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SURVEY ON HEALTH  
AND DRUG USE  
**IN THE INMATE POPULATION  
IN PENITENTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

SUMMARY REPORT

**ESDIP**

FUNDED AND MANAGED BY



IN COLLABORATION WITH



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Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs of the Ministry of Health.

<https://pnsd.sanidad.gob.es>

Survey on Health and Drug Use among Prisoners. ESDIP.

[https://pnsd.sanidad.gob.es/profesionales/sistemasInformacion/sistemaInformacion/encuestas\\_ESDIP.htm](https://pnsd.sanidad.gob.es/profesionales/sistemasInformacion/sistemaInformacion/encuestas_ESDIP.htm)

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# 01

## PRESENTATION

ESDIP **22** | Survey on health and drug use  
in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions



# 01

## PRESENTATION

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The Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs of the Ministry of Health, the Subdirector General of Penitentiary Health of the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions of the Ministry of the Interior, the Directorate General of Penitentiary Affairs of the Department of Justice, Rights and Memory of the Government of Catalonia and the Directorate of Justice of the Department of Equality, Justice and Social Affairs through the Prison Analysis and Inspection Programme of the Basque Government, jointly present the publication “Survey on health and drug use in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions (ESDIP) 2022”.

The importance of learning about drug use within the prison population is more than justified due to the privileged position of the prison system when it comes to providing information on the drug problem, as drug use is more widespread among the prison population (at liberty) than among the general population. On the other hand, the stay in prison provides an opportunity to improve the health of the prison population and to conduct drug prevention and treatment programmes. Regular and up-to-date information is necessary in order to draw up budgets, develop and assess health interventions aimed at benefiting the prison population, their families and the general population.

Discussions on drug availability and drug use in prisons have been considered taboo in the past and even today people are reticent on this issue in other areas outside our immediate environment. However, the use of psychoactive substances, their associated problems and the significant possibilities for intervention within the prison environment are among the priority areas of work in both the European Union and the United Nations. For this reason, more and more studies are being conducted in this area, and Spain is one of the countries with the most information available.

The Survey on health and drug use in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions (ESDIP) has been conducted every five years since 2006. It is included in the National Statistical Plan of the National Statistics Institute, and is framed within the lines of work established by European and Spanish strategies on drugs and addictions. The ESDIP provides national and international benchmark data and trends.

The objective of the ESDIP is to obtain data on health and drug use within the prison population, in order to collect useful information for drawing up budgets, developing and evaluating, on the basis of knowledge, programmes and interventions aimed at preventing and reducing drug use and associated problems within this population.

This publication offers the most relevant results of this survey and it is divided into five blocks: (1) Socio-demographic and procedural characteristics of the prison population, including age, sex, nationality, level of education and procedural status; (2) Health, providing information on the perception of health status and infectious diseases and mental disorders; (3) Drug use, including prevalence of drug use, pattern of use, type of drug and route of administration; (4) Risky practices, such as injecting drugs, unprotected sex and tattooing, in addition to information on the inmates' own knowledge of risky practices; (5) Treatment for drug use, providing information on the prison population undergoing treatment and their characteristics, and the different treatment options.

The prison population has undergone a profound change over the last years, and this is reflected in the survey. The number of inmates has decreased by a quarter, especially at the cost of younger inmates. Changes to the criminal code, and alternatives to imprisonment for drug-related offences, have had a strong impact.

In 2022, the results show that the prison population displays a number of specific characteristics and that it is a population at risk, with a significant presence of infectious diseases and mental disorders. The percentage of illegal drug users is higher among the prison population (at liberty) than among the general population, with the former starting to use drugs at an earlier age. However, the majority of the prison population who use psychoactive substances did so for the first time while at liberty and the percentage of users decreases drastically after incarceration. Within the prison environment, illegal drug use is more widespread among men and among younger inmates. The most commonly used psychoactive substances in prison are tobacco, followed by cannabis and non-prescription tranquilizers.

The results shed light on a number of challenges that require us to continue to work to reduce drug use and its associated risks and problems. Preventive measures and treatment should continue to focus on the specific characteristics of this population at risk, which requires a multidisciplinary approach, an effort for coordination, and close collaboration between the different agents involved, thus enabling us to continually adapt preventive and therapeutic options to the changing reality of drug use. At the same time, it highlights the need to continue to educate the prison population on risk reduction (use of condoms, use of sterile equipment for tattooing, etc.), and among

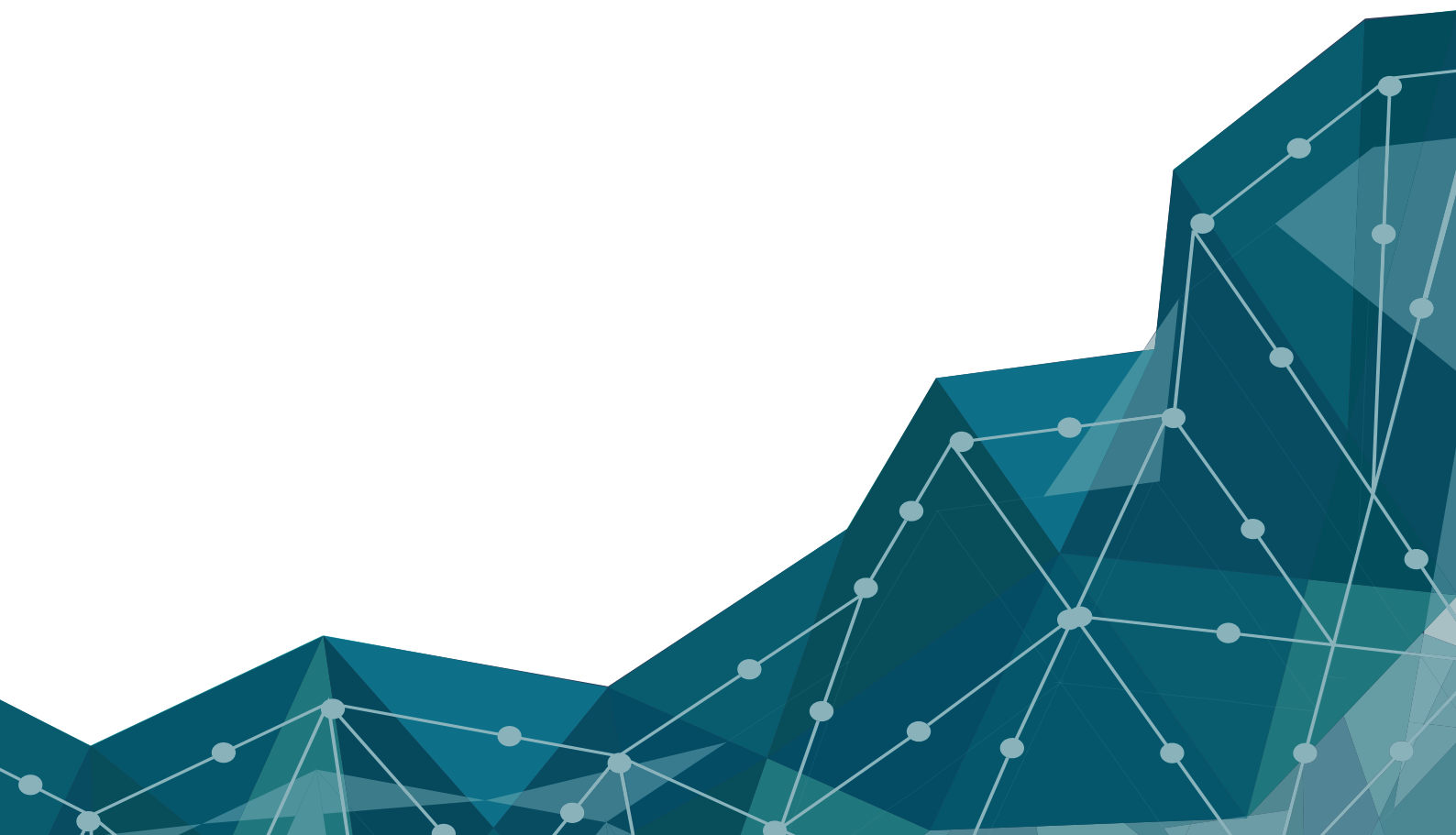
injecting drug users about the possibility and benefits of using the sterile needles available in penitentiary centres.

Finally, it should be remembered that this is the result of the joint efforts of numerous professionals from different fields. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of them, especially to the prison staff without whose cooperation this survey would not have been possible, as well as the prison population who were interviewed at ESDIP.

# 02

## INTRODUCTION

ESDIP **22** | Survey on health and drug use  
in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions



# 02

## INTRODUCTION

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The Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs of the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Subdirector General of Penitentiary Health of the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions of the Ministry of the Interior, the Directorate General of Penitentiary Affairs of the Department of Justice, Rights and Memory of the Generalitat of Catalonia and the Directorate of Justice of the Department of Equality, Justice and Social Affairs, through the Basque Government's Prison Analysis and Inspection Programme, carries out a five-yearly survey on health and drug use in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions (ESDIP).

ESDIP is framed within the lines of work established by the European and Spanish strategies on drugs and addictions and it constitutes a useful tool to obtain information on health and drug use within the prison population. This survey is included in the National Statistical Plan of the National Statistics Institute ([www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)) and the data obtained serve as national and international benchmarks. Having this information on a regular and up-to-date basis is of great use when developing and evaluating health interventions, which will benefit the prison population, their families and the general population. In this sense, it is of great interest to have these new data available in order to monitor the impact of the changes to the criminal code that were introduced years ago, as well as the results of the treatment and harm reduction policies and programmes that have been introduced in prisons.



# 03

## OBJECTIVES

ESDIP **22** Survey on health and drug use  
in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions



## General objective

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To obtain data on health, drug use, risky practices and treatment for drug use within the Spanish prison population, in order to collect information of use when drawing up budgets, developing and evaluating, on the basis of knowledge, programmes and interventions aimed at preventing and reducing drug use and associated problems within this population.

## Specific objectives

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In addition to fulfilling the previously mentioned general objective, the specific objectives of this survey are to obtain information on:

- **Socio-demographic and procedural characteristics of the prison population: Age, sex, nationality, level of education and procedural status, among others.**
- **Health: Perception of health and mental health status, and infectious diseases (HIV, hepatitis and tuberculosis).**
- **Drug use: Prevalence of use, pattern of use, type of drug and route of administration.**
- **Risky practices: Drug injection, unprotected sex and tattooing. Knowledge of risky practices.**
- **Treatment for drug use: People in treatment and their characteristics.**

Conducting ESDIP 2022 makes it possible to understand how the aspects described above have evolved since 2006 and enables national and international-level reporting and comparisons with other countries.

# 04

## METHODOLOGY

ESDIP **22** Survey on health and drug use  
in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions



METHODOLOGY	
<b>Description</b>	Survey included in the National Statistical Plan conducted every five years (started in 2006), through personal interviews with inmates in Spanish prisons.
<b>Responsible bodies</b>	<b>In charge:</b> Spanish Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addictions (OEDA). Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs (DGPNSD). Ministry of Health (MS).
	<b>Contributors:</b> Deputy Directorate General for Prison Health of the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions of the Ministry of the Interior (SGIIPP), Directorate General of Penitentiary Affairs of the Regional Government of Catalonia (DGAP) and the Directorate of Justice of the Regional Ministry of Equality, Justice and Social Affairs, through the Programme for the Analysis and Inspection of Penitentiary Centres of the Basque Government.
<b>Scope of the survey</b>	<b>Geographical:</b> The survey is conducted nationwide. The results are nationally representative.
	<b>Population:</b> Inmate population in prisons in Spain.
	<b>Time:</b> The data collection period was between 1 February and 19 March 2022.
<b>Sample</b>	<p>The sample consists of <b>5,512 inmates</b>, distributed in <b>78 prisons</b>. Men and women over 18 years of age with sufficient knowledge of Spanish or Arabic to answer the questionnaire are included. According to their penal classification, they include pre-trial detainees, second-degree convicts, convicts awaiting further sentencing and unclassified convicts.</p> <p>Sampling, using a table of random numbers, was proportional to the number of inmates in each centre and their nationality, and proportional by sex, with women over-represented (weighted by sex to return proportionality to the sample). The final sample was 5,512 inmates. Sampling error: 1.24% (95% confidence level for <math>p=0.5\%</math>). Response rate: 86.4%</p>
<b>Collection of information</b>	<p>Face-to-face personal interview through an anonymous, pre-coded digital questionnaire completed by the interviewer. The questionnaires are administered to inmates inside the prisons, in a separate room and ensuring the absolute confidentiality and anonymity of their answers. The duration of the interview is 30 to 45 minutes.</p> <p>Questionnaire available in Spanish and Arabic.</p>

## Methodological considerations and limitations

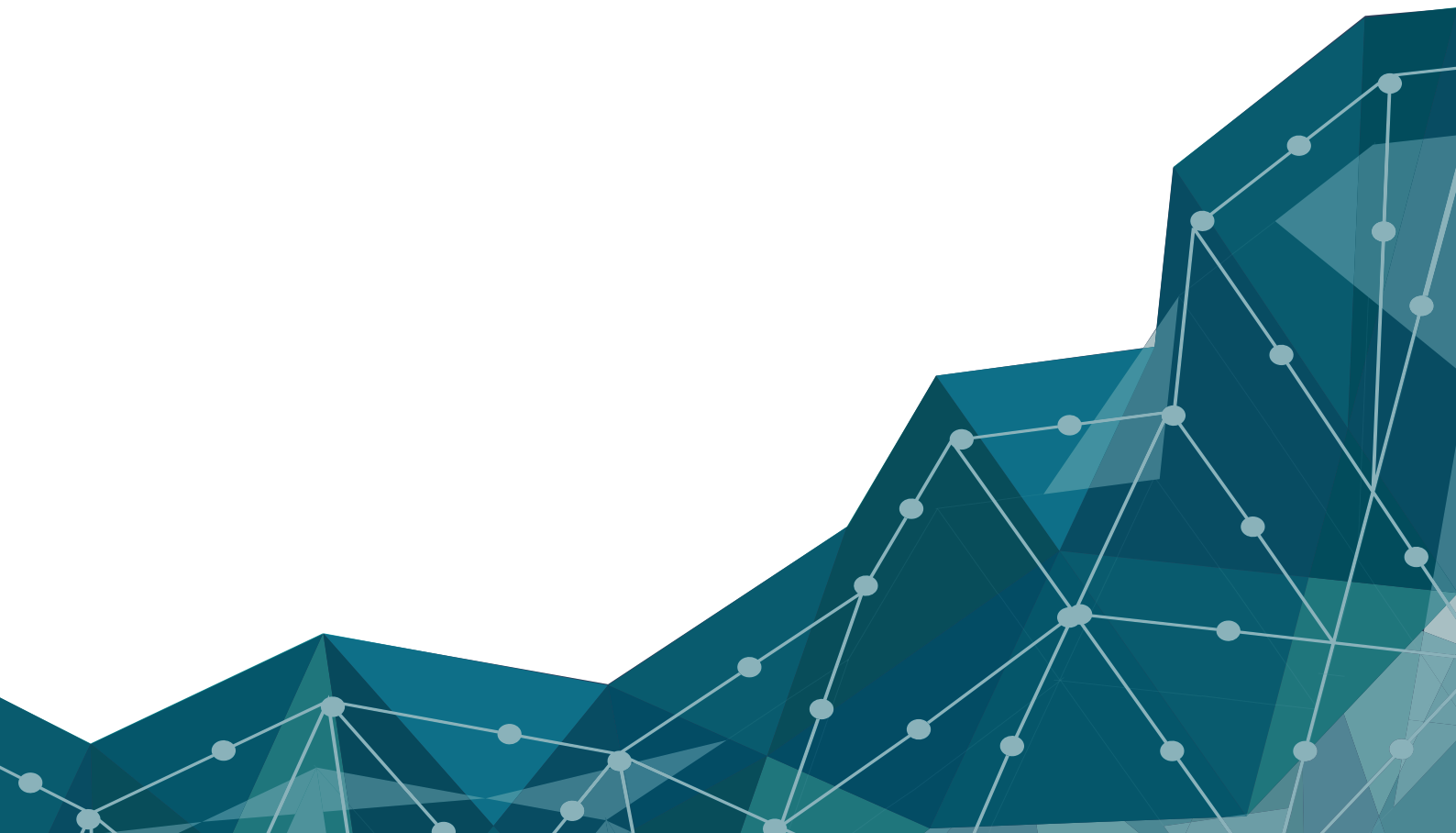
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- This is a descriptive cross-sectional study and has the limitations inherent to this type of design; therefore, causal relationships may not be established.
- The results are taken from the responses of the prison population in custody, which should be taken into account when interpreting them.
- The applied questionnaire allows information on a large number of variables to be obtained, and the most relevant results are included in this document.
- This survey has been performed following the same methodological criteria as in previous editions, thus enabling data comparison, although the evolutionary data should always be interpreted with caution.

