

REITOX ACADEMY: DRUG USE AMONG PRISON POPULATION. SCOPE AND RESPONSES, 01-02/03/2011, Lisbon

«Monitoring drug use and related problems in Belgian prisons as a tool for policy making: difficulties and challenges»



CONTENT

- I. Belgian drug policy in prisons**
- II. Drug monitoring in Belgian prisons**
- III. Difficulties and challenges related to the methodology used for drug monitoring**
- IV. (inter)national relevance of monitoring**
- V. Some results of the Belgian monitoring**



I. Belgian drug policy in prisons

- ✓ **Competence of Minister of Justice, Fed.Dept. Justice:**

- ✓ **DG Penitentiary Institutions,**

- ✓ **Prison Health Care Service:**



- ✓ **2 Coordinators of Drug Policy in Prisons: Flemish & Walloon part**

- ✓ **32 Belgian prisons:**

- ✓ +/- 10 500 prisoners ↔ capacity

- ✓ 15 in Dutch speaking part of Belgium

- ✓ 15 in French speaking part of Belgium

- ✓ 2 in Brussels Capital Region (bilingual)



- ✓ **Drug policy intra muros ~ extra muros**

- ✓ **Drug policy in Belgium:**
 - ✓ **«Balanced and integrated drug policy»:**
⇒ **Prevention-Harm Reduction-Treatment-Enforcement**
 - ✓ **National level: cf. Federal Drug Note, 2001**
 - ✓ **European level: cf. EU drug strategy & drug action plans**
 - ✓ **International level: cf. UNODC drug strategy**

- ✓ **Drug policy in prisons:**
 - ✓ **«Balanced and integrated drug policy»:**
⇒ **Prevention-Harm Reduction-Treatment-Enforcement**
 - ✓ **Cf. Ministerial Circular concerning drugs in prisons, 2006**

 - ✓ **Since 2009 specific budget for drug policy implementation in prisons!**

- ✓ **General objective: install practices ‘that work’ (evidence-based policy)**
- ✓ **Some examples of initiatives:**
 - ✓ **HCV information campaign**
 - ✓ **Information booklet on drug-related health problems made by and for prisoners**
 - ✓ **OST**
 - ✓ **HIV treatment, HBV, HCV treatment (interferon)**
 - ✓ **Structured drug free treatment (in Flemish prison of Ruiselede)**
 - ✓ **« Central Intake Unit » since 2011 (in every prison in Dutch speaking part of Belgium)**
 - ✓ **Drug-free section since 2009 (in Flemish prison of Bruges)**
 - ✓ **Short Duration Group Therapy for drug users (pilot phase in Bruges)**



II. Drug monitoring in Belgian prisons

- ✓ Scope
- ✓ Monitoring drug use and related health problems
 - ✓ Nature & extent: 'life-time drug use', drug use in prison, products
 - ✓ Drug-related health problems: HIV, HCV, HBV
 - ✓ Risk behaviour: tattoo, piercing
- ✓ Limited monitoring of health responses
 - ✓ Substitution treatment: before and during prison



II. Drug monitoring in Belgian prisons - History

✓ History

- ✓ 1999: development self-report questionnaire
- ✓ 1999 & 2003: self-report questionnaire in limited amount of prisons
- ✓ Since 2006: monitoring in all Belgian prisons
- ✓ 2006 → 2008 → 2010 → ... Two-yearly national monitoring
- ✓ Learning proces of overcoming methodological difficulties

II. Drug monitoring in Belgian prisons - Methodology

- ✓ Data-collection instrument: self-report questionnaire
 - ✓ **Socio-demographical and penal data**
 - ✓ Representative with general prison population? Cf. internal statistics 'day population'
 - ✓ **Time spent at daily activities & physical and mental state of being**
 - ✓ Accessibility to daily activities? Drug use in relation to 'life domains'
 - ✓ **Knowledge of and actual risk behaviour in prison**
 - ✓ Knowledge of risk factors for HIV, HBV, HCV
 - ✓ Risk behaviour: tattoo, piercing, sexual activities
 - ✓ **Drug use: alcohol and illegal drugs**
 - ✓ Prevalence of drug use: life time, last year, last month,
 - ✓ Most popular drug, reason of drug use, IDU
 - ✓ Initiation of drug use
 - ✓ **Problems experienced related to drug scene in prison**
 - ✓ **Medical access & OST**



