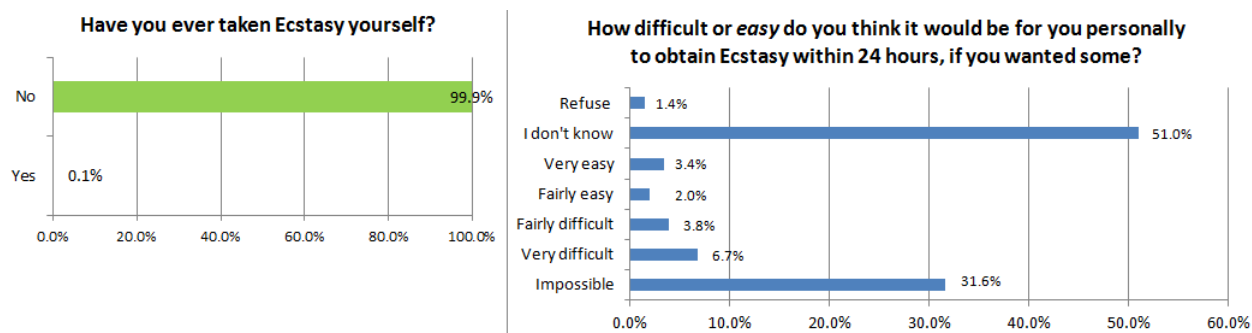


Figure 14. Ecstasy use and perceived accessibility

When asked whether they would be able to find Ecstasy within 24 hours if they wanted, 3.4% of respondents rated this task as very easy. An additional 2% of the sample believes that it would be fairly easy, while 3.8% of respondents interviewed have rated this challenge with fairly difficult. The largest portion of the sample do not know whether they would be able to find Ecstasy in case they wanted, followed by those stating that it would be impossible with 31.6% of answer composition. 6.7% of respondents believe that it would be very difficult to find this substance within 24 hours if they wanted to.

The substance appears to be most accessible to persons in age groups 21 – 25 of which 4.7% report to be able to find Ecstasy if they wanted to, followed by the age group of 26 – 30 years old where 3.4% of them confirm very easy access. The gender overview of responses provides a slightly lower access of women than of men.

Last year prevalence of use is 0.06% providing for a very small pool of users of which meaningful statistical comparisons could be made. Last month usage rate is even lower at a mere 0.02% of the total respondents in the sample.

It should be noted however, that Ecstasy availability is confirmed by the reported solicitation with this substance. 0.9% of respondents in the sample confirm to have been offered Ecstasy in the last year.

3.6. SPEED (Amphetamines)

Speed is used as the street name for Amphetamines and it was used as such in the survey. Similarly to Ecstasy, the prevalence of Speed use appears to be limited to a small percentage of respondents in the capital Prishtina. The discussion in focus group during the pilot survey indicates that the price of Speed in the local market is in the range of € 10/g – € 15/g. When asked whether they knew someone that takes Speed. 99.4% of all respondents in the sample answered negatively. Only 0.8% of men in the sample and 0.2% of women in the sample have confirmed to know Speed users. As with other illicit substances covered thus far, urban/rural distribution is uneven, with 1.1% of urban-based respondents and 0.2% of those interviewed in rural areas confirming to know users of Speed.

As far as age distribution is concerned, the most exposed age group towards this substance is that of 26 – 30 years old of which 0.5% confirming to have tried Speed in their lifetime. All other groups up to 40 years of age average at 2% of respondents confirming to have tried the substance. In terms of gender, the confirmations of use come exclusively from men. The use of Speed is prevalent among men from 15 – 40 years old. Women across all age groups and men older than 40 have not reported any cases of use of Speed. The Figure 15 below provides an overview of perceived accessibility and personal experience/use.