# 05

## RESULTS

ESDIP **22** Survey on health and drug use  
in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions



## Socio-demographic and procedural characteristics of the prison population

The **socio-demographic profile of male inmates** is that of a Spanish man in his 40s who stopped studying at the end of secondary school or before. During the 12 months prior to entering prison, he was working and mostly living in stable accommodation with his family. 9% lived in unstable accommodation.

With regard to procedural characteristics, 18.3% have previously been in a juvenile detention centre and more than half have been in prison before. The vast majority of them have been sentenced and have currently been in prison on average 3 years. The most frequent crimes are against property or against persons.

The **socio-demographic profile of female inmates** is that of a 41-year-old Spanish woman who stopped studying at the end of secondary school or before. During the 12 months prior to entering prison, she was unemployed and seeking employment, or not active, and mostly living in stable accommodation with her children. It is worth noting that 15.3% were living in unstable accommodation prior to their current incarceration.

With regard to procedural characteristics, 12.0% have been in a juvenile detention centre and for 60% of the inmates, this is the first time they have been imprisoned. The vast majority of them have been sentenced and have currently been in prison on average 2.5 years. The most frequent crimes are against property or against public health.

Compared to 2016, there is a higher percentage of inmates who have completed primary education (22.7% in 2016 compared to 40.5% in 2022), who were living in a precarious situation before entering prison (6.4% in 2016 compared to 9.4% in 2022), and who live alone or with their family of origin (43% in 2016 compared to 51.8% in 2022).

### Socio-demographic and procedural characteristics of the prison population by sex (%). Spain, 2022.

Socio-demographic Characteristics		Men	Women
Sex	Man	100	-
	Woman	-	100
Age	Average (years)	40.0	41.0
	≤34	34.4	29.9
	≥35	65.6	70.1
	≤24	8.0	4.3
	25-34	26.4	25.6
	35-44	31.2	35.7
	45-54	23.0	23.9
	55-64	8.9	8.7
	≥65	2.5	1.7
Nationality	Spanish	73.4	77.5
	Foreign	26.7	22.5
	Moroccan	10.5	2.5
	Romanian	1.4	1.9
	Colombian	2.6	3.1
	Ecuadorian	1.1	0.5
	Algerian	2.3	0.0
	Others with lower values	8.8	14.5

CONTINUE >

Socio-demographic Characteristics		Men	Women
Level of education achieved	Cannot read or write, no education or unfinished primary education	11.6	12.9
	Completed primary education	40.6	39.2
	Secondary education	41.6	38.3
	University studies	6.2	9.6
Employment status	Working (permanent or temporary)	56.1	45.1
	Unemployed and seeking employment	16.2	15.4
	Not active*	27.7	39.5
Type of accommodation	Stable accommodation (houses, flats or apartments)	89.5	84.0
	Unstable accommodation**	9.0	15.3
	Other accommodation	1.5	0.7
Cohabitation	Couple	38.9	40.4
	Children	24.5	43.3
	Family of origin (parents/siblings)	34.6	24.9
	Lived alone	18.1	13.4
	Friends	6.9	6.3
Procedural Characteristics			
Procedural status	Sentenced	83.2	82.2
	Pre-trial custody	16.8	17.8
Previous incarceration	In a juvenile detention centre	18.7	12.0
	In prison	51.3	40.1
Age of first incarceration	Average (years)	30.1	33.3
Average time in prison	Current incarceration (years)	3.1	2.5
	Over their lifetime (years)	6.2	4.2
Crime/s for which currently in prison (against...)	Property	37.1	37.3
	Traffic safety	4.7	2.5
	Persons	28.6	25.6
	Sexual freedom	5.8	1.7
	Public health	21.0	28.7
	Gender-based violence	13.3	3.8
	Violence against children and adolescents	1.5	0.5
	Other	4.5	6.3

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

Note 1: The procedural status, type of accommodation and cohabitation refer to the 12 months prior to the current incarceration.

Note 2: The prison population may have been imprisoned for one or more offences and may have cohabited under one or more categories. These sections are above 100%.

Note 3: By prison population, we take to mean persons who are in custody

\*(in prison for a year, unemployed without seeking employment, student, retired, doing housework without looking for a job)

\*\* (precarious housing, bed and breakfast, hostels, hotels, dorms...)



# Health status

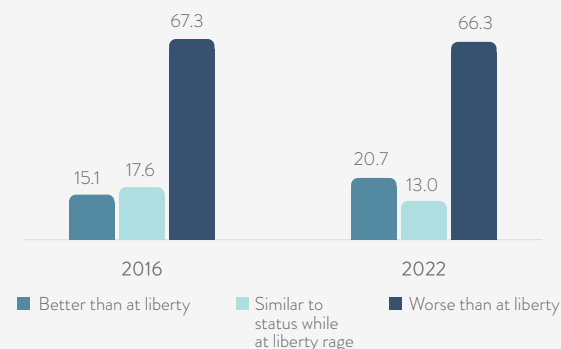
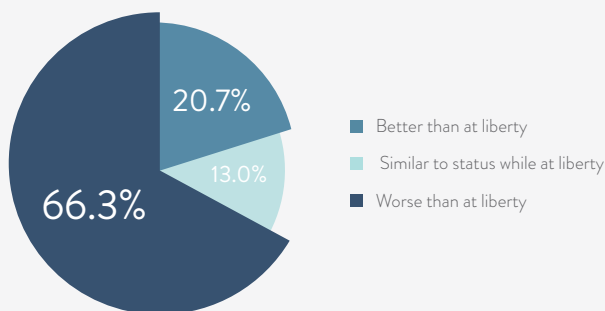
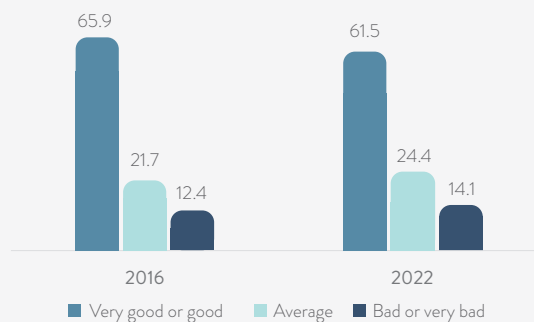
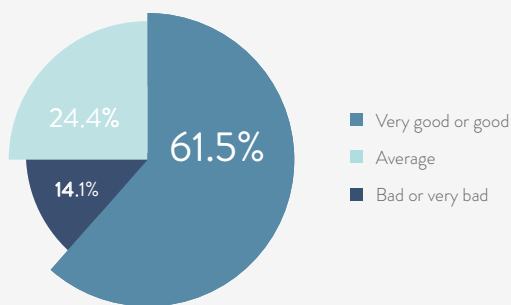
## Perception of health status

**The majority of the prison population consider their health to be good or very good. 20.7% believe they enjoy better health when they are in prison, which is higher than in 2016 (15.1% in 2016).**

61.5% of the prison population in custody consider their health to be good or very good, which is lower than the figure obtained in the 2022 EDADES survey of the general population aged 18 to 64 (82.7%). A higher percentage of men compared to women consider their health to be good or very good (62.0% of men compared to 53.0% of women). On the other hand, the perception of good health is higher among the younger population and decreases with increasing age.

Comparing their current health with that enjoyed before entering prison, 66.3% of the prison population consider their health to have worsened since they entered prison, while 20.7% believe their health to have improved since they entered prison. The latter figure represents an improvement in 2022 compared to 15.1% in 2016. This improvement is most noted among women and the younger population.

Perception of health status of the prison population (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016, 2022.

## Mental health



34.8% of the prison population report having been diagnosed with a mental or emotional disorder at some time in their lives.

Due to the importance of mental health, both within the general population and in the prison population, the survey includes certain questions related to mental or emotional disorders, which allows us to explore the situation in prisons and may serve as a basis for further studies.

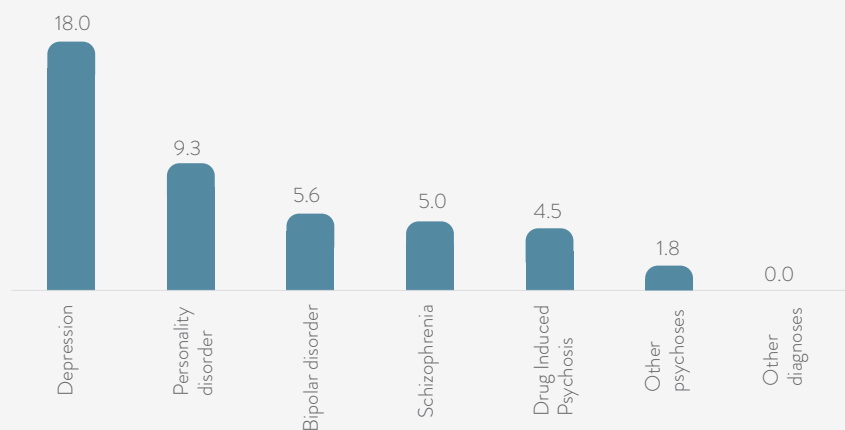
34.8% of the prison population report having been diagnosed with a mental or emotional disorder, at some time in their lives. The prevalence was higher among women (42.3%) than among men (34.3%), the highest value (46.9%) among women between 35 and 44 years of age.

The types of mental or emotional illnesses vary according to sex, with men reporting more diagnoses of schizophrenia, and women more diagnoses of depression and personality disorders. The prevalence of psychosis and bipolar disorder was similar in both sexes.

The average treatment time for people diagnosed with a mental or emotional illness is 8.7 years, ascending to 9.6 years for women and descending to 8.7 years for men.

Persons diagnosed with a mental or emotional illness generally receive less family support than people without mental health issues. 13.2% of persons diagnosed with a mental or emotional illness have no family contact or social support. This varies according to the diagnosis received, thus the absence of family contact is much greater among those who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia.

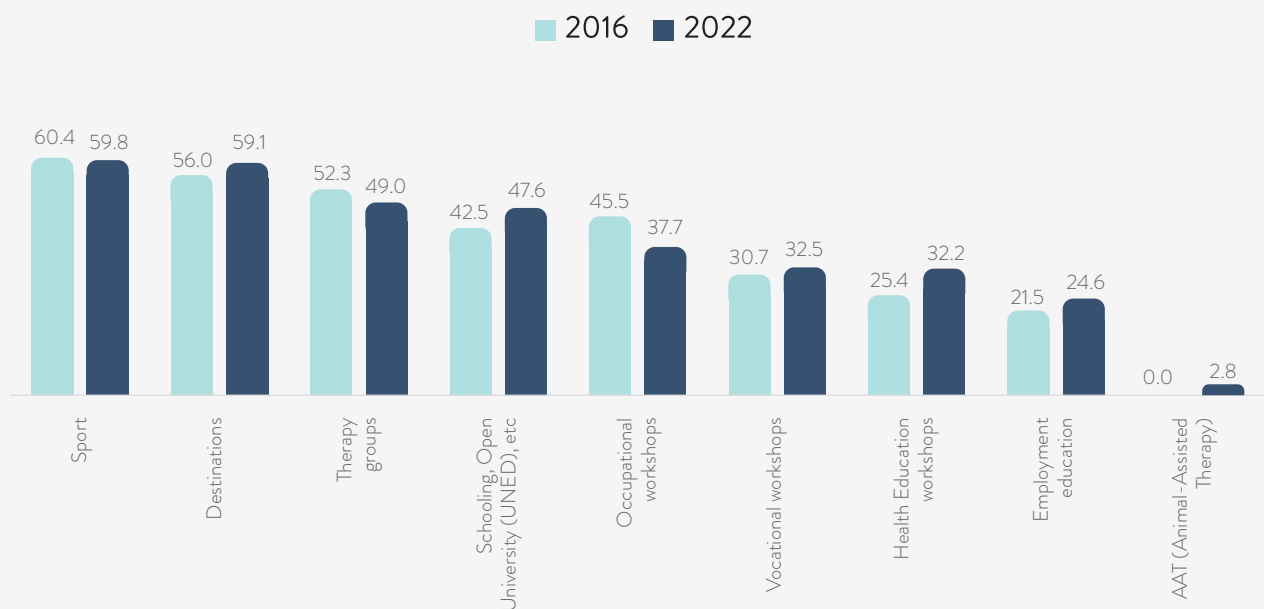
Prevalence of mental illness  
among the prison population (%).  
Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2022.

21.6% of the prison population in custody report that they are currently on medication **for mental or emotional problems** (27.9% in 2016) and 26.1% of the prison population report that they are currently participating in prison mental health intervention/programmes (15.7% in 2016). Of these, 59.8% participate in sports programmes and 59.1% in destinations. With regard to 2016, the percentage of the prison population participating in therapy groups and occupational workshops has decreased, but their participation in studies, vocational workshops, health education workshops, employment education and AAT has increased. Some of these results may be related to the COVID-19 restrictions still in place at the time of the survey.