- ✓ Organisation of data-collection: survey in each Belgian prison:
 - ✓ objective: research sample of 10% of all Belgian prisoners
 - ✓ survey of 10% of prisoners in each prison
 - ✓ representative sample for gender-type, penal status, age
 - ✓ on the basis of 'day population'
 - ✓ interviewers: from NGO's working in prison, penitentiary personnel to university students
- ⇒ Methodological difficulties: Learning proces of overcoming these difficulties!



III. Difficulties and challenges related to the methodology used for drug monitoring

On the level of data-collection

- ✓ Organisation of the data-collection by a mixed team of interviewers
 - ✓ NGO's working in prison, university students, penitentiary personnel
- ✓ Level of independence?
- ✓ No standardised procedure of data-collection put into practice
- ✓ No training and follow-up
- ✓ Pre-selection of respondents by prison staff



On the level of data input, processing and analysis

✓ Too many partners involved



- ✓ Problems with input
- ✓ Lack of data encoding book
- ✓ Lack of data cleaning
- ✓ « Shared ownership » of database
- ⇒ Influence on quality of analyses/results

✓ Challenge for 2010: overcome methodological problems

III. Difficulties and challenges related to the methodology used for drug monitoring

In 2010 (latest monitoring):

- ✓ 1 team of interviewers for data-collection & input: university students
- ✓ 1 standardised procedure of data-collection: no pre-selection of respondents by prison staff anymore
- ✓ Training and follow-up of interviewers
- ✓ Data processing & analysis: in collaboration with university
- ✓ One uniform database for coming years (comparison between different years)
- ✓ Final research report = co-authorship Prison Health Care & University
- ✓ Collaboration with NGO's: « advice board »

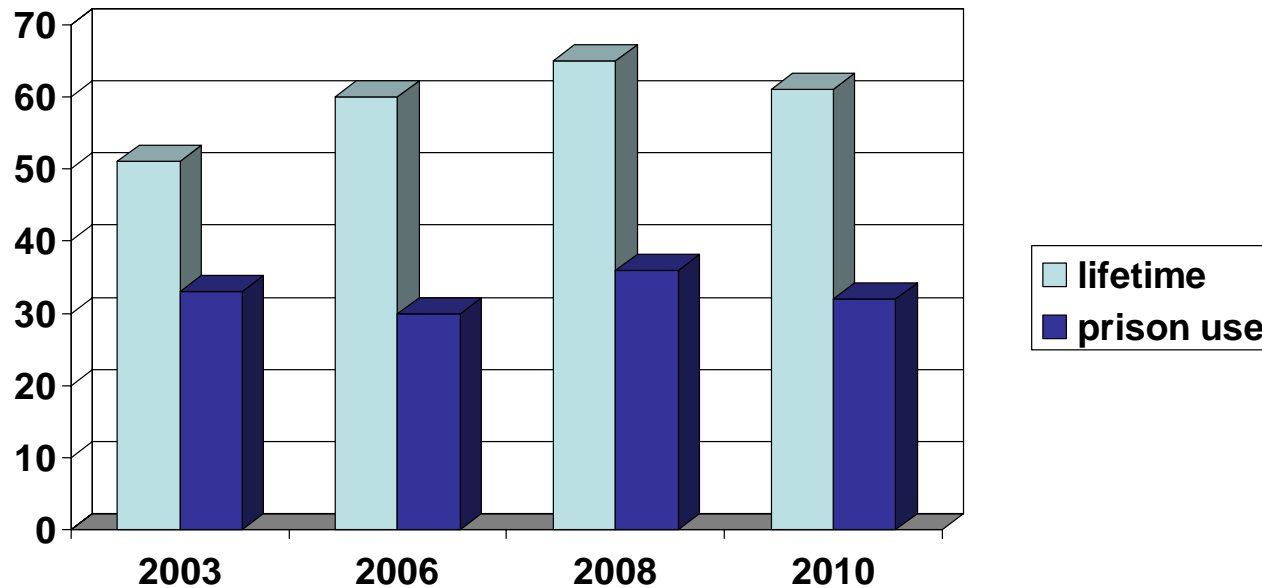
IV. (inter)national relevance of monitoring