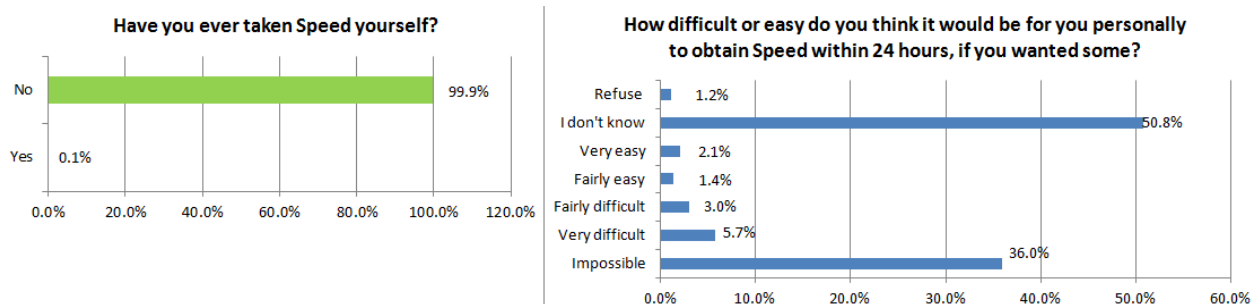


Figure 15. Speed use and perceived accessibility

When asked whether they would be able to find Speed within 24 hours if they wanted some, 2.1% of respondents rated this task as very easy, which is 1.3% drop from the percentage of those giving Ecstasy access the same rating. An additional 1.4% of the sample believes that it would be fairly easy, while 3% of respondents interviewed have rated this task to be very difficult. The majority of the respondents in the sample (50.8%) don't know would be able to find Speed in case they wanted some, while 36% of them assess that it is impossible for them to find Speed within 24 hours. 5.7% of respondents state that they would have it rather difficult to access Speed within 24 hours.

Last year prevalence of Speed use is confirmed by 0.1% of total or 0.2% of the total men in the sample as all positive responses were provided by men. The small percentage of use reported limits the potential for further breakdown or analysis according to age groups and/or other comparisons. There have been no reports of last month use of Speed in this survey.

It should be noted however, that Speed seems twice less present than Ecstasy. When 0.4% of the respondents reported to have been offered Speed during the last year, compared with 0.9% for Ecstasy.

3.7. Cocaine

Cocaine has lately received significant media attention in Kosovo. After police raids resulted with seizure of 16 kg of pure Cocaine substance and additional 30 kg of adulterants near Peja/Pec, Cocaine was at the spotlight of local media. Being one of the most expensive drugs available, Cocaine is restricted to users with financial potential to support this expensive vice. The discussion in focus group during the pilot survey indicates that the price of Cocaine in the local market revolves from € 70/g – € 150/g depending on the quality of the substance.

Over 97% of respondents in the sample responded negatively to the question whether they knew someone that takes Cocaine. 3.3% of men in the sample as compared to 1.9% of women have confirmed to know Cocaine users. Urban/rural distribution of responses is also to this question, whereby 4.9% of urban-based respondents and 0.9% of those interviewed in rural areas confirm knowing users of Cocaine.

The age group mostly exposed to this substance appear to be among the group between 26 - 30 years of age (0.6% confirmed lifetime use) and 15 - 20 years old (0.5% confirmed lifetime use). It should be noted that lifetime use of Cocaine is also confirmed by 0.3% of respondents in the age group 41 – 50 year old. Confirmations of Cocaine use come from men 0.4% of men and 0.1% of women in the sample, and as for other drugs, evidencing greater exposure of men in the sample. The Figure 16 below provides an overview of perceived accessibility and personal experience/use of Cocaine.

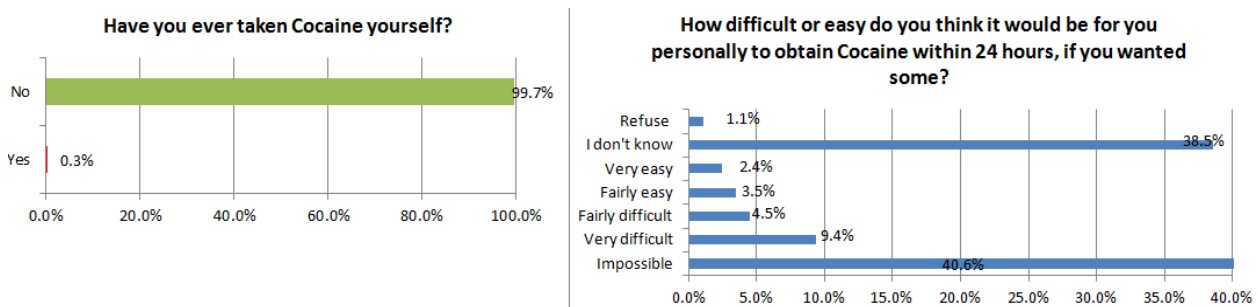


Figure 16. Cocaine use and perceived accessibility

The question on the ability to find Cocaine within 24 hours if they wanted to, was answered by 2.4% as very easy and 3.5% of respondents as fairly easy. This value sets accessibility of Cocaine between the accessibility rating for Speed and Ecstasy.