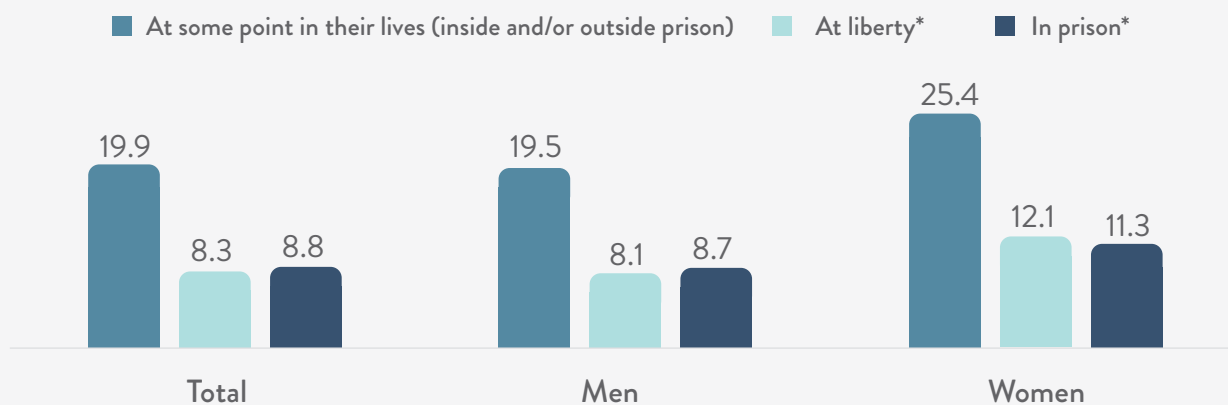
Prevalence of participation in mental health programmes in prisons (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2022.

32.2% of the prison population have reported **suicidal ideation** at some time in their lives (38.7% among women and 31.8% among men). Suicidal ideation is higher in prison than at liberty for both sexes. 19.9% of the prison population report having tried to take their own life at some time (25.4% among women and 19.5% among men).

Prevalence of suicide attempts (%). Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2022.

\*At liberty: 12 months before entering prison.

\*In prison: During the current imprisonment.

The data show that 61.7% of the prison population who has reported suicidal ideation at some time in their lives have attempted to take their own lives, this figure being higher among women (65.8%) than among men (61.4%).

Prevalence of suicide attempts among the prison population with suicidal ideation during their lifetime, by sex (%). Spain, 2022.

Suicide attempts among the prison population with suicidal ideation at some time in their lives		
	YES	NO
Both sexes	61.7	38.3
Men	61.4	38.6
Women	65.8	34.2

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

## Infectious diseases

The prison population is considered a population at risk of infectious diseases. The ESDIP survey asks the prison population if they have been tested for HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and tuberculosis, the results of these tests, and whether they have received treatment.

All persons admitted to prison are offered a lab test including **screening tests** for HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis, which is not performed if they refuse, or in the event of a short stay in the prison. However, only 65% to 73% remember having it performed when surveyed. The infection for which most respondents remember being screened is hepatitis C (72.8%). The infection for which the fewest respondents remember being screened is hepatitis B (66.1% total, 66.2% males and 65.3% females). The evolutionary data (2011-2022) show a possible decrease in testing for both HIV and hepatitis in general among the current population, which may be related to the COVID period. Injecting drug users remember being screened more than the prison population as a whole.

Of the prison population that remembers being screened and is aware of the **result**, 4.6% are HIV positive, 13.6% are positive for hepatitis C and 1.1% for hepatitis B. The percentage of positives is higher in men for all infectious diseases. The prevalence of infection is clearly higher (up to three times higher) in the case of injecting drug users. Since 2011 there has been a decrease in the prevalence of infectious diseases in both the total population of inmates and among injecting drug users.

According to SGIIPP data, in the penitentiary centres under it, in 2020, 4% of the prison population was HIV positive and 9.1% HCV positive (0.9% with detectable viral loads), figures that are consistent with those obtained in this survey (ESDIP, 2022) taking into account the temporal and methodological differences (the SGIIPP information is from 2020, is obtained from the total number of tests carried out, and does not include centres in Catalonia).

If we look at the **number of years passed after the infection was detected**, the overall average is between 15.3 years (HCV), 19 years (HBV) and 20.9 years (HIV). This time is slightly longer for people who have injected drugs on occasion, and among men.

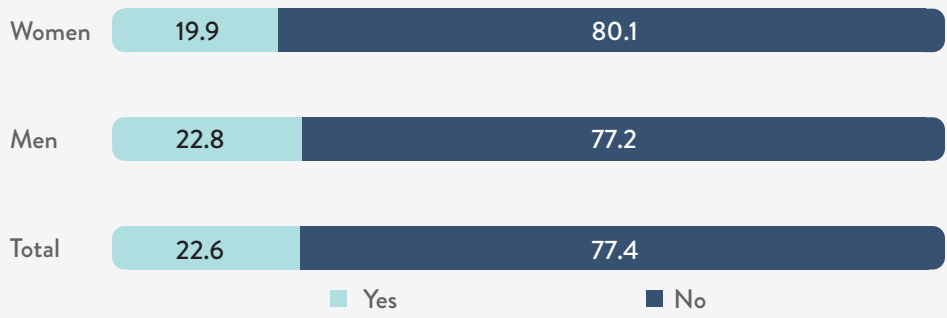
4.3% of the prison population report having had **tuberculosis** (many may not distinguish between tuberculosis disease and latent tuberculosis infection) and on average 17.3 years have passed since they had the disease. Among injecting drug users, the percentage of individuals who report having had TB has increased to 11.2%.

With regard to **treatment for infectious diseases**, 97.4% of the inmates who said that they had been diagnosed with HIV reported that they were receiving treatment for this infection, with higher treatment rates among women. 84.3% of the prison population with HCV reported having received treatment (there are cases of spontaneous remission that do not require treatment), with a higher percentage among men. Of the prison population who recall being HBV positive, 48.7% report having received treatment for HBV, with a lower percentage among men.

In terms of **vaccination** inside prisons, 37.0% of the prison population report having been vaccinated on occasion for HBV (37.8% of men and 26.5% of women). Reports of HBV vaccination while at liberty are somewhat lower at 22.1%.

This edition includes an analysis of the incidence of **SARS-COV-2 (COVID)** in the prison population, showing that 22.6% of the prison population have tested positive for the virus at some time, 22.8% of men and 19.9% of women, with results varying according to the different prison administrations, 34.6% in prisons in Catalonia and 20.5% in prisons under the General State Administration (including the Basque Country during the pandemic). In terms of prevention, more than 95% of the prison population report that they have received the COVID vaccine at some time (94.9% of men and 96.8% of women).

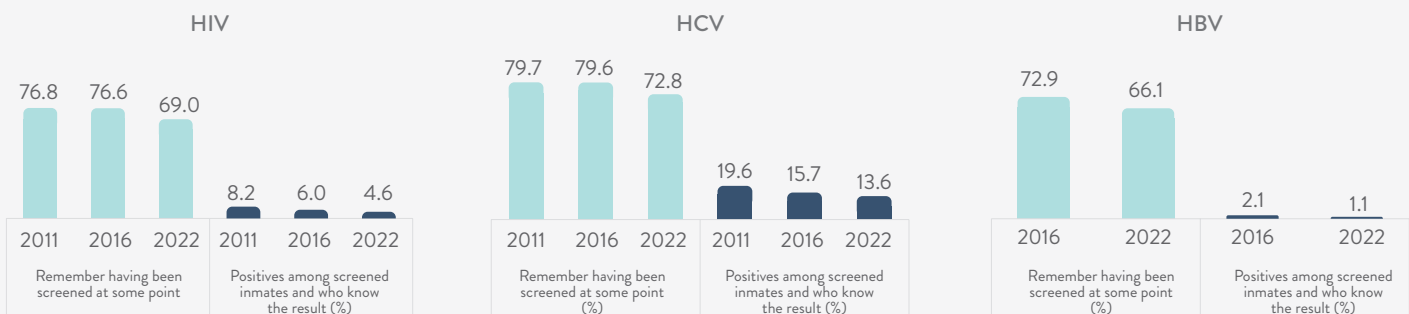
COVID positives in the prison population by sex (%). Spain, 2022.



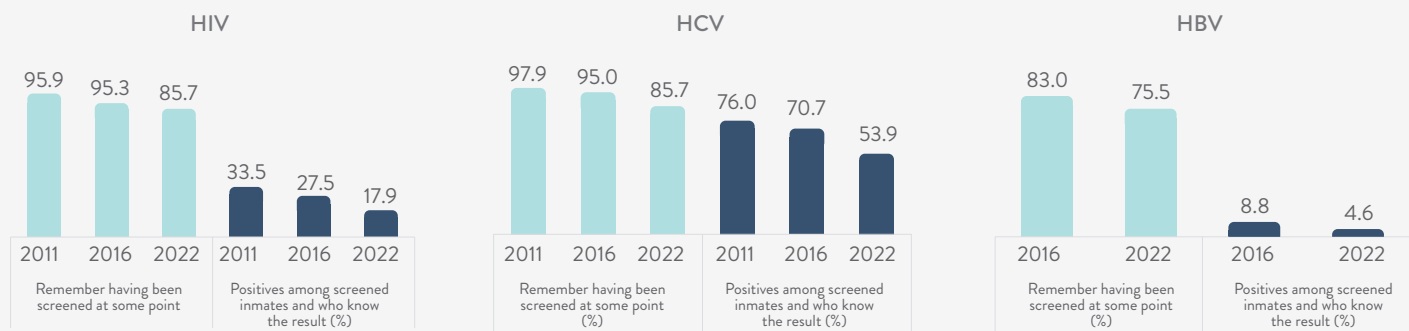
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

Note: The result is obtained from the responses provided by the prison population

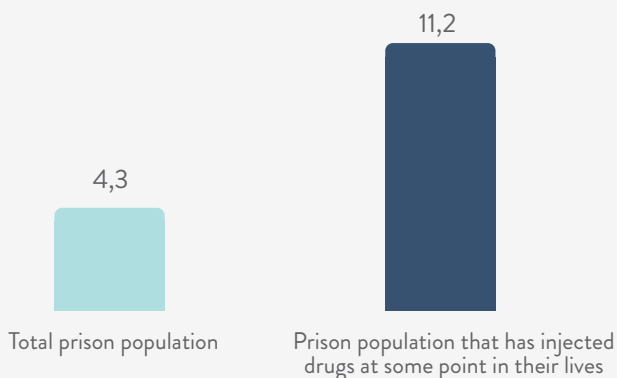
Infectious diseases among the prison population (%). Spain, 2011, 2016 and 2022.



Infectious diseases among the prison population who have injected drugs at some time (%). Spain, 2011, 2016 and 2022.



### Report having Tuberculosis (Year 2022)



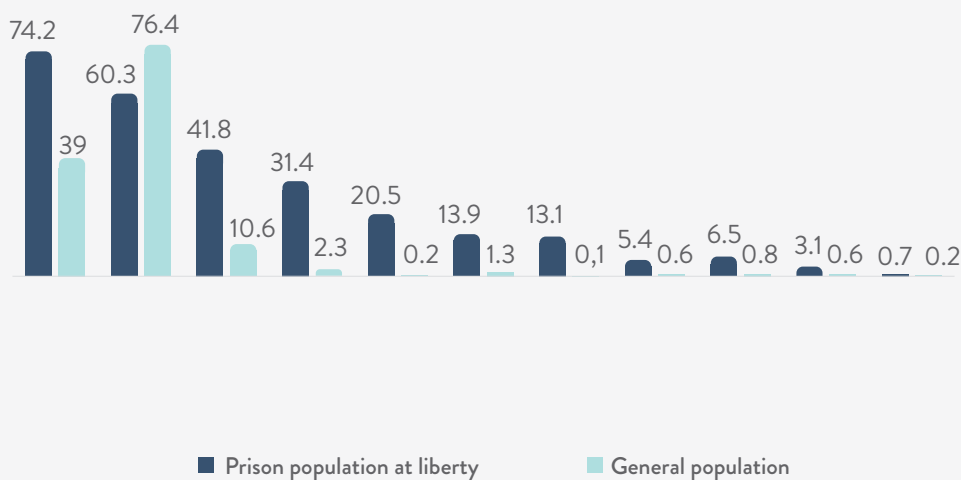
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022.  
 Note: The information on screening and the result is obtained from the responses provided by the prison population.

## Drug use

### Comparison between the general population and the prison population

Illegal drug use over the last 12 months is clearly higher among the prison population surveyed, prior to their incarceration, than among the general population aged 15 to 64, with noteworthy differences in cannabis and cocaine use. Alcohol is the only drug that modifies this trend and displays a higher prevalence among the general population.

Prevalence of drug use within the last 12 months in the prison population prior to incarceration and in the general population (%). Spain, 2022.



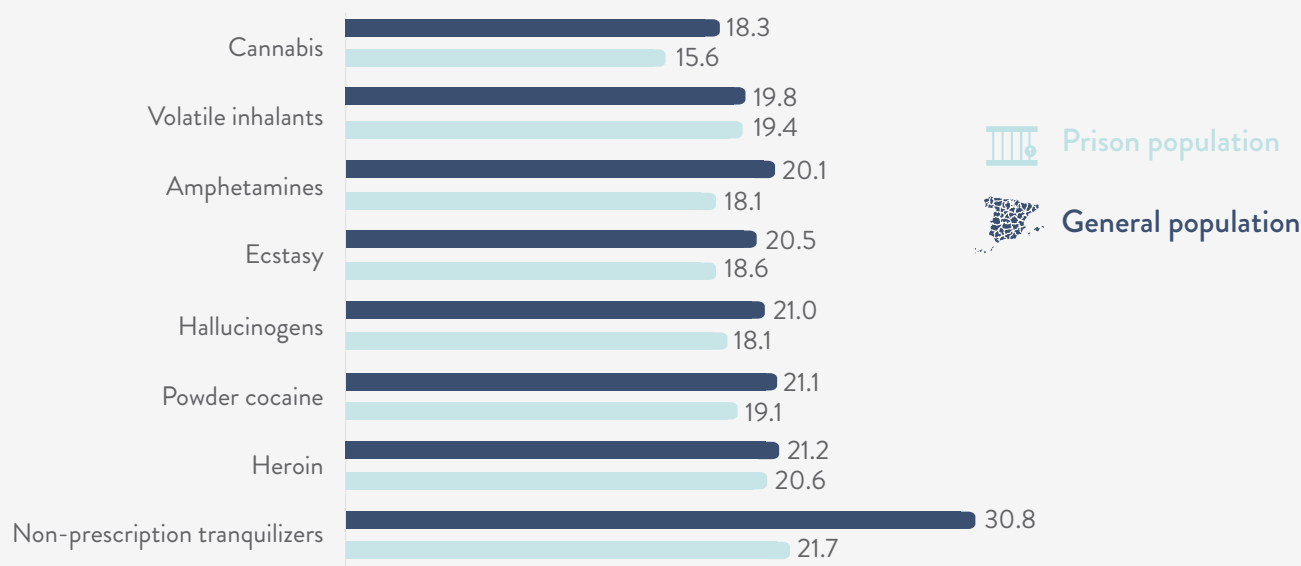
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022 Survey on Alcohol and Drugs in Spain. EDADES 2022.

Note: Non-prescription tranquilizers

Note: Heroin is used on its own, not mixed with cocaine

With regard to the **age of onset** of psychoactive substance use, the prison population starts using drugs at an earlier age compared to the general population between 15 and 64 years of age. For most drugs, the difference does not exceed 3 years, except for tranquilizers (9 years).

Average age of onset of illegal drug use among the general population aged 15-64 and among the prison population in custody (years), Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022 Survey on Alcohol and Drugs in Spain. EDADES 2022.