- ✓ On National level:
 - ✓ Tool for policy making
 - ✓ Evidence-based policy
 - ✓ Visibility of our work, ↑ attention for drug problem
 - ✓ ↑ Credibility among prison staff
- ✓ On EU level:
 - ✓ EU-wide monitoring to put national data in broader context
 - ✓ Gives added value to national results
 - ✓ Similarities/differences between M.S?



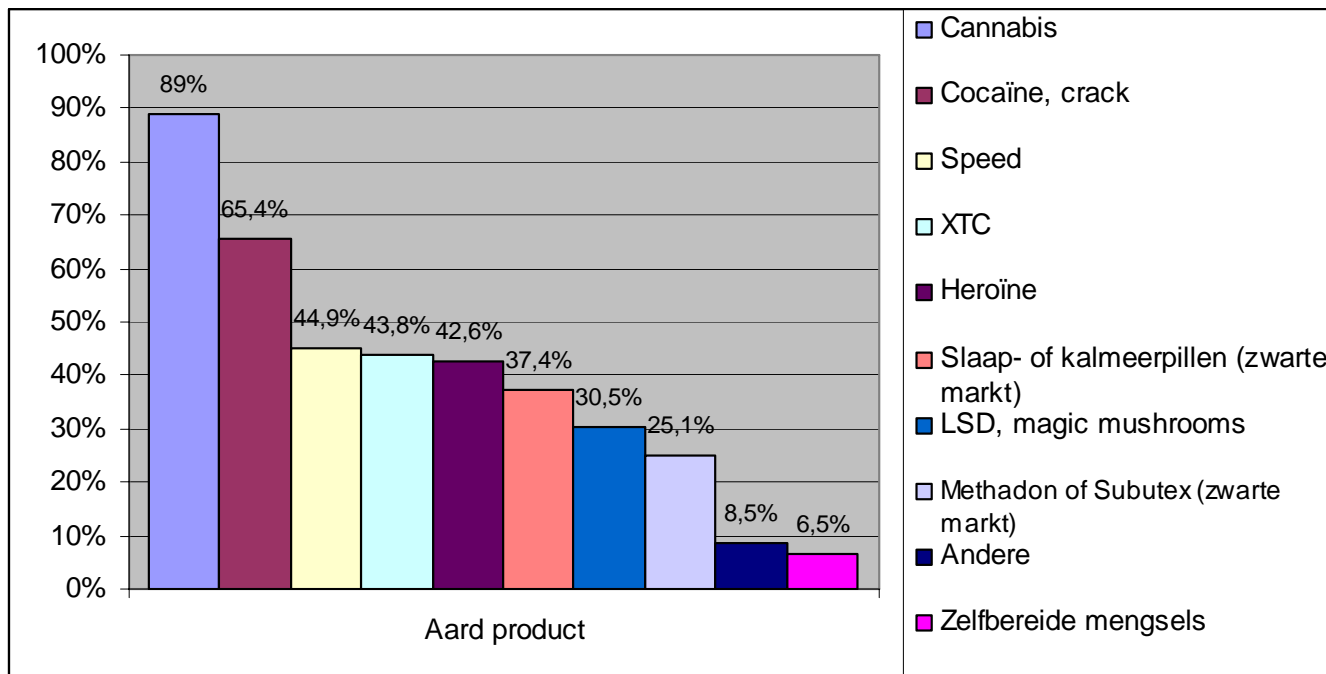
V. Some results of the Belgian monitoring