Last year prevalence of cocaine use is confirmed by 0.2% of total respondents or 0.3% of the total men in the sample as only male respondents have confirmed last year use of Cocaine. The low incidence of results hinders their further elaboration and differentiation in terms of age groups and other demographic criteria. Only 0.09% of total respondents in the sample or 0.2% of men in the sample have confirmed last month use of Cocaine.

3.8. Heroin

Heroin is one of the most dangerous illicit drugs inquired about in the Survey. It should be noted that the GPS survey is probably not the most appropriate method of identifying heroin users as they represent the most problematic part of the drug user population. 98.5% of all respondents in the sample declined knowing someone that takes heroin. 1.9% of men in the sample and 0.8% of women report knowing Heroin users. 2.6% of respondents from urban settlements as opposed to 0.5% of respondents in rural areas confirm to know users of Heroin.

As for the personal use experience with Heroin, 0.1% of respondents in the sample have confirmed to have tried this substance in their lifetime. The use of Heroin is exclusively reported by respondents in urban settlements, but the age span reaches up to 60 years of age. Women

across all age groups have not reported any cases of use of Heroin. The Figure 17 below provides an overview of perceived accessibility and personal experience/use Heroin.

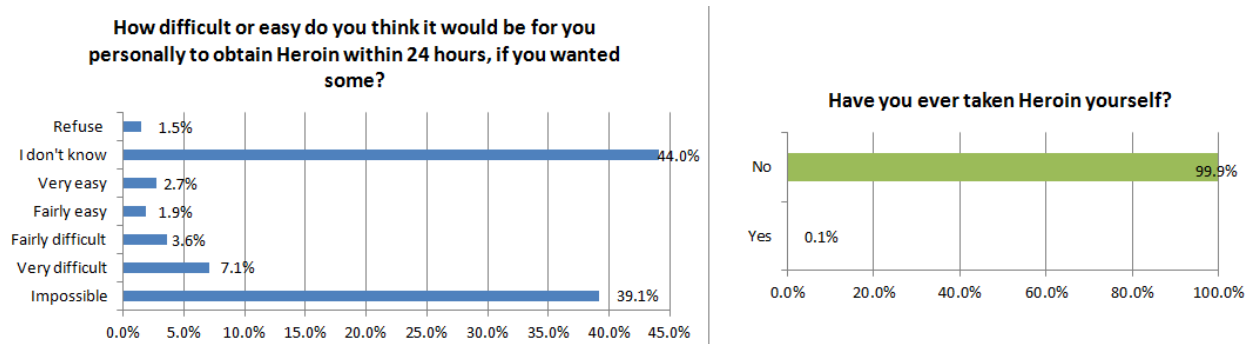


Figure 17. Heroin use and perceived accessibility

Unlike other substances covered in the sections above, Heroin accessibility appears to be greater than for other substances. Even 1% of persons above the age of 60 report to have it very easy to find Heroin within 24 hours if they wanted to. Nevertheless, the age with the greater access to this substance is that between 41 - 50 years of age, 4% of which report to have very easy access to Heroin within 24 hours. 44% of respondents in the sample do not know whether they would be able to find Heroin within 24 hours, while 39.1% of them state this would be an impossible task for them.

Last year prevalence of heroin use is reported by 0.1% of total or 0.2% of the total men in the sample as all positive responses were provided by men. The small percentage of use reported limits the potential for further breakdown or analysis according to age groups and/or other comparisons. Last month prevalence of heroin use was not confirmed in the survey.

It should be noted however, that Heroin is more present than Speed and Cocaine, but less than Ecstasy. The presence of Heroin in the society is also confirmed by 0.6% of respondents interviewed in the GPS survey who confirm that they have been offered either for purchase or for free this substance during the last year.