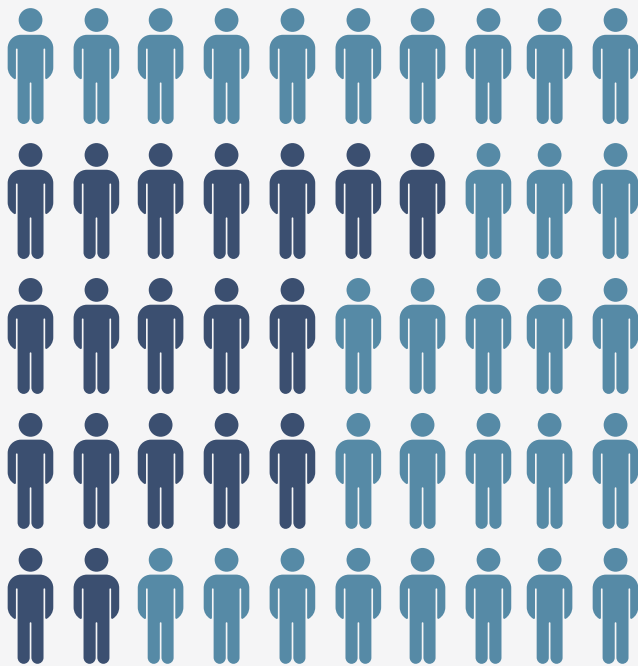
Compared to ESDIP 2016, the average ages of onset of use remain stable for all illegal drugs except for volatile inhalants and non-prescription tranquilizers. In 2016, the age of onset of use of volatile inhalants among the population in custody was 15 years and the use of non-prescription tranquilizers was 20 years.

### Legal and illegal drug use among the prison population

75.1% of the prison population in custody have used an illegal drug some time in their lives while at liberty. The illegal drugs included in this report are: non-prescription tranquilizers, cannabis, cannabinoids, unmixed heroin, non-prescription methadone, non-prescription buprenorphine, non-prescription fentanyl, base cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin mixed with cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamine ecstasy, hallucinogens, volatile inhalants, ketamine, LSD, magic mushrooms, synthetic cathinones, anabolic steroids and GHB. 58.9% of the prison population in custody have used an illegal drug within the last year at liberty, 53.5% within the last month at liberty and 16.8% have done so within the last 30 days in prison. Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug both in prison and at liberty.



Illegal drug use among the prison population. Spain 2022.



Of every ten inmates...

Seven have on occasion used an illegal drug while at liberty (75.1%)

Five have used an illegal drug within the last year at liberty (58.9%)

Five have used an illegal drug within the last month at liberty (53.5%)

Two used an illegal drug within the last month in prison (16.8%)

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

With regard to the consumption of legal drugs, alcohol is the most widely consumed psychoactive substance while at liberty. Tobacco is the most commonly used psychoactive substance both, in prison and while at liberty. In this regard, it should be noted that smoking is currently permitted in outdoor areas in prisons, or in closed rooms set aside for this purpose.

Prevalence of legal and illegal drug use among the prison population (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.

	Any illegal drug		Tobacco		Alcohol		Non prescription tranquilizers		Cannabis		Powder cocaine		Heroin	
	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022
At some point in their lives while at liberty	70.8	76.0	-	85.1	85.5	74.0	28.0	28.4	62.6	62.3	53.4	54.0	28.1	25.4
Last 12 months at liberty	54.2	58.9	-	74.2	72.5	60.3	15.7	13.9	42.2	41.8	30.7	31.4	14.3	13.1
Last 30 days at liberty	49.2	53.5	-	72.5	64.9	54.5	13.5	12.1	37.8	37.7	24.8	24.9	12.2	11.1
Last 30 days in prison	20.6	16.8	74.9	74.0	2.2	2.0	6.2	7.8	19.4	11.2	1.4	1.3	2.8	1.4

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

Note: Illegal drugs: non-prescription tranquilizers, cannabis, cannabinoids, unmixed heroin, non-prescription methadone, non-prescription buprenorphine, non-prescription fentanyl, base cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin mixed with cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamine ecstasy, hallucinogens, volatile inhalants, ketamine, LSD, magic mushrooms, synthetic cathinones, anabolic steroids and GHB.

Prevalence of legal and illegal drug use among the prison population, by sex (%). Spain, 2022.

	Any illegal drug		Tobacco		Alcohol		Non prescription tranquilizers		Cannabis		Powder cocaine		Heroin	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
At some point in their lives while at liberty	76.3	57.6	83.5	73.0	75.3	53.5	23.2	18.6	63.2	39.1	55.1	34.7	23.3	20.7
Last 12 months at liberty	59.9	44.3	74.8	66.3	61.7	38.6	14.1	10.8	42.8	26.9	32.3	17.0	13.2	11.8
Last 30 days at liberty	54.4	40.9	73.0	65.3	55.9	34.3	12.3	9.4	38.6	24.0	25.6	14.1	11.1	10.5
Last 30 days in prison	17.4	8.4	74.4	67.4	2.1	1.0	8.0	3.6	11.6	4.7	1.3	1.1	1.5	0.5

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

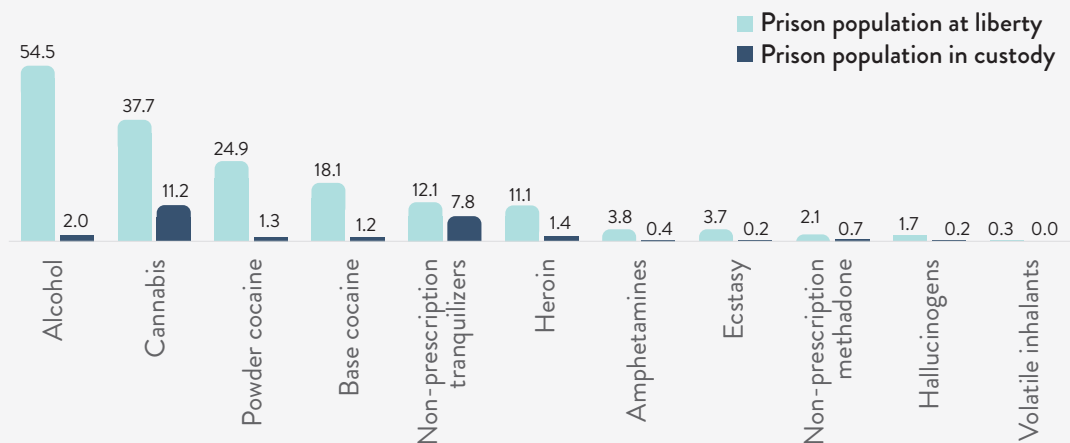
Note: Illegal drugs: non-prescription tranquilizers, cannabis, cannabinoids, unmixed heroin, non-prescription methadone, non-prescription buprenorphine, non-prescription fentanyl, base cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin mixed with cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamine ecstasy, hallucinogens, volatile inhalants, ketamine, LSD, magic mushrooms, synthetic cathinones, anabolic steroids and GHB.

The prevalence of legal and illegal drug use both in prison and while at liberty is higher among men. The largest differences in drug use between men and women are found in prison because women reduce their consumption to a greater extent when they enter prison. The only substance whose prevalence of use increases upon entry into prison for both sexes is tobacco.

Comparison of the prison population at liberty and in prison

On entering prison, the prevalence of all drug use fell, most notably in the use of alcoholic beverages and cocaine. Cannabis use drops by a third once they enter the prison and non-prescription tranquilizers by almost half, yet they are the drugs most commonly used by the inmate population during the last month.





Prevalence of legal and illegal drug use in the prison population while at liberty or in prison in the last 30 days (%). Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

In terms of the prevalence of drug use by sex, men have a higher prevalence of use of all drugs, both in prison and at liberty. Women display a greater reduction in prevalence for all substance use on entering prison, except tobacco, which, similar to men, increases in use in prison. The largest differences in drug use by sex in prison are found in cannabis and heroin, much lower among women.

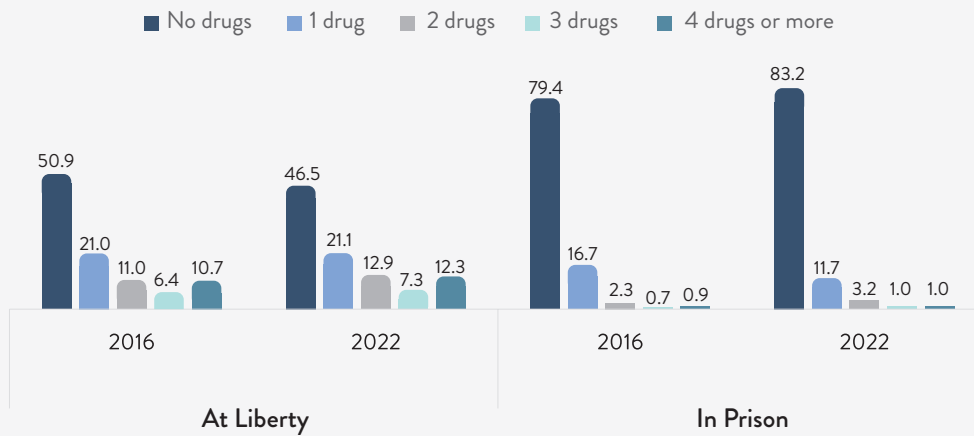
Prevalence of legal and illegal drug use in the prison population while at liberty  
or in prison within the last 30 days, by sex (%). Spain, 2022.

	At liberty		In prison	
				
Tobacco	73.0	65.3	74.4	67.4
Alcohol	55.9	34.3	2.1	1.0
Non-prescription tranquilizers	12.3	9.4	8.0	3.6
Cannabis	38.6	24.0	11.6	4.7
Synthetic cannabinoids	2.3	1.1	0.5	0.1
Heroin	11.1	10.5	1.5	0.5
Base cocaine	18.1	17.7	1.2	0.9
Powder cocaine	25.6	14.1	1.3	1.1
Amphetamines	3.9	2.1	0.5	0.0
Methamphetamine	2.3	1.4	0.2	0.0
Ketamine	2.4	0.9	0.3	0.2
Ecstasy	3.9	1.0	0.2	0.1
Hallucinogens	1.8	0.9	0.2	0.0
LSD	1.2	0.5	0.0	0.0
Magic mushrooms	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.0
Volatile inhalants	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0
GHB/GBL	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

The prevalence of illegal drug use among the prison population follows a pattern of polydrug use. This pattern of polydrug use is more common while at liberty and no changes are observed when compared to 2016. However, the pattern of polydrug use decreases upon incarceration, increasing the prison population in custody that does not use any psychoactive substances.

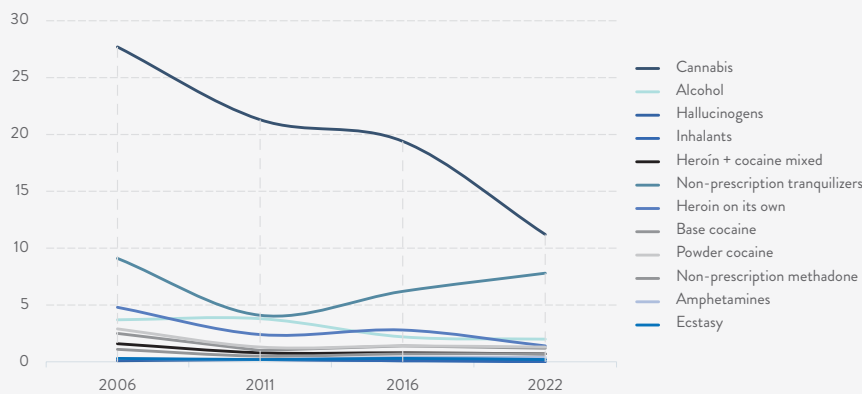
Prevalence of polydrug use in the prison population at liberty or in prison within the last 30 days (%). Spain, 2016-2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

From 2006 to 2022, a downward trend has been observed in the prevalence of drug use within the last 30 days in prison for most illegal drugs. Cannabis, the most commonly used illegal drug in prison, shows a clear downward trend, with use falling to a third of what it was in 2006. It is important to note the decline in the prevalence of heroin and cocaine use in prison. The only substance that displays an upward trend in prevalence of use is nonprescription tranquilizers since 2011, although the figures reached in 2022 are lower than those observed in 2006 (the peak of the historical data series).

Prevalence of drug use in the prison population within the last 30 days in prison (%). Spain, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.

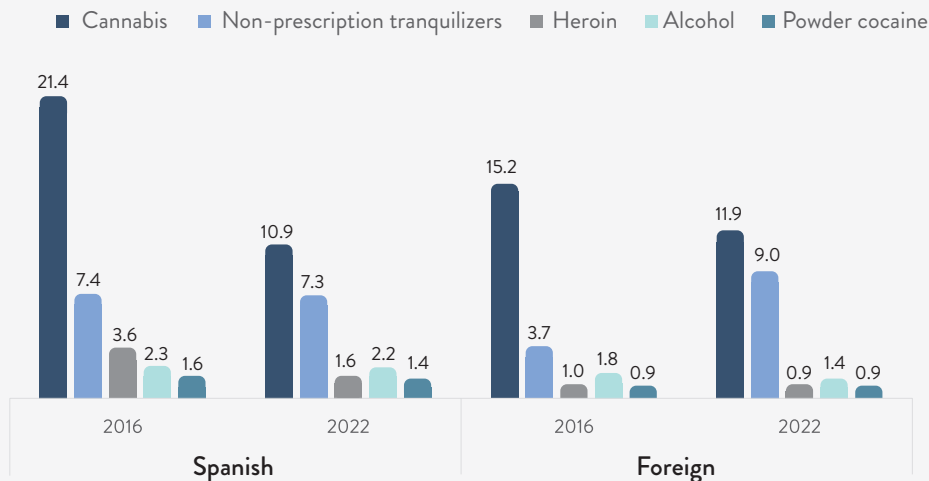


	2006	2011	2016	2022
Cannabis	27.7	21.3	19.4	11.2
Alcohol	3.7	3.8	2.2	2.0
Hallucinogens	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Inhalants	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0
Heroin + cocaine mixed	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.7
Non-prescription tranquilizers	9.1	4.1	6.2	7.8
Heroin on its own	4.8	2.4	2.8	1.4
Base cocaine	2.5	1	1.4	1.2
Powder cocaine	2.9	1.3	1.4	1.3
Non-prescription methadone	1.1	0.5	0.7	0.7
Amphetamines	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4
Ecstasy	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.

In 2022, the prevalence of use of different psychoactive substances does not differ according to the inmate's nationality. The decline in the prevalence of drug use in 2022 compared to 2016 is observed in both Spanish and foreign populations, for all drugs except non-prescription tranquilizers, which remains stable in the Spanish population, but increases considerably in the foreign population.