Life-time use and use in prison 2003-2010



Life-time drug use in prison population – most popular drug 2008

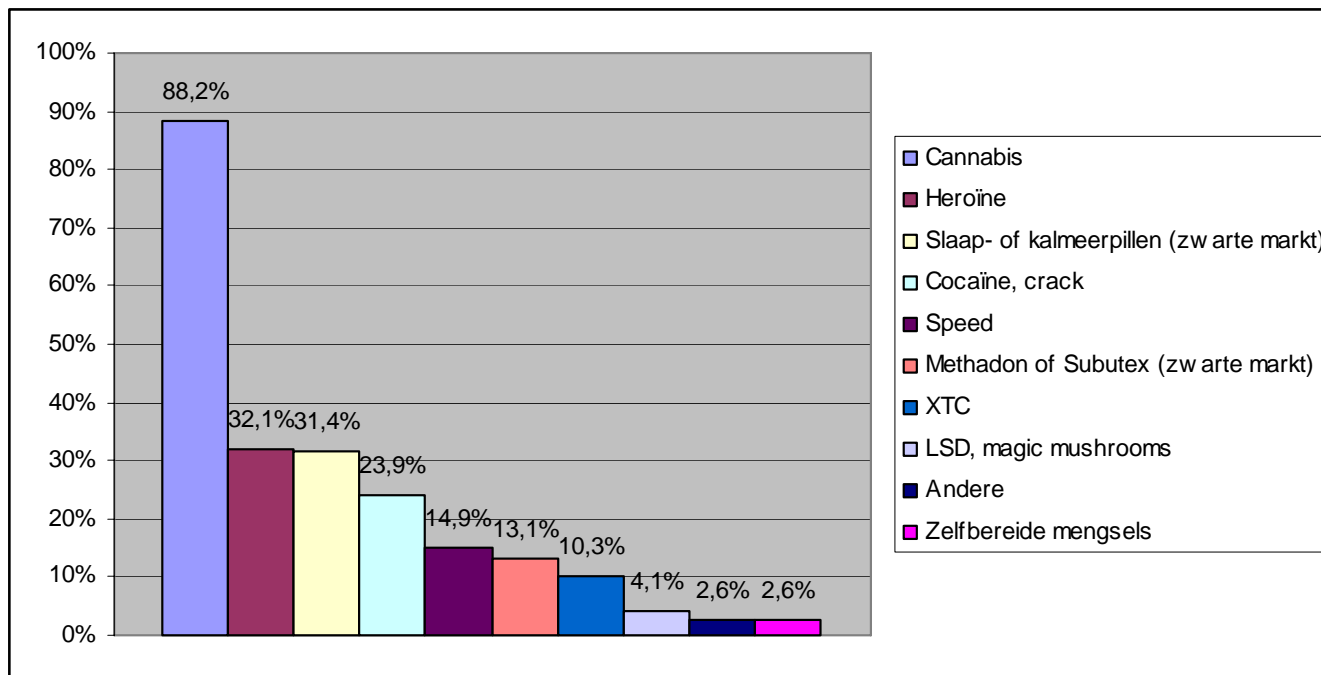
Graph: nature of product of life time users of illegal drugs en non-prescribed medication, 2008 (N=1078)