3.9. LSD / Acid

LSD is the last illicit substance included in the Kosovo GPS Survey. It is also recognized by the street name of Acid, this is how it has been used in the survey. The incidence of use appears to be limited to Prishtina as it was also the case with other substances. 0.7% of respondents in the sample know someone that takes Acid/LSD. 1.4% of respondents from urban areas as opposed to 0.1% of them coming from rural settlements confirm knowing someone that takes LSD.

As far as age distribution is concerned, the most exposed age group towards this substance is that of 26 – 30 years old of which 0.6% confirming to have tried LSD in their lifetime. The age group 21 – 25 ranks second with 0.5% of respondents within the group confirming use of LSD, followed by the 15 -20 year olds of which 0.2% of total group report to have tried LSD. None of the respondents over 35 years of age has reported to have tried LSD.

Figure 18 visually illustrates the results obtained on questions of personal lifetime use and perceived access within 24 hours.

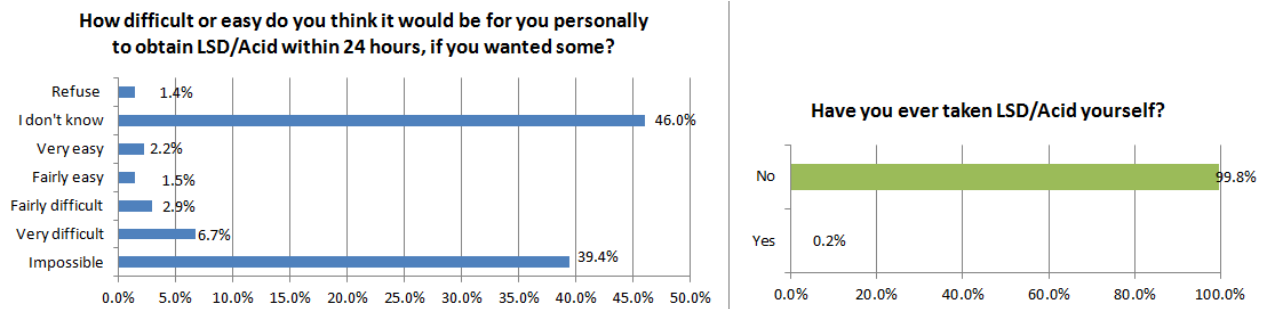


Figure 18. LSD/Acid use and perceived accessibility

When asked whether they would be able to find LSD within 24 hours if they wanted some, 2.2% of respondents answered with very easy. An additional 1.5% of respondents in the sample assess that it would be fairly easy to find LSD within 24 hours, while 2.9% of respondents interviewed claimed this task to be very difficult. Similarly to other substances, the largest part of respondents (46%) don't know whether they would be able to find Acid if they wanted some, with an additional 39.4% of them rating this challenge as is impossible

Last year prevalence of LSD use is reported by 0.1% of total or 0.2% of the total men in the sample as all positive responses were provided by men. The small percentage of use reported limits the potential for further breakdown or analysis according to age groups and/or other comparisons. 0.06% of men in the sample confirm last month use of Acid. It should be noted however, that LSD is much less present than most of the substances covered in the GPS with 0.6% of respondents reporting to have been offered Acid.

3.10. Attitudes and Opinions

The section on attitudes and opinions covered a broad range of topics and issues related to substance abuse practices and other aspects related to lifestyle and beliefs systems. Some of the highlights of these answers are provided in this section.

- 87% of respondents support the recently applied ban on smoking in public places, more precisely 63.3% strongly approve and 17.8% approve it. 3.6% neither approve nor disapprove the ban. Women tend to have a more positive opinion on the ban than the men (70.6% strongly approve it opposed to 68.5%; 18.8% of women approve opposed to 17.1% of men).
- Drug addicts are perceived more as a patient by 35.4 % of respondents and 17.7% perceive them more as a criminal. 25.7% of respondents consider drug addicts as both criminals and patients at the same time and finally 8.2% perceive them as neither criminals nor patients.
- The statement 'People should be permitted to take hashish or marijuana' was completely unacceptable for 79.5% of respondents interviewed. And largely unacceptable to an additional 11.1% of respondents in the GPS. Only 4.6% of respondents 'completely agree', or 'agree to large extent' with this statement. 4.8% of respondents report neutrality to this question.
- The statement 'People should be permitted to take Heroin', was found completely acceptable and somewhat acceptable to 1.6% of respondents. While 3% of respondents state to be neutral to this statement, over 95% of them display disagreement with it.
- 1.8% of respondents consider it acceptable to try Ecstasy once or twice, while 86% of respondents oppose it. While 2.2% of respondents state they have no opinion on the matter, 8.7% of them state not to know whether it is OK to try Ecstasy once or twice.
- 23.2% of respondents consider it as acceptable for people to smoke up to 10 cigarettes per day. Almost 60% of respondents in the sample do not agree with that. Neutrality to the question has been expressed by 11.5% of respondents.
- 20.8% of respondents consider it acceptable to have a drink or two several times/week. 10.9% of respondents are neutral to this question and 60.5% of respondents disagree with this statement.
- 2.1% of the sample consider occasional use of marijuana acceptable, 2.2% are neutral to this question while 90.2% of them state opposition to it.
- 84% of respondents consider it risky to smoke more than one pack of cigarettes per day while 16% of them consider it not as risky.
- 98.3% of respondents consider as risky to smoke marijuana or cannabis regularly; 1.7% consider that there is no risk or a slight one.

- Experimentation of ecstasy or cocaine is seen as risky by respectively 97.4% and 97.8% of the respondents.

The following table shows the variation of risk perception of potential harms in relation to the substance use.

Attitude / Opinion	Smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day	Have five or more drinks each week-end	Smoke marijuana or hashish regularly	Try ecstasy once or twice	Try Cocaine once or twice
No risk	6.1	10.8	0.5	0.6	0.6
Slight risk	9.9	13.5	1.2	1.9	1.6
Moderate risk	18.6	18.6	5.2	6.0	5.4
Great risk	65.3	57.1	93.1	91.4	92.4

Table 3: Risks perception of harms related to substance use (%)

Conclusions

In general, the respondents disapprove the use of illicit drugs and show a higher risk perception towards the use of illicit drugs than for cigarettes and alcohol. Findings of this survey show that prevalence rates of illicit substance use are much lower than for the legal ones, risks perception are then probably related to both health and criminal consequences.

This first general population survey is an important first step to help understanding the situation regarding drugs use in the country. While it only represents the first attempt to measure consumption levels and attitudes towards substance use, the GPS survey is the first survey to capture a snapshot of the situation pertaining to substance use. It should however be noted that the GPS survey is not the most adequate type of research for capturing long-term usage of Heroin or other more potent psychotropic substances, but overall, it represents the most reliable methodology for investigating drug markets and population behaviors.

The biggest value of the GPS Survey comes in terms of its potential to develop periodic trends' measurement that enables to observe, aside from the behavior of the population, also the effectiveness of policy measures of anti-drug agencies and institutions. The results of the GPS survey are useful for researchers, academics, public health professionals and other interested audiences, but most importantly, the policy makers at national level. The GPS survey should be considered as the first necessary step to begin routine monitoring of drug use presence and alcohol consumption trends, as well as, collecting public's opinions and attitudes toward drug and alcohol problems as well as policies regulating these two types of substances.

The evidence collected through the GPS survey and the data contained in this report should provide policy makers with insights on current situation in order for them to make informed decisions. In addition, the survey for the first time, brings reliable statistical data on drug use in Kosovo that are comparable with results of similar studies carried out in other European countries, by applying European standard protocols in the context of a general population survey in Kosovo. The contribution that the report makes in generating a common understanding of psychoactive substance use and risky behavior is one of the most important aspects of the study, as it enables proper policy planning and benchmarking with other countries in terms of effectiveness of measures and factors contributing to increase/decrease of usage trends.

Though the prevalence of drug use recorded through this survey provides for fairly low percentage of population who admit having used substances, the availability of substances appears to be quite easy. This holds true particularly for marijuana/hashish availability for which only 28.3% of respondents stated to be impossible for them to find if they wanted some, with an additional 8.3% and 5.2% of those perceiving such task as very difficult and fairly difficult respectively. 13% of the surveyed population state easiness in access of marijuana/hashish, while over 43% of respondents state not to know the difficulty of finding this substance if they wanted some.

The access to Ecstasy, Speed, Heroin and LSD is reported to be more limited, while Cocaine is seemingly slightly more available. Prescription drugs/pharmaceuticals

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