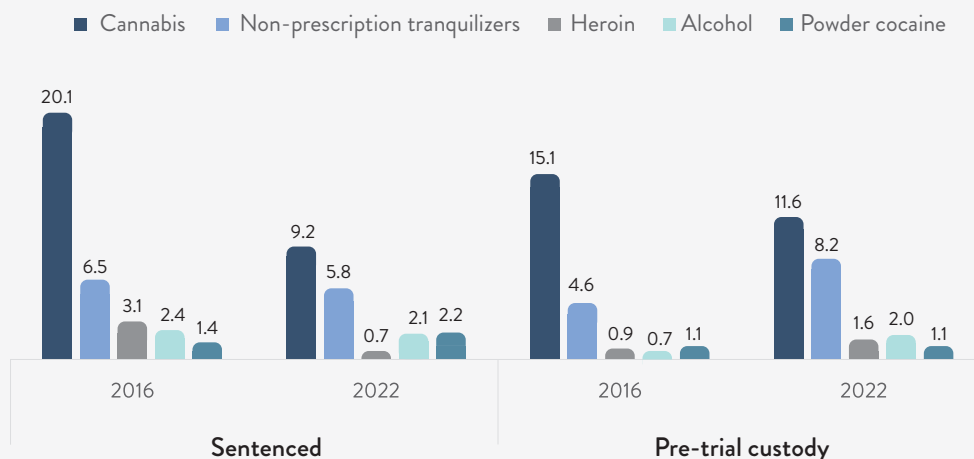
Prevalence of drug use in the prison population in custody within the last 30 days in prison, by nationality (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016 and 2022.

In 2022, the prevalence rates among the pre-trial custody population are higher than in the sentenced population, for all substances analysed except powder cocaine. When compared to 2016, an overall decrease is observed for all substances except powder cocaine in the sentenced population, while, in the case of the pretrial custody population, there is an increase in the prevalence of non-prescription tranquilizers, heroin and alcohol.

Prevalence of drug use in the prison population in custody within the last 30 days in prison, according to their procedural status (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.



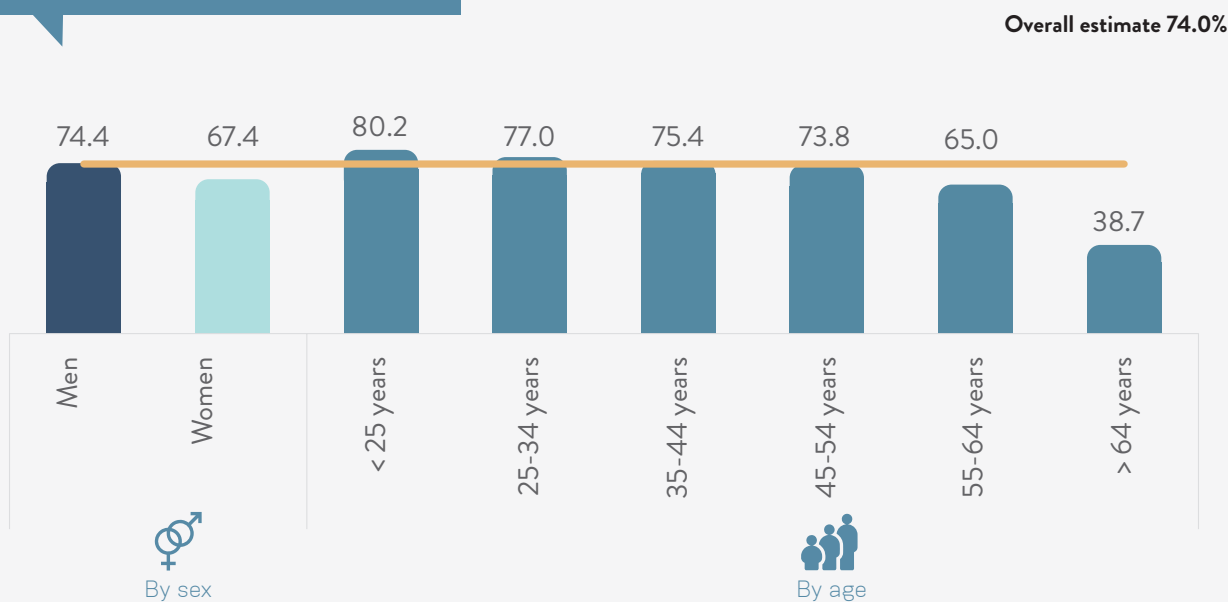
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016 and 2022.

## Characteristics of drug use in the prison population in prison within the last 30 days

### TOBACCO

74.0% of the prison population have smoked tobacco in prison within the last 30 days. Its use is more widespread among men and in the prison population under the age of 25. It is noteworthy that 80.2% of the prison population aged 24 and below have smoked in prison within the last 30 days. This prevalence is much higher than among the general non-institutionalised population.

Prevalence of **tobacco** use in prison within the last 30 days, by sex and age. Spain, 2022.

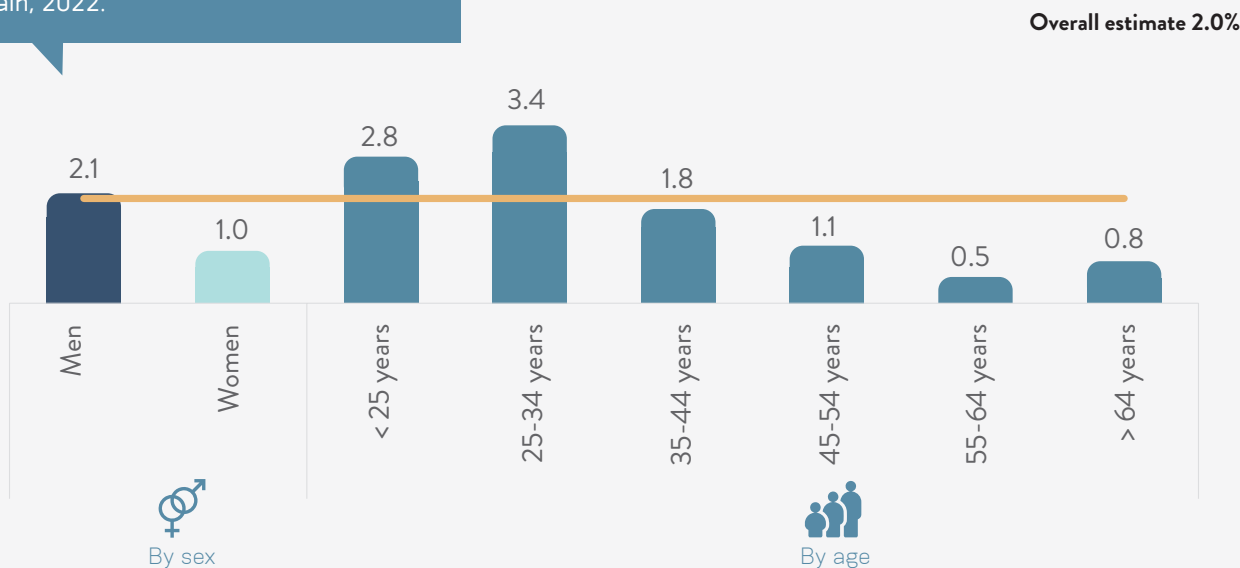


Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

### ALCOHOL

Alcohol is the psychoactive substance most commonly used by the prison population before incarceration, and the one that shows the greatest decline on entering prison. 2.0% have used it in prison within the last 30 days. Its use is more widespread among men and in the prison population under the age of 35.

Prevalence of **alcohol** use in prison within the last 30 days, by sex and age. Spain, 2022.

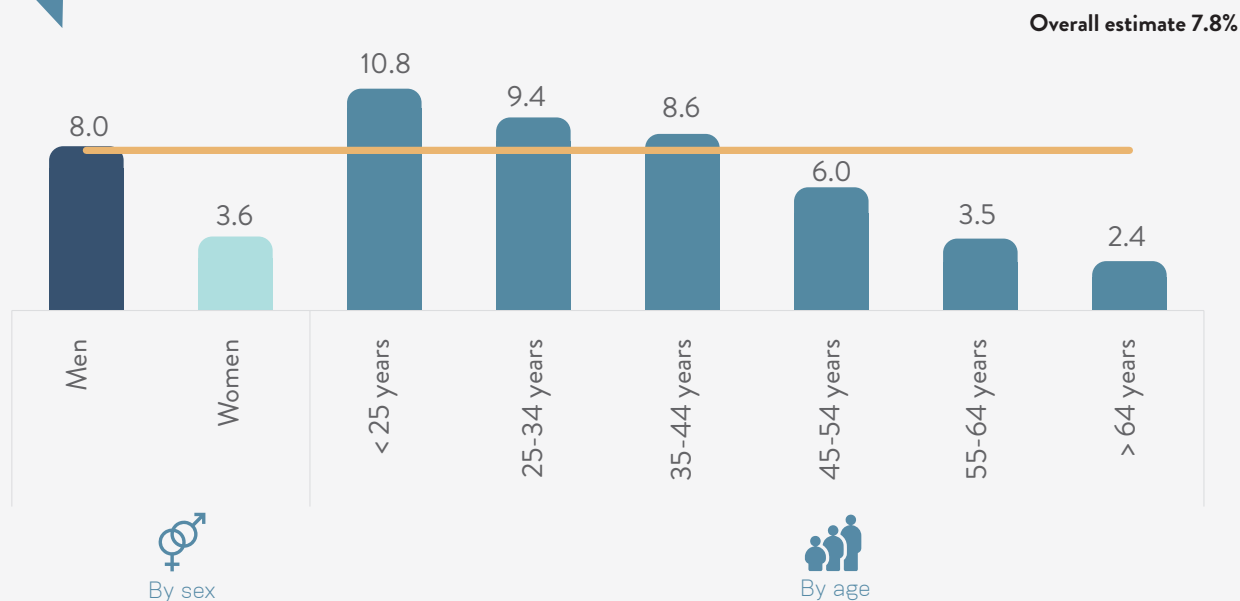


Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

## NON-PRESCRIPTION TRANQUILIZERS

7.8% of the prison population report having used non-prescription tranquilizers in prison within the last 30 days. The use of this substance is twice as high among men than among women in prison. They are consumed mostly orally and 26.0% of those who report having consumed them have started using them inside the prison.

Prevalence of **non-prescription tranquilizer** use in prison within the last 30 days, by sex and age. Spain, 2022.

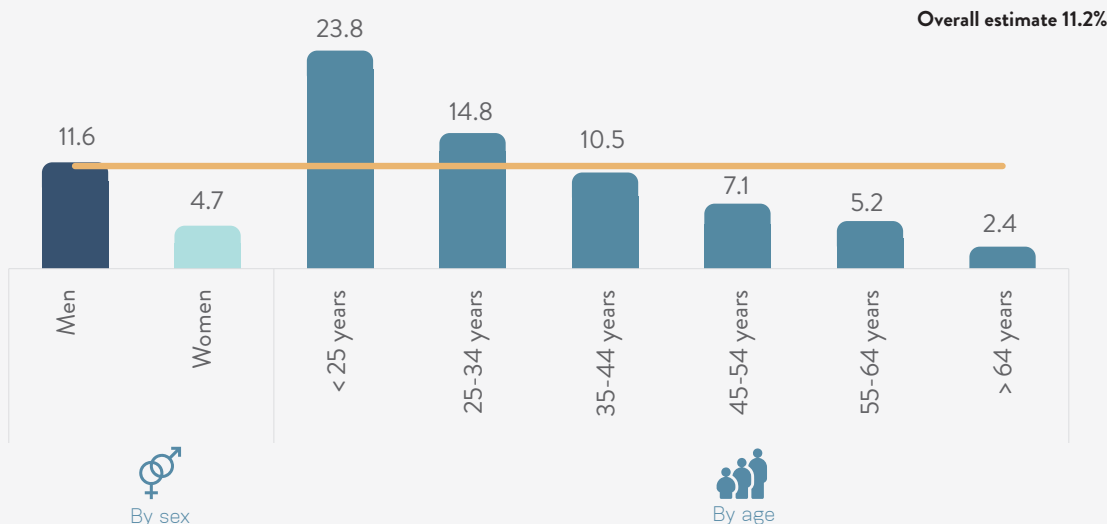


Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

## CANNABIS

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug among the prison population both inside and outside prison. 11.2% of the prison population reported having used this substance within the last 30 days in prison (in 2016 this indicator was 19.4%). Its use is more prevalent among men (more than twice that of women) and among the prison population under the age of 25. 1.6% of users report that they started using cannabis in prison (in 2016 this indicator was 1.8%).

Prevalence of **cannabis** use in prison within the last 30 days, by sex and age. Spain, 2022.

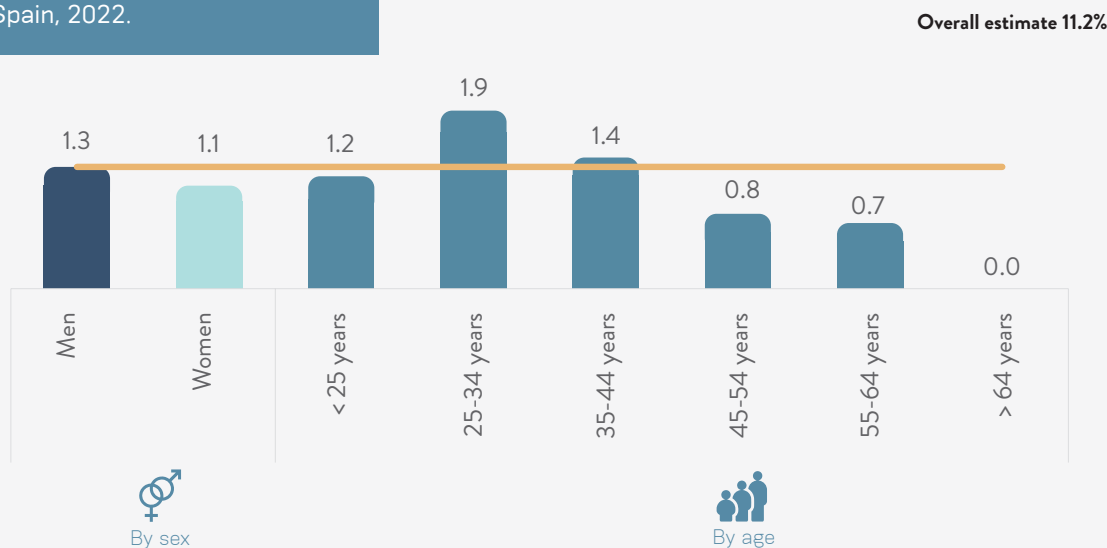


Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

## POWDER COCAINE

1.3% of the prison population report having used powder cocaine in prison within the last 30 days (1.4% in 2016). 77.7% of users use the snorting route, 14.8% use the smoking route and 6.0% use the injecting route (in 2016 the injecting route was 14.5%). Its use is more widespread among men and in the prison population under the age of 35. 1% of users acknowledge that they started using powder cocaine in prison (in 2016 it was 0.8%).

Prevalence of **powder cocaine** use in prison within the last 30 days, by sex and age. Spain, 2022.