Drug use in prison and type of product 2008

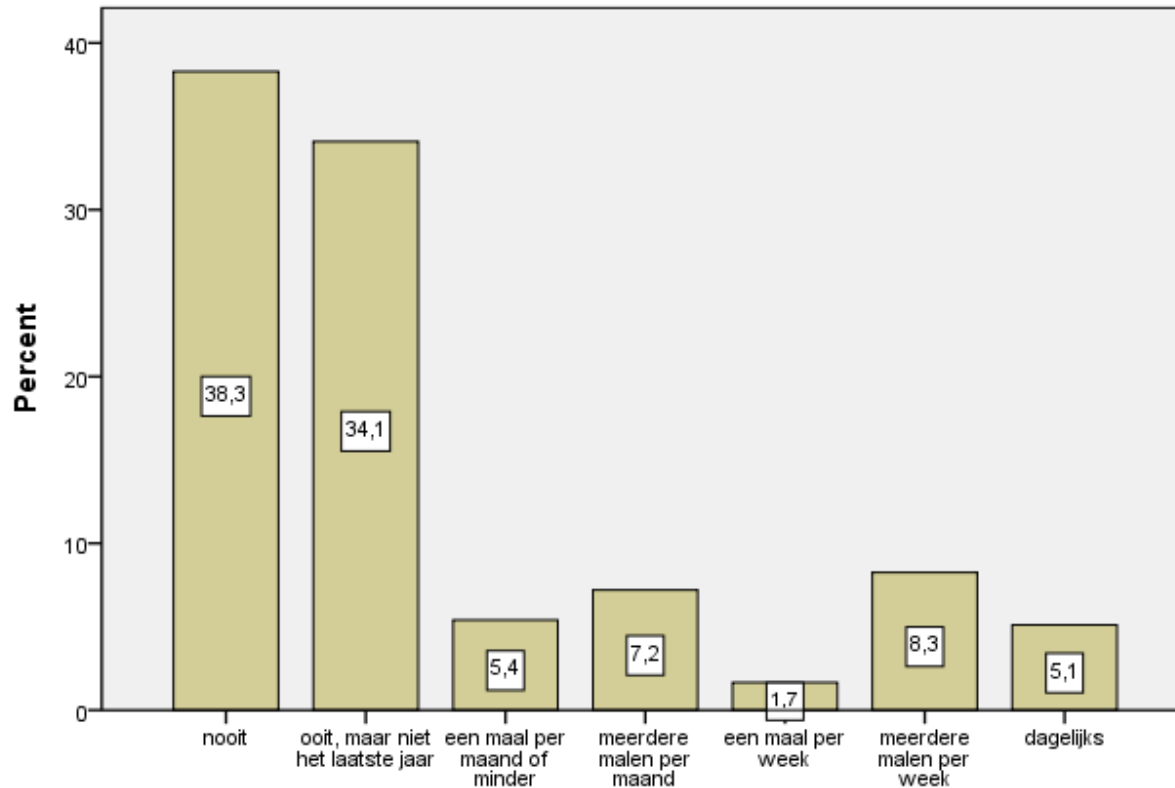
✓ type of product life-time ⇔ type of product in prison 2008

Graph: Nature of the product drug use during detention 2008



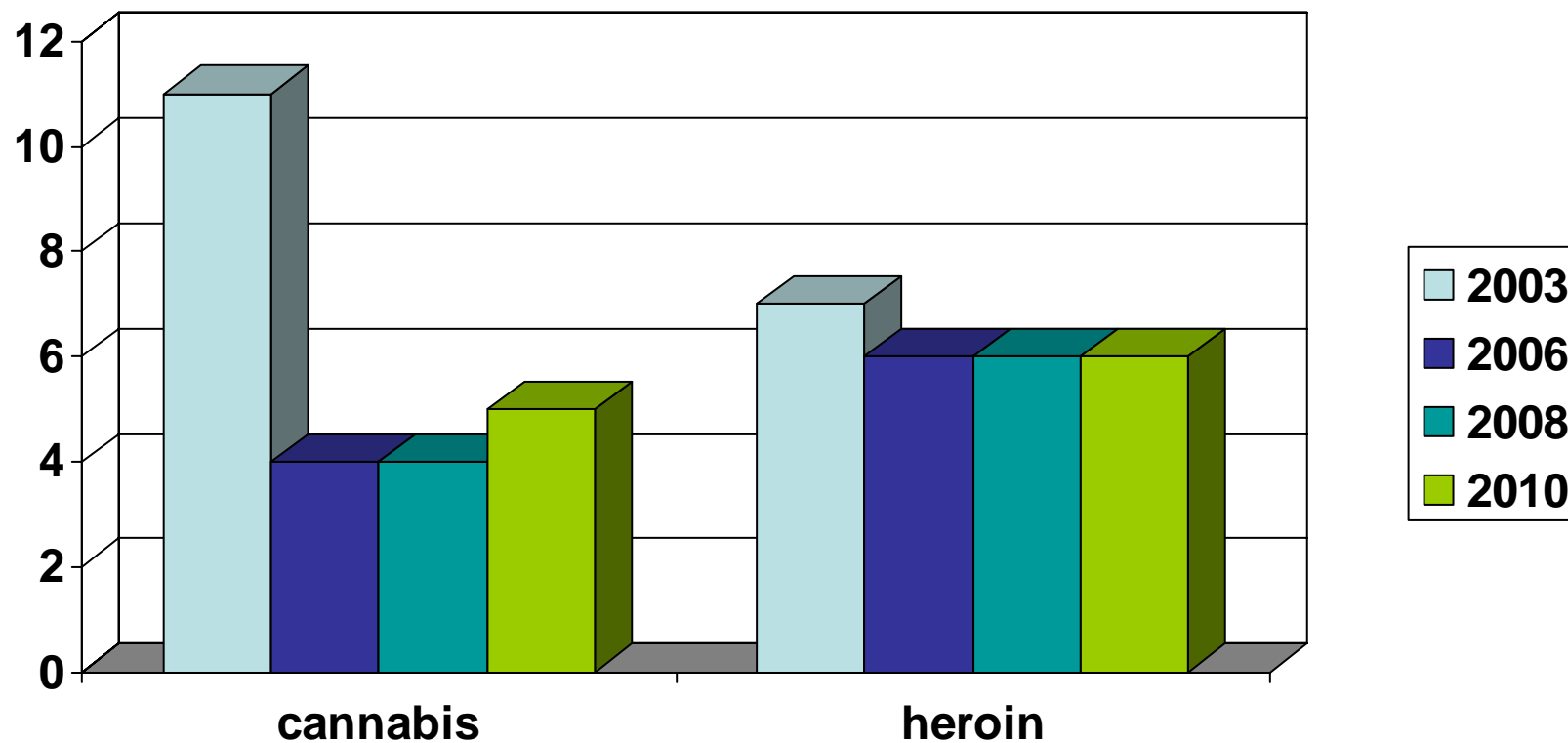
Drug use in prison 2010 & frequency of use

gebruik drugs beschikbaar op zwarte markt gevangenis tijdens huidig verblijf



gebruik drugs beschikbaar op zwarte markt gevangenis tijdens huidig verblijf

Initiation in the use of new substances (% of total sample, self report)



- ✓ Drug use in Belgian prison (2003-2010):
 - ✓ 51% - 66% of the prison population
- ✓ International comparison drug use in prison:
 - ✓ 16%-54% (EMCDDA, 2002)
 - ✓ 10%-60,4% (WHO, 2007)
- ✓ Number of prison sentence and drug use in prison:
 - ✓ ↑ number of sentences = ↑ risk drug use in prison
- ✓ Reason sentence and drug use in prison
 - ✓ Almost 1/3 of the prisoners in prison due to drug related offences
 - ✓ But: nature of offence is not predictable factor for prison drug use

Problems due to drug scene in prison

- ✓ **30 %: experience problems related to drug culture**
 - ✓ drug nuisance, for ex.. 'smell', 'community problems', 'disturbant behavior', 'fights', 'fear for relapse'
- ✓ **10%: victim of drug-related violence in prison**
- ✓ **10%: under pressure to use drugs**



Drug-related health risks

✓ IDU:

- ✓ 20% of all life-time users also experience with IDU OR 15% of prison population
- ✓ 1 in 4 of IDU's in prison OR 3% of prison population IDU

✓ Seksual activities

- ✓ 1 in 2 never use of condom in 2008 (= ↓: 70% in 2006)

✓ Prevalence HIV, HBV, HCV, TBC in prison > general community



References

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- ✓ EMCDDA (2002) *Drug use in prison. Selected issues 2002*. Lisbon: EMCDDA.
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