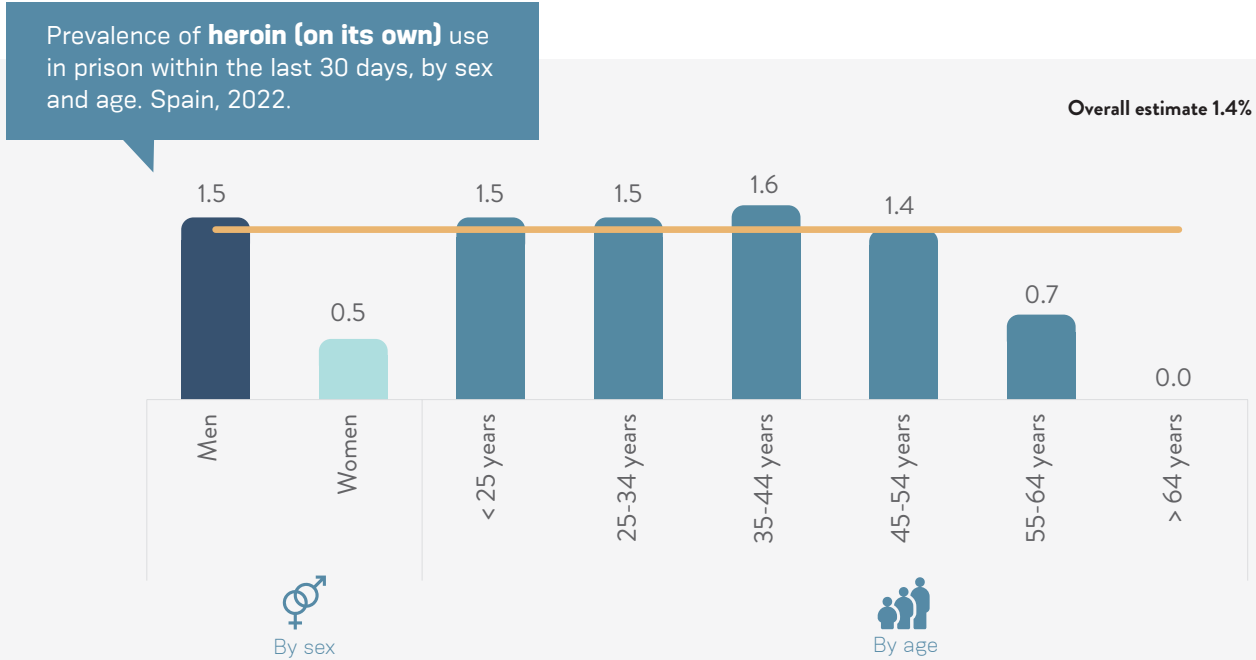


Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022



## HEROIN (ON ITS OWN)

1.4% of the prison population report having used heroin in prison within the last 30 days. 78.5% of users use the smoking route, 16.8% the snorting route and 4.7% the injecting route. Its use is more widespread among men. 14.7% of heroin users started using heroin for the first time while in prison. This percentage represents 3.7% of the total prison population.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

## OTHER ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

Other illegal substances, cannabinoids, non-prescription methadone, non-prescription buprenorphine, nonprescription fentanyl, amphetamines, methamphetamine ecstasy, hallucinogens, volatile inhalants, ketamine, LSD, magic mushrooms, synthetic cathinones, anabolic steroids and GHB, have prevalences of use that are less than 1.0% within the last 30 days in prison, which makes it impossible to establish patterns of use.

### Non-fatal drug overdoses among the prison population

Non-fatal overdoses among the prison population are more frequent while at liberty (18.9% overall, 19.0% of men and 17.0% of women) than in prison (4.1% overall, 4.2% of men and 2.7% of women) and, when they occur at liberty, they are more frequent prior to the first incarceration. Compared to 2016, the number of persons in custody who report having suffered an overdose at some point in their lives has increased. However, the percentage of persons who have overdosed in prison has declined in comparison to 2016.

Prevalence of non-fatal overdoses while at liberty and/or in prison (%). Spain, 2016 and 2022.

	At liberty		In prison*	
	2016	2022	2016	2022
At some point in their lives	15.6	18.9	5.2	4.1
3 years ago or less	2.4	3.1	1.5	1.9

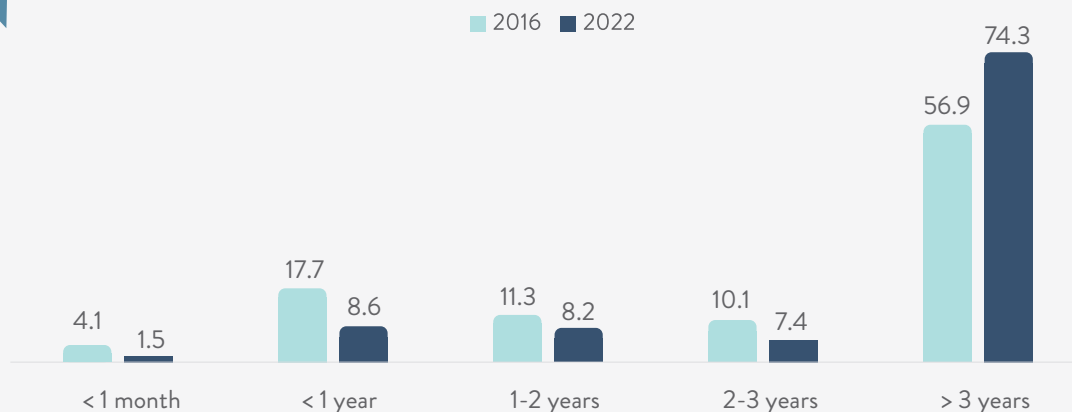
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016 and 2022.

Note: Percentage of prison population reporting a non-fatal overdose.

\* "In prison" refers to current incarceration, other incarceration and/or if it happened while on prison leave

25.7% of the overdoses reported by the prison population have occurred within the last 3 years. According to the prison population, the psychoactive substances responsible for these overdoses are cocaine, alcohol and heroin, while at liberty, and tranquilizers and heroin in prison. In 2022, there has been an increase in the time since the last overdose.

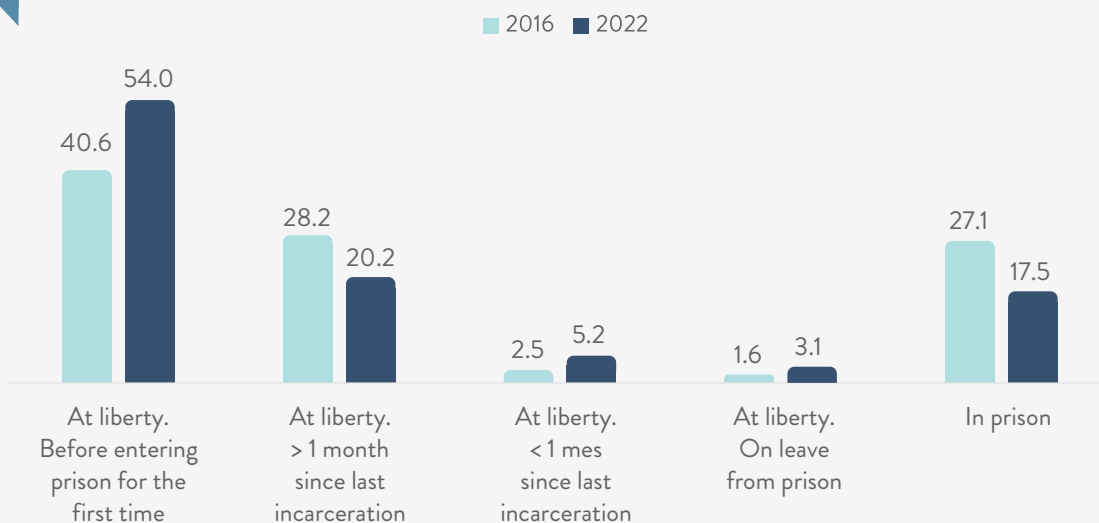
Non-fatal overdoses among the prison population. **How long ago** was the last overdose? (%). Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016 and 2022.

Most overdoses occur while at liberty and mostly before the first incarceration. Since 2016, there has been an increase in overdoses before the first incarceration, less than a month after the last incarceration, and while at liberty on prison leave.

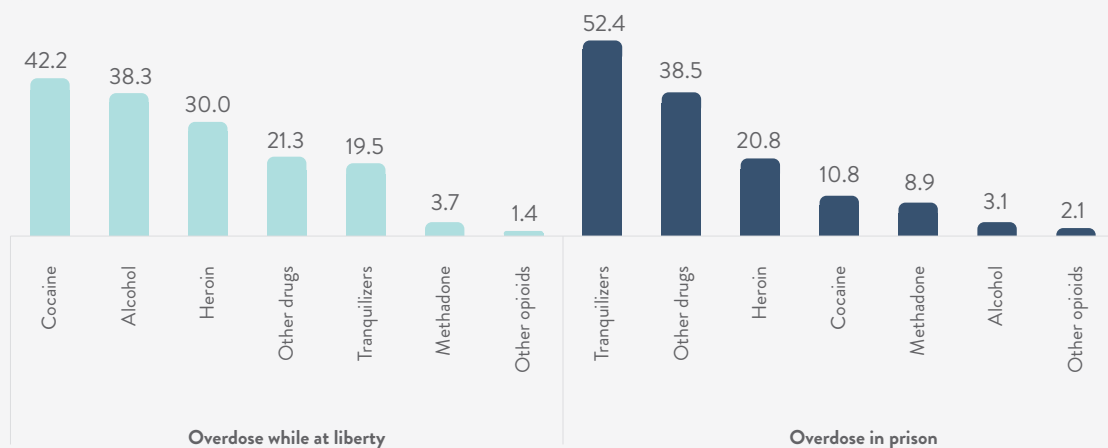
Non-fatal overdoses among the prison population. **Where were you** when you last overdosed? (%). Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016 and 2022.

Among those who report having suffered an overdose or acute non-fatal intoxication while at liberty (18.9% of the prison population), the substances involved are cocaine and alcohol, followed by heroin. Among the prison population who report having overdosed in prison (4.1% of the prison population), tranquilizers are the substances that generate the most acute non-fatal intoxications. Cocaine and alcohol overdoses are drastically reduced.

Drugs to which the prison population attribute non-fatal overdoses (in prison or at liberty) (%). Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022.

Note: Distribution of 100% of overdoses that occurred 3 years ago or less. "In prison" includes any type of incarceration.

Around 11% of the prison population who have ever overdosed in their lifetime, including inside or outside prison, have been included in overdose follow-up programmes in prison, increasing to 36.7% in prison populations that have at some point overdosed on heroin. With regard to awareness of naloxone, 55.9% of those who have ever overdosed on heroin are aware of it.

Percentage of the prison population included in **overdose follow-up programmes** and knowledge of **naloxone** among those who have overdosed, by sex. Spain, 2022.

	Overdose follow-up programme			They are aware of naloxone		
	Total	♂	♀	Total	♂	♀
Among those who have overdosed	11.1	11.2	9.7	-	-	-
Among those who have overdosed on heroin	36.7	36.7	35.7	55.9	55.7	60.0

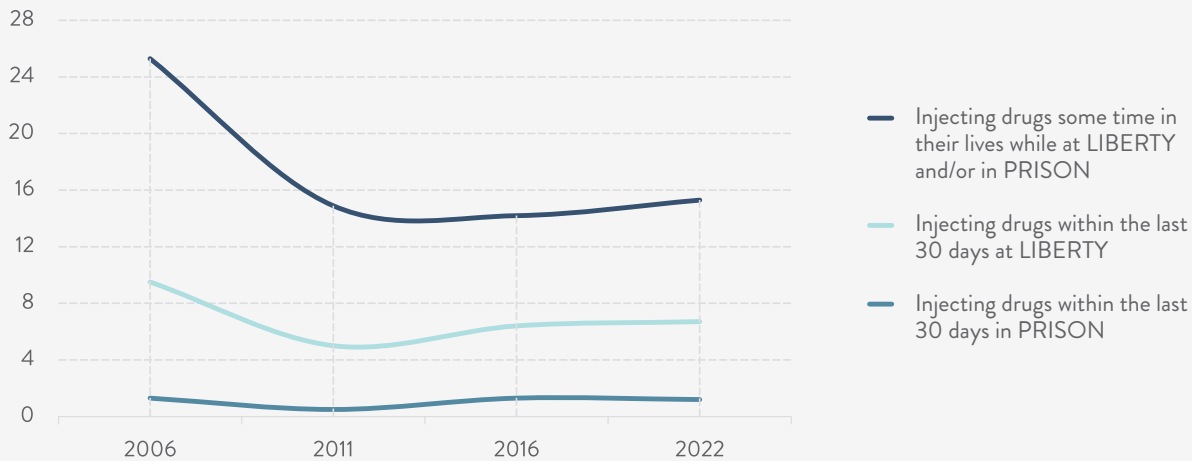
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

# Risky practices

## Drug injection

In 2022, 15.3% of the prison population had injected drugs at some point in their lives. It is a figure that has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. A similar trend is observed for injecting within the last 30 days at liberty. Drug injection in the last 30 days in prison is considerably reduced and does not exceed the maximum figure of 1.3% in the entire historical data series. 1.1% of the total prison population reported having injected for the first time while in prison.

Prevalence of **injecting** among the total prison population (%). Spain, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.



	2006	2011	2016	2022
Injecting drugs some time in their lives while at LIBERTY and/or in PRISON	25.3	14.9	14.2	15.3
Injecting drugs within the last 30 days at LIBERTY	9.5	5.0	6.4	6.7
Injecting drugs within the last 30 days in PRISON	1.3	0.5	1.3	1.2

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.  
 \*Data corrected in 2022 to allow for the evolutionary comparability of the historical data series.

The **profile of the inmate who injects** drugs in prison (within the last 30 days) is a Spanish man over the age of 35, who is a convicted prisoner and has been in prison several times.

The **drugs** injected by the prison population within the last 30 days in prison are non-prescription tranquilizers followed by opioids and cocaine.

The **average age of onset of injecting** is 21.2 years (21.2 years for men and 20.7 years for women).

21.2% of the prison population know about the Prison **Needle Exchange Programme** (PIJ) (21.7% in men and 13.6% in women), which amounts to 52.8% of the prison population who have ever injected in their lifetime. Awareness of these programmes is also higher among men who have injected than among women who have injected (53.9% men and 34.6% women). 1.1% of the inmate population have used the PIJ within the last month in prison, with 1.2% having used the PIJ within the last month of their current incarceration.

4.2% of the prison population reported having employed **used needles** at some point in their lives while at liberty. This percentage falls to 2.3% when they are in prison on one of their incarcerations. Regarding the use of utensils other than needles or syringes (spoons, lids, containers, filters, cotton wool, cleaning fluid, etc.) already used by another person, the percentage while at liberty is 3.3% and when in prison, 1.7%.

Among those who have injected while at liberty, 29% injected with needles already used by other people. This percentage increases to 52.9% among those who have used the injecting route while in prison during one of their incarcerations.

## Unprotected sex

48.4% of the prison population stated that they currently **have a partner** (47.2% of men and 66.1% of women) and of these 11.4% currently have a partner in prison. Nearly 6 of every 10 women who have a partner are currently in prison.

53.3% of the prison population stated that they had had **sexual intercourse** within the last 12 months, with a higher percentage among women (57.3%) than among men (53%). 97.9% of men who have had sex in the last 12 months report having had sex with women and 89% of women who have had sex in the last 12 months report having had sex with men.

38.8% of the prison population who have had sex in the last 12 months **have used condoms** and most of them (95.2%) have used male condoms. Among those who report not having used a condom, 78.9% did not use a condom because they did not want to and 21.1% did not use a condom because their partner did not want them to.

Among those who are aware of their HIV status and know they have an **infectious disease**, the percentage of condom use is double in some cases (62.8% of those who are aware that they are HIV-infected, 43.6% of those who are aware that they are HCV-infected, 78.2% of those who are aware that they are HBV-infected). It is worth pointing out the high percentage of the prison population who, in spite of knowing their HIV-positive status for various infectious diseases, do not use condoms.

### Condom use among the prison population (%). Spain, 2022.

Have you used condoms during sexual intercourse within the last 12 months?		YES	NO
	% of the total	38.8	61.2
% of those who are aware that they are	HIV-infected	62.8	37.2
% of those who are aware that they are	HCV-infected	43.6	56.4
% of those who are aware that they are	HBV-infected	78.2	21.8

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

The majority of the prison population is aware of the possibility of obtaining condoms in their penitentiary centre (96.4%), a similar value for both sexes and stable since 2016, with free condoms and lubricant being widely distributed.

Perception of condom availability in prisons (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.

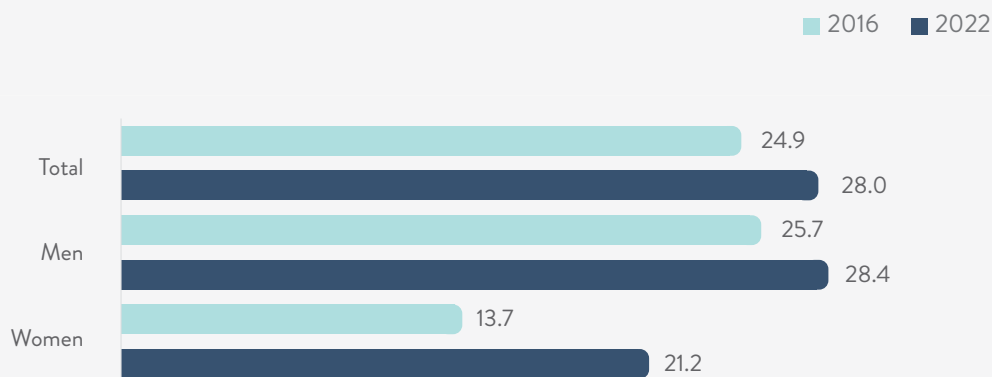
2016			2022		
TOTAL	♂	♀	TOTAL	♂	♀
98.8	98.8	99.1	96.4	96.4	95.3

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016, 2022.

## Tattoos

In 2022, 52.6% of the prison population reported having had a tattoo outside prison at some time in their lives, a figure that drops to 28.0% inside prison, 28.4% of men and 21.2% of women. 18.6% of the prison population reported having had a tattoo in prison during their current imprisonment. The percentage of the prison population that has ever been tattooed in prison has increased since 2016, especially among women.

Percentage of the prison population who have ever had a tattoo in prison. Spain, 2016- 2022.



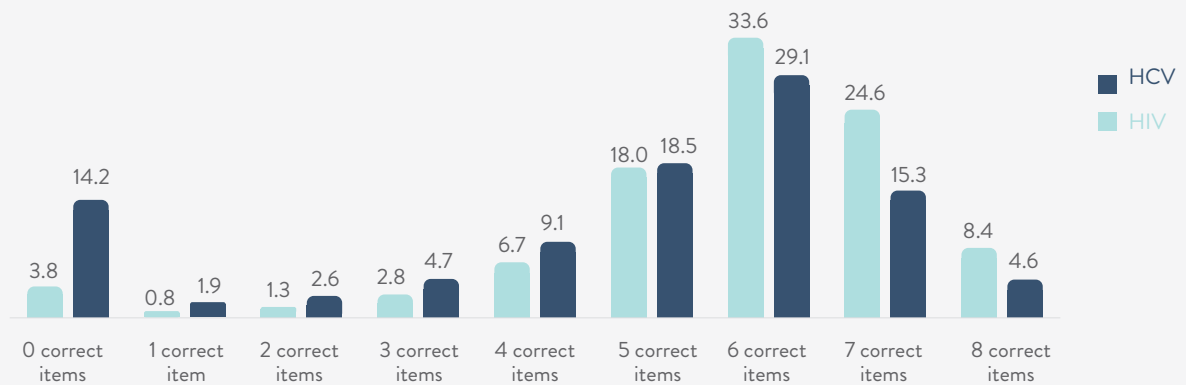
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2016, 2022.

## Knowledge of risky practices

The prison population was asked about their knowledge of the different routes of transmission of the infectious diseases HIV and HCV. Possible routes of transmission include kissing, sharing needles or other utensils, sharing personal items or eating utensils, unsafe sex and mother-to-child transmission.

Although the prison population is highly aware of HIV and HCV transmission through unprotected sex and needle sharing, there is a certain lack of knowledge regarding other mechanisms of transmission, especially hepatitis C.

Percentage of the prison population who have correctly answered different items related to the transmission of communicable diseases (HIV and HCV) among the prison population. Spain, 2022.



Note: HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HCV: Hepatitis C Virus  
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

## Knowledge regarding the transmission of communicable diseases (HIV and HCV) among the prison population (%). Spain, 2022.

% of the prison population that provided correct/incorrect answers or are unaware of each mechanism of transmission	HIV			HCV		
	✓	✗	?	✓	✗	?
By kissing	68.5	21.9	9.6	39.4	31.4	29.2
Sharing used syringes and needles	94.3	1.6	4.1	82.0	2.2	15.8
Sharing other injecting utensils (spoon, can or lid...)	62.4	25.0	12.6	58.9	17.4	23.6
Sharing personal items (toothbrushes, razor blades...)	80.0	12.2	7.7	70.5	9.2	20.3
Sharing eating utensils (glass, spoon, fork...)	58.0	30.4	11.6	37.4	38.1	24.6
Through a pregnant mother to her child	69.9	12.5	17.6	59.8	10.3	29.9
Through sexual intercourse without a condom	93.4	2.0	4.6	76.8	4.7	18.5
Sharing non-injecting equipment for drug use, such as straws for snorting coke, hot pipes for smoking crack, or rolled foil for smoking/snorting heroin.	49.1	34.3	16.6	50.2	22.2	27.6

**More than half of the prison population responded correctly to the questions**

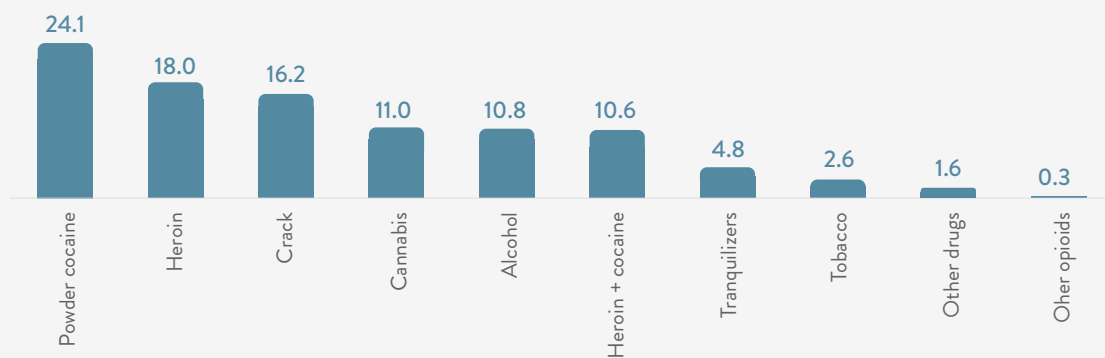
Note: HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HCV: Hepatitis C virus  
Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

CORRECT    
  INCORRECT    
  DON'T KNOW

## Treatment for drug use

31.2% of the prison population report having received treatment while at liberty to stop or control drug use (31.5% men and 26.1% women), compared to 24.1% who have at some point received treatment in prison during any incarceration (24.6% men and 17.1% women). With regard to the last treatment while at liberty, cocaine powder, heroin and base cocaine are the drugs for which most treatment has been received. Among women, the most treatment has been for base cocaine, and among men, powder cocaine.

Drugs for which the treated prison population had last received treatment while at liberty (%). Spain, 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

Of those who received treatment to stop or control **opiate** use while at liberty, 64.8% have received methadone treatment, 13.7% have received oral buprenorphine-naloxone treatment and 21.5% have received other types of treatment.

With regard to treatment for **alcohol** consumption while at liberty, 58.6% have received psychological therapy and/or support groups, 18.0% alcohol aversion therapy, 11.8% treatment with benzodiazepines or anticonvulsants, and 11.6% therapy with drugs to suppress cravings such as naltrexone or acamprostate.

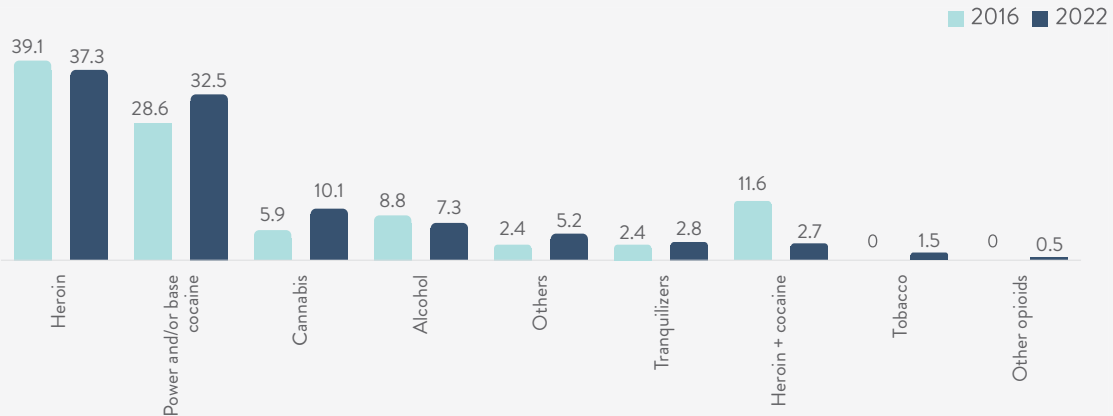
50.6% of the prison population (50.3% men and 56.2% women) who were in treatment at liberty reported having **continued to receive treatment** on entering prison. Those who stopped receiving treatment on admission mostly took voluntary leave (45.6%) or medical discharge (28.6%).

20.8% of the prison population has received treatment to stop or control drug use at the time of their **current imprisonment** (21.1% men, 15.5% women).

Heroin is the drug for which most treatment is provided in **prison**, followed by powder and/or base cocaine and, after a considerable interval, cannabis. Compared to 2016, in-prison treatment for cocaine and cannabis rose and treatment for heroin (both heroin on its own and the combination of heroin + cocaine) fell, given that the number of users also decreased.



Drugs for which the prison population last received treatment in prison (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.



Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022

OF those who have received treatment to stop or control **opiate** use in prison, 62.6% have received methadone treatment, compared to 41.2% in 2016; 11.7% have received oral buprenorphine-naloxone treatment, and 25.6% have received other types of treatment.

With regard to treatment for **alcohol** consumption while in prison, 81.8% have received psychological therapy and/or support groups, and 18.2% have received pharmacological treatment including alcohol aversion therapy or treatment with benzodiazepines or anticonvulsants, or drug therapy to suppress cravings such as naltrexone or acamprosat.

With regard to the **team attending to them** in prison during treatment, in 44.6% of the cases they were exclusively prison staff, in 27.7% they were external professionals, and in 27.7% inmates were treated by both external and prison professionals.

Furthermore, only 11.8% of the prison population not currently in treatment are **interested in starting treatment**, this percentage being higher among men (17.4%) than among women (11.4%). The main reason given by the prison population not in treatment as to why they do not wish to start treatment is because they feel they do not need it.

### AT LIBERTY

31.2% OF THE PRISON POPULATION REPORT HAVING RECEIVED TREATMENT AT SOME POINT WHILE AT LIBERTY TO STOP OR CONTROL DRUG USE

50.6% CONTINUED WITH THE TREATMENT THAT WAS RECEIVING



49.4% DID NOT CONTINUE WITH THE TREATMENT

- ▶ VOLUNTARY LEAVE 45,6%
- ▶ DISCHARGED 28,6%
- ▶ NOT OFFERED TREATMENT 22,1%
- ▶ OTHERS 3,7%

### IN PRISON

24.1% HAVE AT SOME POINT RECEIVED TREATMENT IN PRISON TO STOP OR CONTROL DRUG USE

# 06

## 20 POINTS TO REMEMBER

ESDIP <sup>20</sup> Survey on health and drug use  
in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions



- 01  The **Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs** of the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Subdirectorate General of Penitentiary Health of the **General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions** of the Ministry of the Interior, the Directorate General of Penitentiary Affairs of the **Department of Justice, Rights and Memory** of the Generalitat of Catalonia and the Directorate of Justice of the **Department of Equality, Justice and Social Affairs** through the Prison Analysis and Inspection Programme of the Basque Government, carries out a survey on Health and Drug Consumption among the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions (ESDIP) every five years (editions in 2006-2011-2016-2022).
- 02  The **ESDIP** is framed within the lines of work established by the European and Spanish strategies on drugs and addictions and it constitutes a useful tool to obtain information on health and drug use within the prison population. This survey is included in the National Statistical Plan of the INE (National Statistics Institute) and the data obtained serve as national and international benchmarks.
- 03  **Objective of the ESDIP.** To obtain data on socio-demographic characteristics, health, drug use, risky practices and treatment for drug use within the Spanish prison population, in order to collect information of use when developing and evaluating, on the basis of knowledge, programmes and interventions aimed at preventing and reducing drug use and associated problems within this population.
- 04  **ESDIP method.** Survey of the prison population in custody (men and women over 18 years of age) in penitentiary centres in Spain. A face-to-face personal interview is conducted through a digital, anonymous and pre-coded questionnaire (available in Spanish and Arabic), which is completed by the interviewer and lasts 30-45 minutes. In 2022, 5512 inmates were interviewed. The results are nationally representative. The results are taken from the responses of the prison population, which should be taken into account when interpreting them. The evolutionary data should always be interpreted with caution.
- 05  **The socio-demographic profile of male inmates** is that of a Spanish man in his 40s who stopped studying at the end of secondary school or before. During the 12 months prior to entering prison, he was working and mostly living in stable accommodation with his own family. 9% lived in unstable accommodation. **The sociodemographic profile of female inmates** is that of a 41-year-old Spanish woman, who stopped studying at the end of secondary school or before. During the 12 months prior to entering prison, she was unemployed and seeking employment, or not active, and mostly living in stable accommodation with her children. It is worth noting that 15.3% were living in unstable accommodation prior to their current entry in prison.
- 06  **Perception of health status.** The majority of the prison population consider their health to be good or very good. 20.7% believe they enjoy better health when they are in prison, which is higher than in 2016 (15.1% in 2016).
- 07  **Mental health.** 34.8% of the prison population reported having been diagnosed with a mental or emotional disorder, at some time in their lives. The prevalence was higher among women (42.3%) than among men (34.3%). 32.2% of the prison population have reported suicidal ideation at some time in their lives (38.7% in women and 31.8% in men). Suicidal ideation is higher in prison than at liberty for both sexes. 19.9% of the prison population report having tried to take their own life at some time (25.4% of women and 19.5% of men). This figure rises to 61.7% of the prison population with suicidal ideation.
- 08  **Infectious diseases.** 65% to 73% of the prison population remember having been screened for HIV or hepatitis. Of the prison population that remembers being screened and is aware of the result, 4.6% are HIV positive, 13.6% are hepatitis C positive and 1.1% are hepatitis B positive. The prevalence of infection is clearly higher in men and among drug injectors. Since 2011 there has been a decrease in the prevalence of infectious diseases in both the total population of inmates and in drug injectors. The incidence of SARS-COV-2 (COVID) in the prison population shows that 22.6% of the prison population have tested positive for the virus at some time (34.6% in prisons in Catalonia and 20.5% in prisons under the General State Administration).

- 09** **Prevalence of drug use. Comparison between the general population (EDADES, 2022) and the prison population (ESDIP 2022) while at liberty.** The reported illegal drug use over the last 12 months is clearly higher among the prison population in custody prior to their incarceration, than among the general population aged 15 to 64, with noteworthy differences in cannabis and cocaine use. The prison population starts using drugs at much earlier ages than the general population of 15 to 64 years.
- 10** **Prevalence of drug use. Legal and illegal drug use among the prison population.** 75.1% of the prison population reported having used an illegal drug at some time while at liberty, 58.9% within the last year at liberty, 53.5% within the last month at liberty and 16.8% within the last 30 days in prison. Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug both in prison and at liberty. Tobacco is the most used legal substance both, in prison and while at liberty. The prevalence of legal and illegal drug use both, in prison and while at liberty is higher among men.
- 11** **Prevalence of drug use. Comparison of the prison population while at liberty and in prison.** On entering prison, the prevalence of all drug use fell, most notably in the use of alcoholic beverages and cocaine. Women display a greater reduction in the prevalence of use of all drugs on entering prison, except tobacco, which, similar to men, increases in use in prison. From 2006 to 2022, a downward trend has been observed in the prevalence of drug use within the last 30 days in prison for most illegal drugs. Cannabis, the most commonly used illegal drug in prison, shows a clear downward trend, with use falling to a third of what it was in 2006. The only substance that displays an upward trend in prevalence of use is nonprescription tranquilizers since 2011, although the figures reached in 2022 are lower than those observed in 2006 (the peak of the historical data series).
- 12** **Non-fatal drug overdoses among the prison population.** Non-fatal overdoses among the prison population are more frequent while at liberty (18.9% overall, 19.0% of men and 17.0% of women) than in prison (4.1% overall, 4.2% of men and 2.7% of women) and, when they occur at liberty, they are more frequent prior to the first entry in prison.
- 13** **Drug injection.** In 2022, 15.3% of the prison population had injected drugs at some point in their lives, a figure that has remained stable over the last 10 years. A similar trend is observed for injecting within the last 30 days at liberty. Drug injection within the last 30 days in prison is reduced compared to injecting while at liberty, and remains stable over the whole historical data series with figures close to 1.3%. 1.1% of the total prison population reported having injected for the first time in prison.
- 14** **Prison Needle Exchange Programme (PIJ).** 21.2% of the prison population know about the Prison Needle Exchange Programme (PIJ) (21.7% of men and 13.6% of women), which amounts to 52.8% of the prison population who have ever injected in their lifetime. Awareness of these programmes is also higher among men who have injected than among women who have injected (53.9% men and 34.6% women). 1.1% of the total prison population have used the PIJ within the last month in prison.
- 15** **Unprotected sex.** 53.3% of the prison population stated that they had had sexual intercourse within the last 12 months, with a higher percentage among women (57.3%) than among men (53%). 38.8% of the prison population who have had sex within the last 12 months have used condoms and most of them (95.2%) have used male condoms. It is worth pointing out the high percentage of the prison population who, although they are aware of their HIV-positive status for various infectious diseases, do not use condoms, even though the majority of the prison population is aware of the possibility of obtaining condoms and lubricant free of charge in their prison (96.4%). This figure is similar for both sexes and remains stable since 2016.

- 16** **Tattoos.** In 2022, 52.6% of the prison population reported having had a tattoo outside prison at some time in their lives, a figure that drops to 28.0% inside prison, 28.4% of men and 21.2% of women. 18.6% of the prison population reported having had a tattoo in prison during their current imprisonment. The percentage of the total prison population that has ever been tattooed in prison has increased since 2016, especially among women.
- 17** **Knowledge of risk factors.** Although the prison population is highly aware of HIV and hepatitis C transmission through unprotected sex and needle sharing, there is a certain lack of knowledge regarding other mechanisms of transmission, especially hepatitis C. It is necessary to continue to educate and to fund specific programmes on risk factors and raising awareness among the prison population on the need to use condoms, and among injecting drug users about the possibility and benefits of using the sterile needles provided in the centres by the PIJ.
- 18** **Treatment for drug use.** 31.2% of the prison population report having received treatment at some point in their lives to stop or control drug use (31.5% of men and 26.1% of women). 24.1% report having received treatment at some point in prison during any incarceration (24.6% of men and 17.1% of women). 50.6% of the prison population (50.3% of men and 56.2% of women) who were in treatment at liberty report having continued to receive treatment upon incarceration. Those who stopped receiving treatment during their stay in prison mostly took voluntary leave (45.6%) or medical discharge (28.6%). 20.8% of the prison population report having received treatment to stop or control drug use at the time of their current imprisonment (21.1% men, 15.5% women).
- 19** **Preventive measures and treatment** should continue to focus on the characteristics and profile of this population at risk, which requires a multidisciplinary approach and coordination between the different agents and institutions involved. The prison stay provides an opportunity to improve the health of the prison population and to conduct prevention and treatment programmes. We must continue to work to reduce drug use and its associated risks and problems.
- 20** Having this information on a regular and up-to-date basis is of great use when **drawing up budgets, developing and evaluating therapeutic interventions**, which will benefit the prison population, their families and the general population.

# 07

## ANNEXES

ESDIP **22** Survey on health and drug use  
in the inmate population in penitentiary institutions



# ANNEX1



Prevalence of drug use in the prison population,  
by time and place of use (%). Spain, 2016- 2022.

	At some point in their lives while at LIBERTY or in PRISON		Within the last 12 months at LIBERTY		Within the last 30 days at LIBERTY		Within the last 30 days in PRISON	
	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022
Alcohol	85.5	74.0	72.5	60.3	64.9	54.5	2.2	2.0
Tobacco	-	85.1	-	74.2	-	72.5	74.9	74.0
Non-prescription tranquilizers	28.0	28.4	15.7	13.9	13.5	12.1	6.2	7.8
Cannabis	62.6	62.3	42.2	41.8	37.8	37.7	19.4	11.2
Synthetic cannabinoids	-	6.2	-	2.5	-	2.3	-	0.4
Base cocaine	36.7	30.4	19.1	20.5	16.2	18.1	1.4	1.2
Powder cocaine	53.4	54.0	30.7	31.4	24.8	24.9	1.4	1.3
Heroin on its own	28.1	25.4	14.3	13.1	12.2	11.1	2.8	1.4
Methadone (non-prescription)	9.3	7.6	4.3	2.6	3.4	2.1	0.7	0.7
Buprenorphine (nonprescription)	-	2.3	-	0.4	-	0.3	-	0.1
Fentanyl (non-prescription)	-	1.2	-	0.2	-	0.1	-	0.0
Heroin + cocaine mixed	21.8	19.6	11.7	11.4	9.8	9.8	0.8	0.7
Amphetamines	22.1	20.2	7.3	5.4	4.9	3.8	0.4	0.4
Methamphetamine	-	10.8	-	3.1	-	2.3	-	0.2
Ketamine	-	11.9	-	3.3	-	2.3	-	0.3
Ecstasy	23.8	25.9	7.0	6.5	4.6	3.7	0.3	0.2
Hallucinogens	20.1	21.1	3.9	3.1	2.4	1.7	0.1	0.2
LSD	-	14.0	-	2.2	-	1.2	-	0.0
Magic mushrooms	-	11.9	-	1.6	-	0.9	-	0.0
Synthetic cathinones	-	0.7	-	0.1	-	0.1	-	0.0
Anabolic steroids	-	4.2	-	1.0	-	0.5	-	0.1
Volatile inhalants	7.6	6.9	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0
GHB/GBL	-	3.3	-	0.7	-	0.4	-	0.0

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2016 and 2022.

# ANNEX2

Prevalence of drug use in the prison population in prison within the last 30 days, by age, sex, nationality, procedural status and number of incarcerations (%). Spain, 2022.

	TOTAL			Age and sex		Nationality		Procedural status		Number of incarcerations	
	Total			< 35 years	≥35 years	Spanish	Foreign	Pre-trial custody	Sentenced	Once	Several times
				Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Tobacco	74.0	74.4	67.4	77.7	72.0	77.2	64.9	75.5	66.7	65.4	82.3
Alcohol	2.0	2.1	1.0	3.3	1.3	2.2	1.4	2.0	2.1	1.3	2.7
Non-prescription tranquilizers	7.8	8.0	3.6	9.7	6.8	7.3	9.0	8.2	5.8	5.6	10.0
Cannabis	11.2	11.6	4.7	16.8	8.3	10.9	11.9	11.6	9.2	6.7	15.6
Synthetic cannabinoids	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.6
Heroin	1.4	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.4	1.6	0.9	1.6	0.7	0.5	2.4
Non-prescription methadone	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.1	1.3
Non-prescription buprenorphine	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Non-prescription fentanyl	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Heroin + cocaine	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.1	1.2
Base cocaine	1.2	1.2	0.9	1.4	1.1	1.3	0.9	1.2	1.4	0.3	2.1
Powder cocaine	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.8	1.0	1.4	0.9	1.1	2.2	0.7	1.8
Amphetamines	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.7
Methamphetamine	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.2
Ketamine	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3
Ecstasy	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
Hallucinogens	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
LSD	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Magic mushrooms	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Synthetic cathinones	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Anabolic steroids	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Volatile inhalants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
GHB/GBL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2022.



# ANNEX3

Prevalence of drug use in the prison population (%).  
Spain, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.

	At some point in their lives while at LIBERTY or in PRISON				Last 12 months at LIBERTY				Last 30 days at LIBERTY				Last 30 days in PRISON			
	2006	2011	2016	2022	2006	2011	2016	2022	2006	2011	2016	2022	2006	2011	2016	2022
Alcohol	88.3	84.3	85.5	74.0	71.8	71.3	72.5	60.3	63.0	64.8	64.9	54.5	3.7	3.8	2.2	2.0
Tobacco	-	-	-	85.1	-	-	-	74.2	-	-	-	72.5	74.0	75.1	74.9	74.0
Non-prescription tranquilizers	32.8	28.3	28.0	28.4	18.7	15.9	15.7	13.9	16.4	13.3	13.5	12.1	9.1	4.1	6.2	7.8
Cannabis	64.8	63.2	62.6	62.3	46.6	43.4	42.2	41.8	42.7	39.8	37.8	37.7	27.7	21.3	19.4	11.2
Powder cocaine	53.3	54.0	53.4	54.0	36.2	33.2	30.7	31.4	31.1	27.4	24.8	24.9	2.9	1.3	1.4	1.3
Base cocaine	39.0	33.9	36.7	30.4	26.9	21.5	19.1	20.5	23.8	18.5	16.2	18.1	2.5	1.0	1.4	1.2
Heroin on its own	39.0	31.4	28.1	25.4	22.1	16.7	14.3	13.1	19.4	13.7	12.2	11.1	4.8	2.4	2.8	1.4
Non-prescription methadone	9.5	9.7	9.3	7.6	4.6	4.3	4.3	2.6	3.4	3.1	3.4	2.1	1.1	0.5	0.7	0.7
Heroin + cocaine	31.4	25.1	21.8	19.6	19.9	14.2	11.7	11.4	17.7	12.0	9.8	9.8	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.7
Amphetamines	24.2	24.7	23.8	20.2	7.6	7.3	7.0	5.4	4.8	4.8	4.6	3.8	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4
Ecstasy	24.5	22.7	22.1	25.9	6.3	6.4	7.3	6.5	4.1	4.6	4.9	3.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2
Hallucinogens	26.2	22.8	20.1	21.1	4.5	4.9	3.9	3.1	2.4	3.1	2.4	1.7	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Volatile inhalants	9.1	10.1	7.6	6.9	0.9	1.6	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.

# ANNEX4

Prevalence of treatment for drug use in the prison population (%).  
Spain, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.

	2006	2011	2016	2022
Treatment while at liberty	33.0	28.0	31.6	31.2
Treatment in prison	32.5	26.3	27.2	24.1

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2022.

# ANNEX5

Comparison of the prevalence of drug use in the general population and in the prison population. Spain, 2022.

	PRISON POPULATION (ESDIP 2022)				GENERAL POPULATION (EDADES 2022)		
	At some point in their lives while at LIBERTY or in PRISON	Last 12 months at LIBERTY	Last 30 days at LIBERTY	Last 30 days in PRISON	At some point in their lives	Last 12 months	Last 30 days
Alcohol	74.0	60.3	54.5	2.0	93.2	76.4	64.5
Tobacco	85.1	74.2	72.5	74.0	69.6	39.0	37.2
Non-prescription tranquilizers	28.4	13.9	12.1	7.8	3.6	1.3	0.6
Cannabis	62.3	41.8	37.7	11.2	40.9	10.6	8.6
Powder cocaine	54.0	31.4	24.9	1.3	11.7	2.3	1.3
Base cocaine	30.4	20.5	18.1	1.2	1.7	0.2	0.1
Heroin	25.4	13.1	11.1	1.4	0.6	0.1	0.0
Ecstasy	25.9	6.5	3.7	0.2	5.1	0.8	0.2
Amphetamines	20.2	5.4	3.8	0.4	4.6	0.6	0.2
Hallucinogens	21.1	3.1	1.7	0.2	5.4	0.6	0.2
Volatile inhalants	6.9	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.2	0.1

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP 2022 Survey on Alcohol and Drugs in Spain. EDADES 2022.

# ANNEX6

Main route of drug administration within the last 30 days in the prison population while at liberty and in prison (%). Spain, 2022.

	Amphetamines		Powder cocaine		Heroin		Heroin + Cocaine		Non-prescription tranquilizers	
	AT LIBERTY	IN PRISON	AT LIBERTY	IN PRISON	AT LIBERTY	IN PRISON	AT LIBERTY	IN PRISON	AT LIBERTY	IN PRISON
Pulmonary or smoked	2.3	4.5	9.1	14.8	81.7	78.5	84.2	71.4	0.7	0.5
Parenteral or injected	1.0	0.0	3.4	6.0	10.3	4.7	7.9	14.0	0.2	0.0
Intranasal or snorted	43.3	40.9	86.1	77.7	6.7	16.8	6.9	14.6	0.3	1.0
Oral	53.4	54.5	1.5	1.3	1.3	0.0	1.1	0.0	98.9	98.4

Source: Survey on Health and Drug Use in the Inmate Population in Penitentiary Institutions. ESDIP, 2022.

# ANEXO7

More information on the prison population in Spain.

<http://www.institucionpenitenciaria.es/>

[https://justicia.gencat.cat/ca/ambits/reinsercio\\_i\\_serveis\\_penitenciaris/](https://justicia.gencat.cat/ca/ambits/reinsercio_i_serveis_penitenciaris/)

<https://www.euskadi.eus/administracion-penitenciaria/web01-a2justic/es/>

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FINANCIA Y GESTIÓN:



COLABORAN:

