

Preventing Drug & Alcohol Problems in Teenagers

WHAT PARENTS & OTHER ADULTS CAN DO



January 2025
Dr Bobby Smyth



@bobbysmyth4

Overview

- Adolescent development
- Substances used & trends
- Why do we worry about teenage use
- Interventions to reduce use & risks
 - Society
 - **Parents**

Apprentice Adults

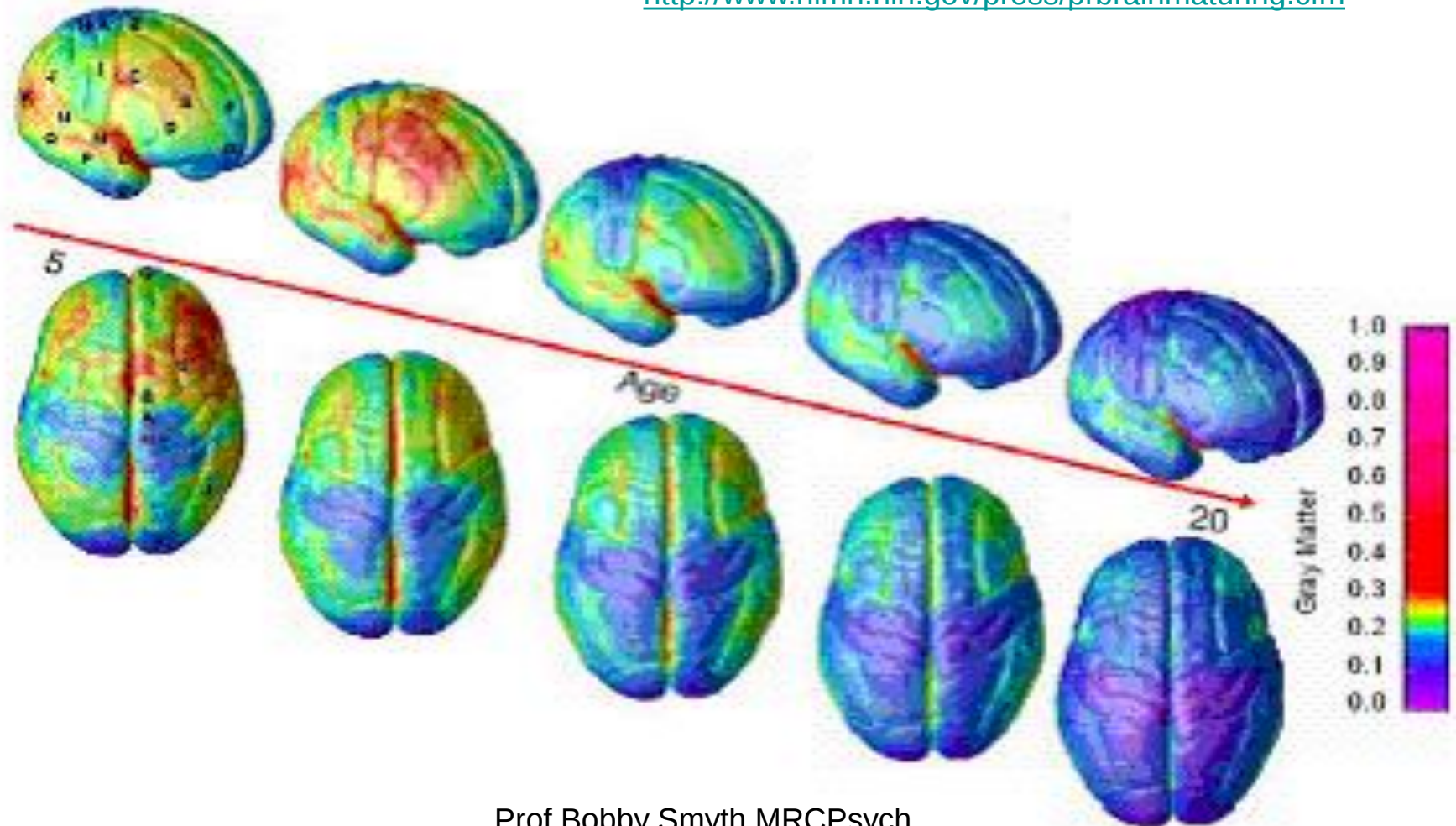


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PhD 2025

The Adolescent brain – a work in progress

Giedd et al, 1999, Nature Neuroscience, 2, 861-863

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/press/prbrainmaturing.cfm>



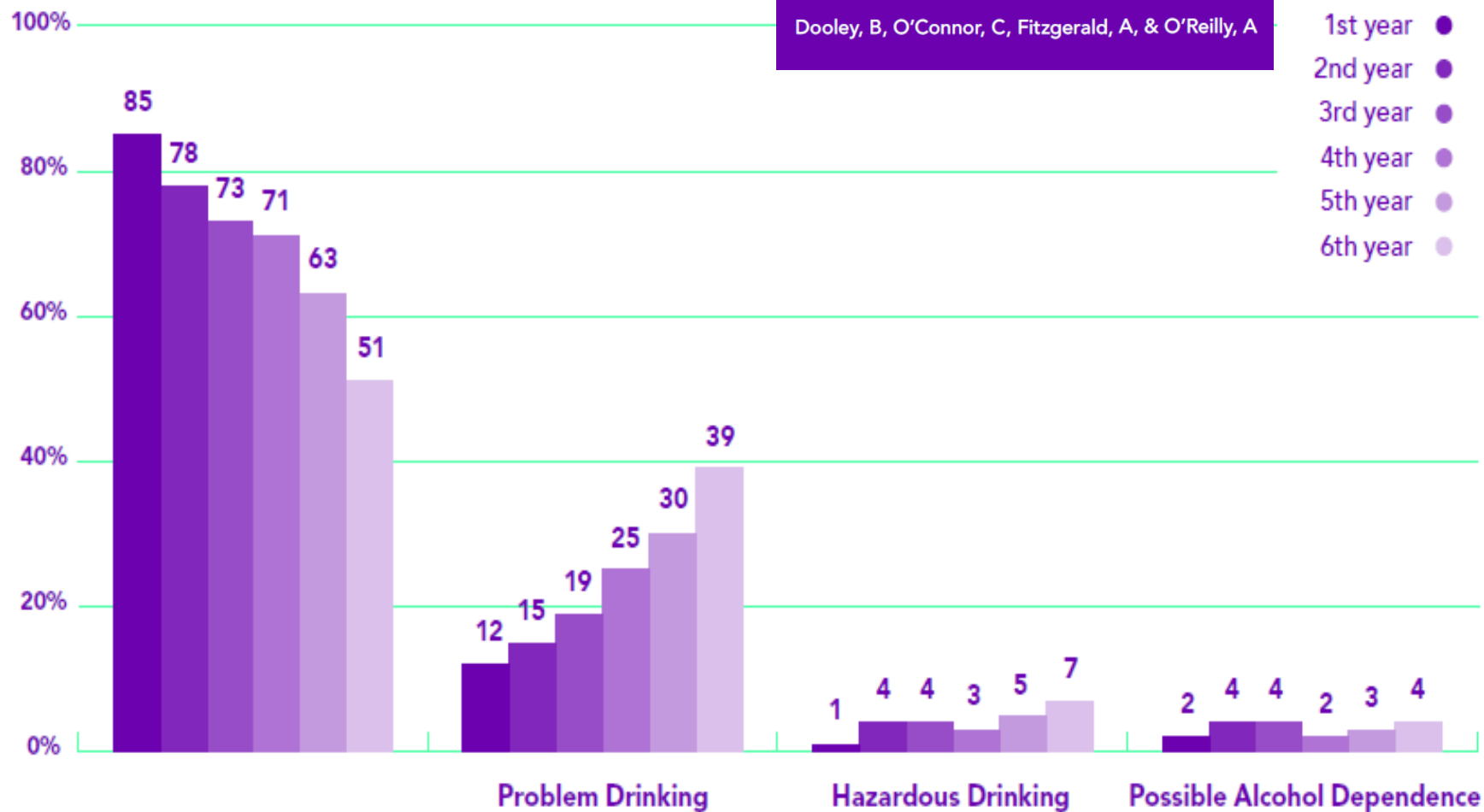
My World Survey 2

The National Study of **Youth Mental Health in Ireland.**

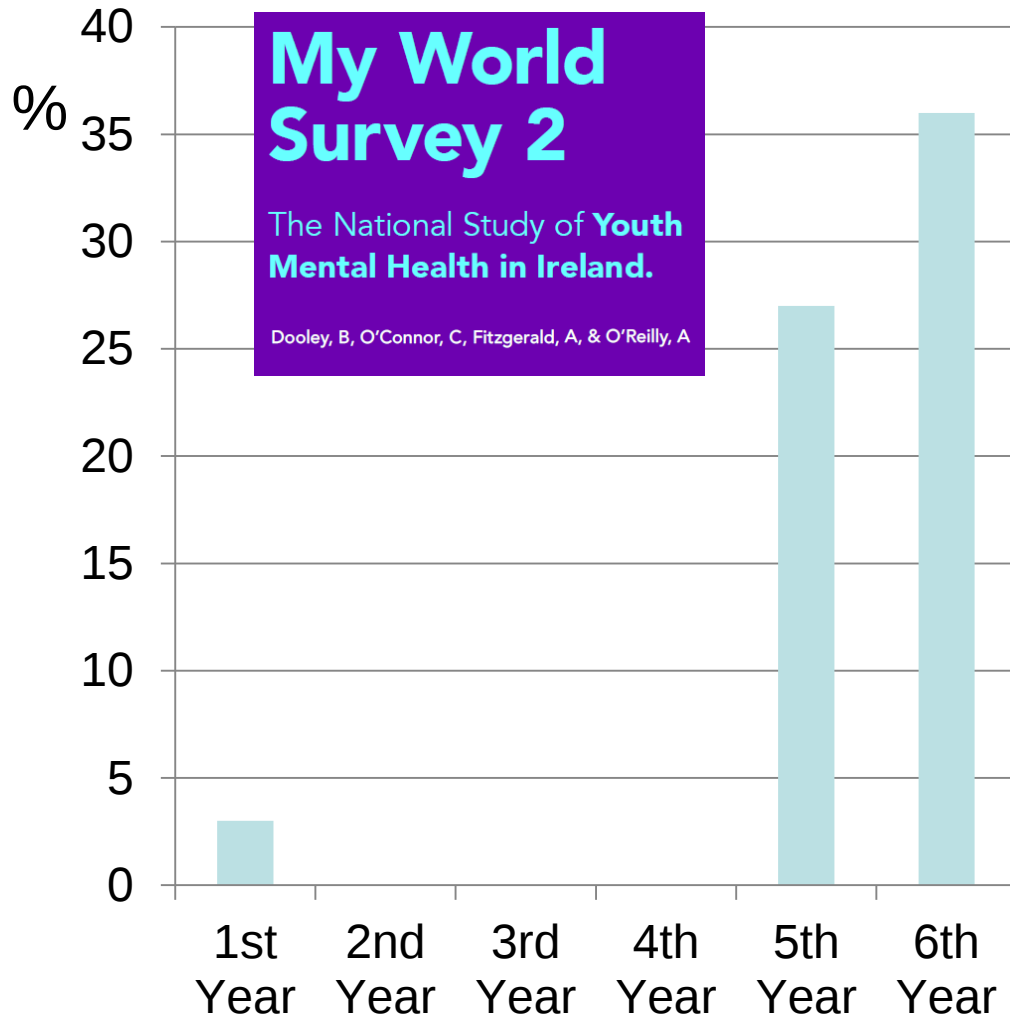
Dooley, B, O'Connor, C, Fitzgerald, A, & O'Reilly, A

- 1st year ●
- 2nd year ●
- 3rd year ●
- 4th year ●
- 5th year ●
- 6th year ●

Drinking behaviour by school year



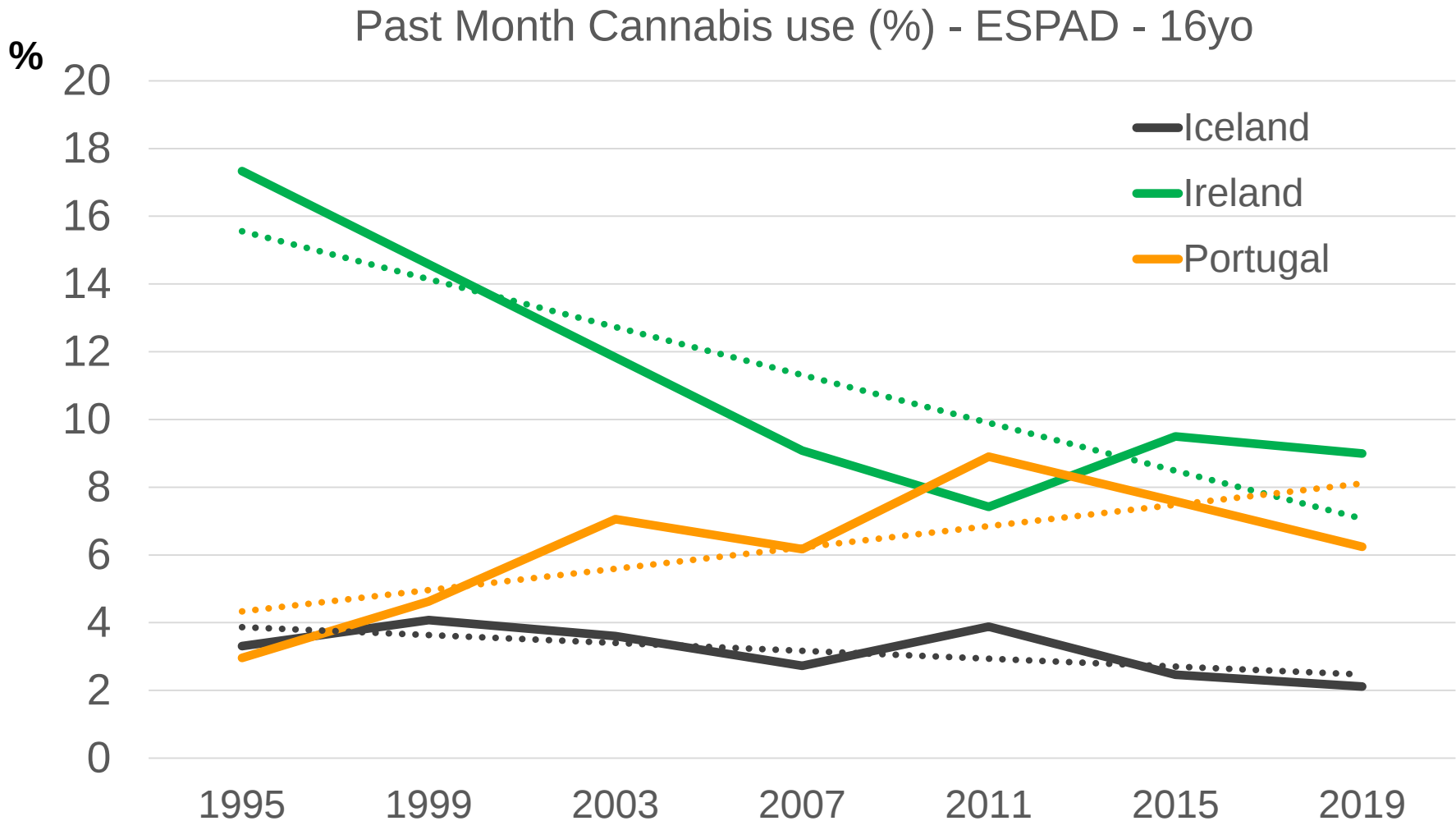
Lifetime cannabis use - 2019



Lifetime cannabis
use across 1st
years to 6th years
= 15%

It was 12% in
2012.

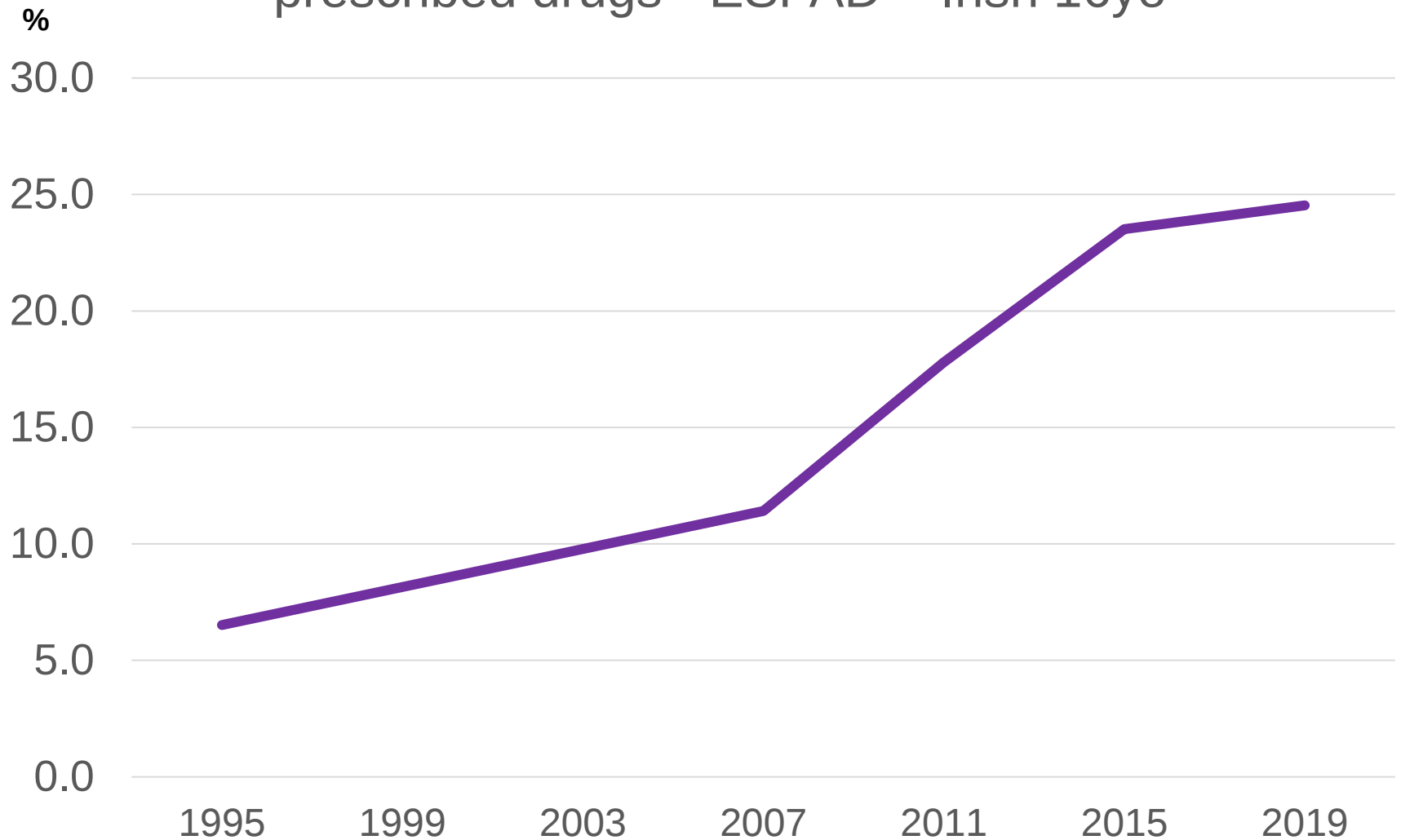
ESPAD – Trends among 16yo



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2025

Lifetime abstinence from Cigs, alcohol, illegal & prescribed drugs - ESPAD – Irish 16yo



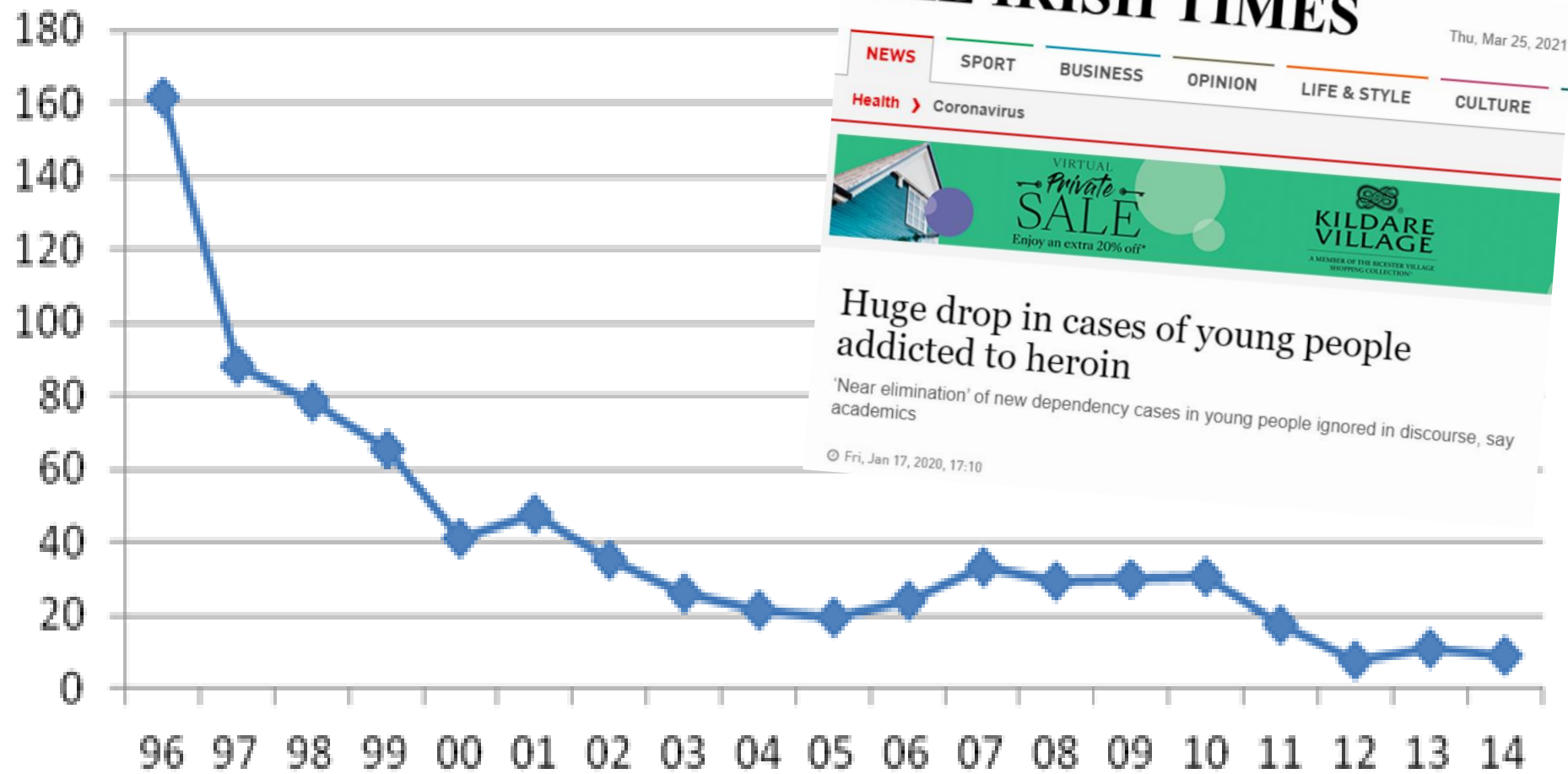
Source Data: ESPAD additional tables - Table 127. See <http://www.espad.org/espad-report-2019>

* Rx = non-prescribed sedatives or tranquilizers

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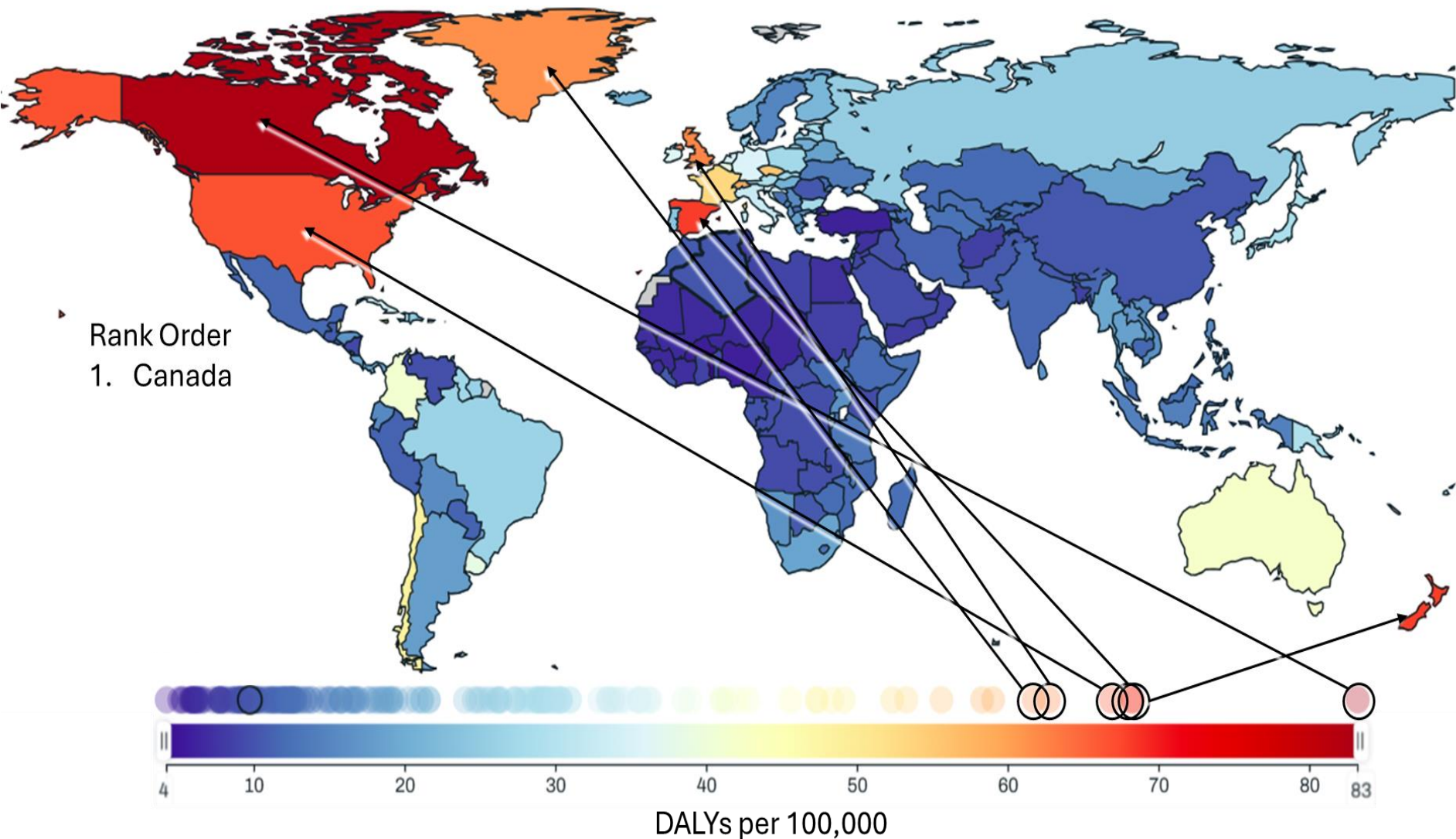
Crude incidence/100,000 of treated opioid use disorders among 15-19 years



Carew, A. M., & Comiskey, C. (2018). *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 192, 329-337

GBD 2021_DALYs due to Cannabis use disorder_ 10-24yo

Cannabis use disorders
Both sexes, 10-24 years, 2021, DALYs per 100,000



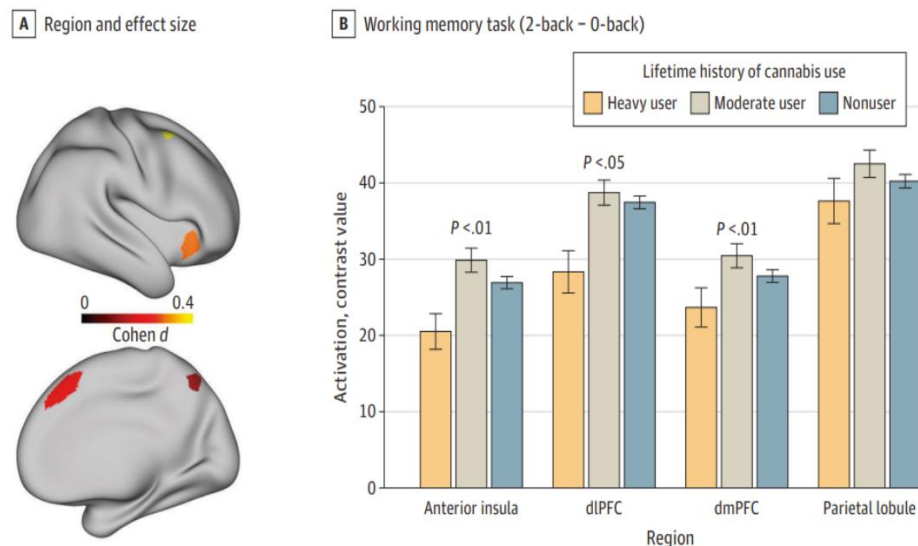
Original Investigation | Substance Use and Addiction

Brain Function Outcomes of Recent and Lifetime Cannabis Use

Joshua L. Gowin, PhD; Jarrod M. Ellingson, PhD; Hollis C. Karoly, PhD; Peter Manza, PhD; J. Megan Ross, PhD; Matthew E. Sloan, MD; Jody L. Tanabe, MD; Nora D. Volkow, MD

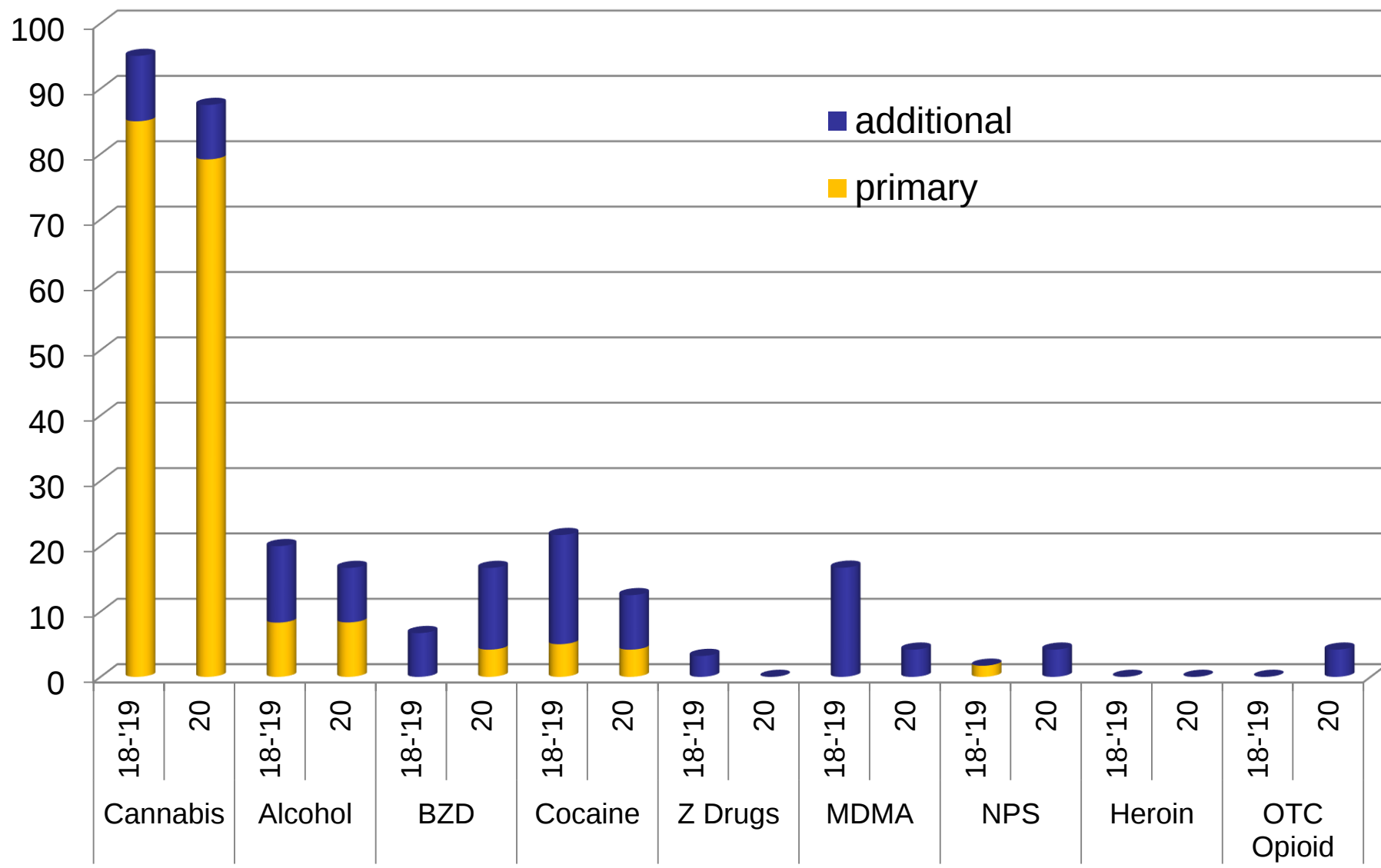
"CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE: In this study of young adults, lifetime history of heavy cannabis use was associated with lower brain activation during a working memory task. These findings identify negative outcomes associated with heavy lifetime cannabis use and working memory in healthy young adults that may be long lasting."

Figure 4. Lifetime History of Cannabis Use and Activation During the Working Memory Task



A, Brain images depicting regions and effect size. Each of the 4 regions comprised in the working memory task summary was examined separately as a post hoc analysis to determine which regions were associated with cannabis history. The brain image depicts the effect size of the comparison between heavy and nonusers for each of the 4 regions. B, Bar graph of the models. The models included lifetime history as an independent variable and adjusted for recent cannabis use (ie, positive urine screen), age, sex, education, income, alcohol use, and nicotine use. The graph indicates the mean value by group, and the error bar represents the SEM. *P* values refer to the significance of the quadratic effect of lifetime history of use in the full model, not to post hoc comparisons. dlPFC indicates dorsolateral prefrontal cortex; dmPFC, dorsomedial prefrontal cortex.

Substances driving demand for addiction treatment amongst youth in Ireland



New forms of 'cannabis'



- Edibles
 - Delayed onset

- Synthetics

Photo credit: An Garda Síochána



- Vapes

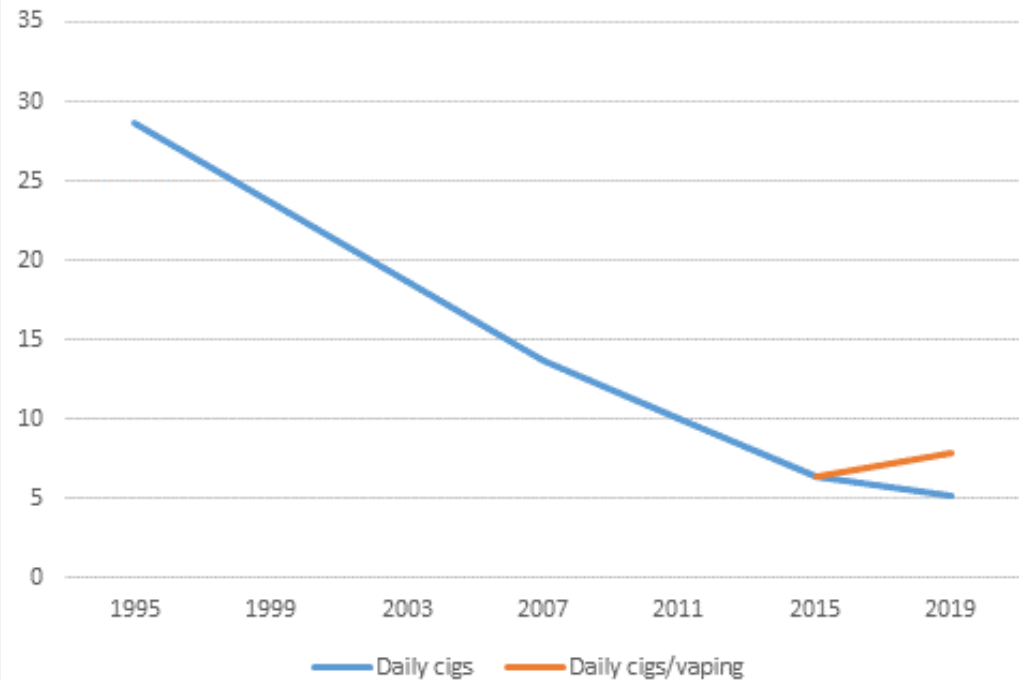
VAPING

Vaping illnesses rise, and the number of young kids vaping soars

The number of kids who say they've vaped by age 14 has tripled in recent years.



Ireland - ESPAD Data - Daily cigs/vaping



LOOM

This product is derived from Industrial Hemp

WARNING:

It is not medical advice, and our HHC vape pen does not diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any diseases, conditions, or any other ailment. You may have an entirely different experience. We do not suggest in anyway, shape or form, that your experience will be the same.

This HHC vape pen can be intoxicating to some people. Do not drive or operate any machinery while using this product. Consult a doctor before using this product.

INGREDIENTS: 95% HHC Distillate (Hemp Derived), 5% Terpenes

Volume : 2ml / 250mAh
Coil : Ceramic Coil
Recharge : Type-C USB Port

- 2 Clicks for Pre-heat
- 5 Clicks for On / Off



WWW.ACANGOLD.COM

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Irish Examiner

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HOMEPAGE / NEWS

Irish study links legal semi-synthetic cannabis to psychosis



LATE!

At least controll

'Go hon and try'

Leinster with Pr

024

COMMENT | 27

Synthetic cannabis is far from harmless – we must warn children of the dangers

MARY McCARTHY



Because we live in such a highly regulated world, parents can assume what's openly for sale has been tested and is not harmful for their kids, right? Unfortunately, no.

This week, I was shocked to learn a psychoactive substance called HHC, also known as synthetic cannabis – which is banned in some countries but unregulated and widely available in "jellies" and vape form in Ireland – has been linked to psychosis.



★★★★★

Reviews (7)

€45.00

1

Compare

Nathan

Great quality

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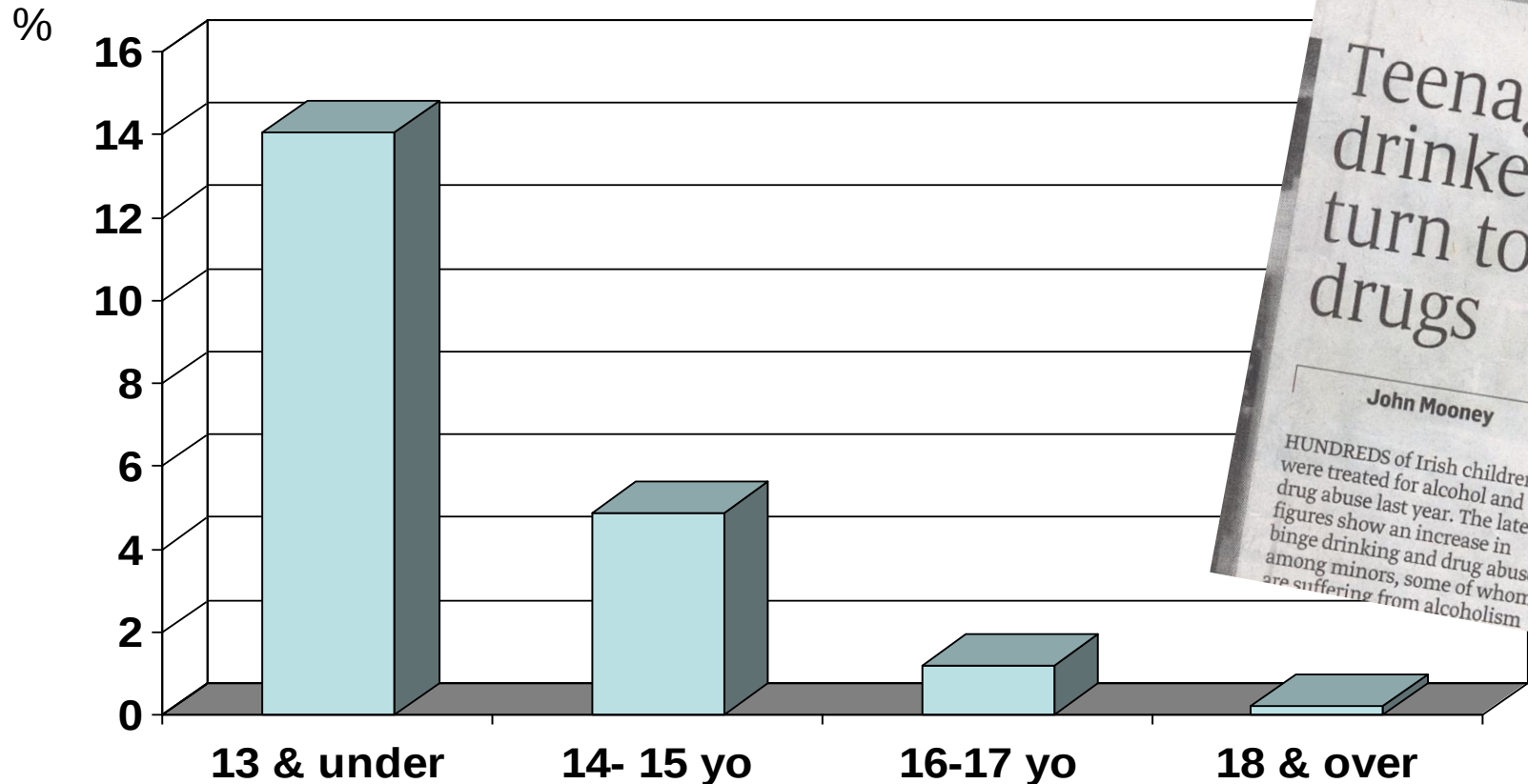


Nitrous Oxide

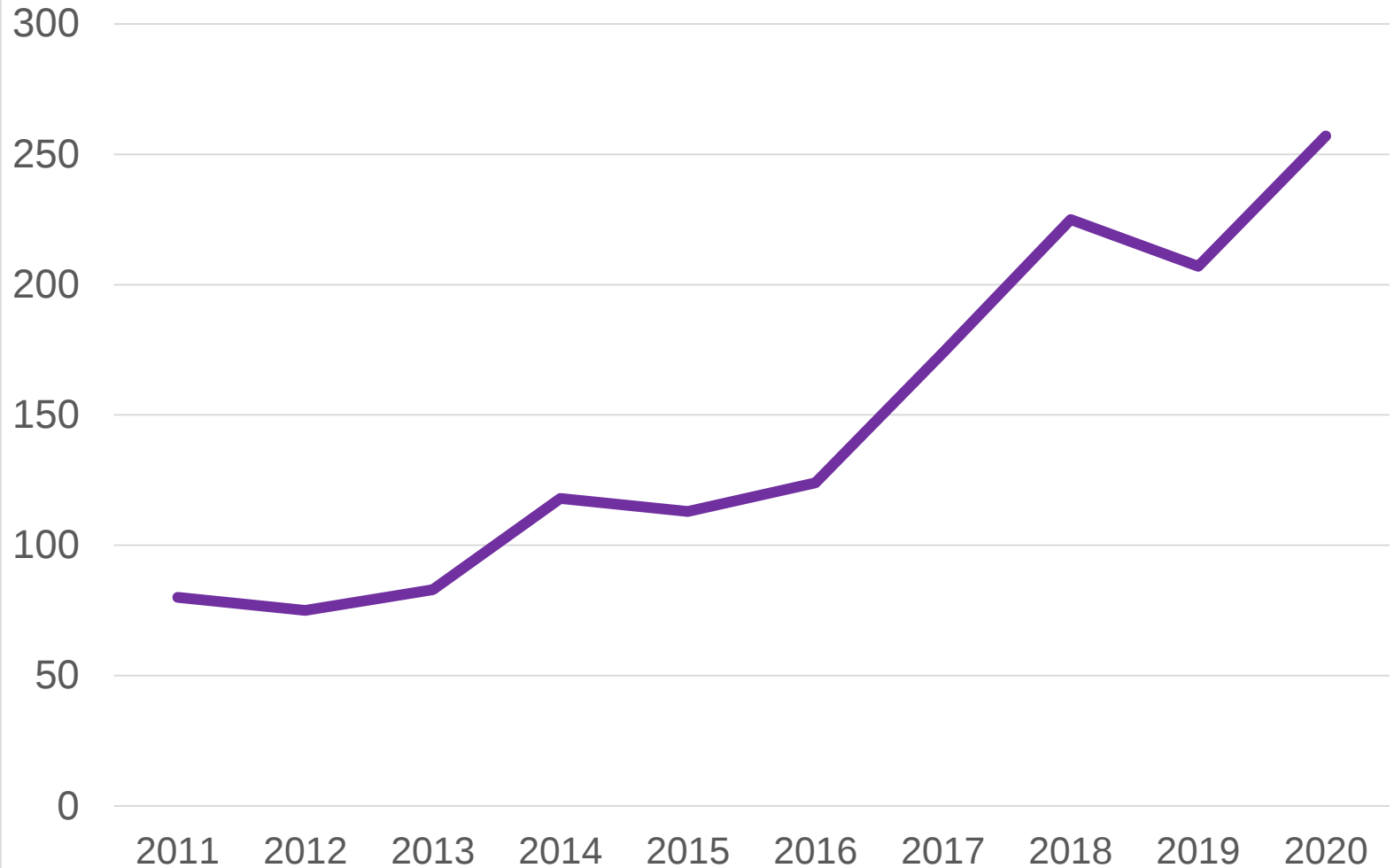


Alcohol as 'gateway drug'

Past year cocaine use aged 20-29yo, by age of drinking onset



Cocaine related hospital admissions - 15-24yo



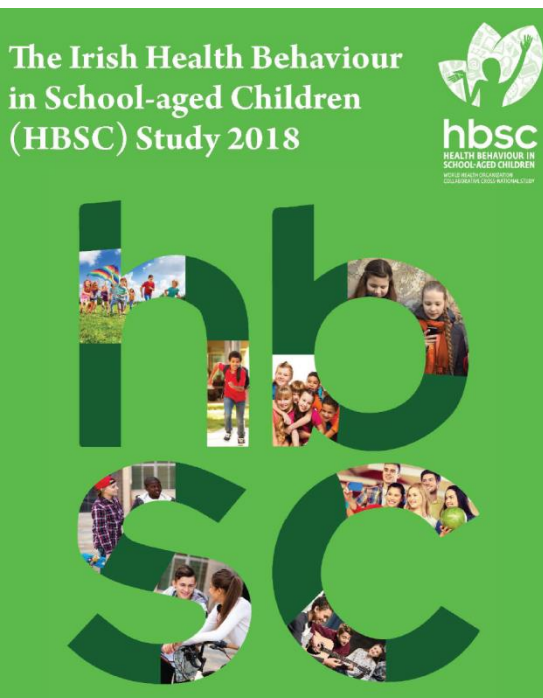
Other drugs.....



Summarising potential risks & harms

- ‘Damage’ to brain development – Possible Long term IQ decline
- Reduced ability to learn while using regularly
- ↑↑ risk of later drug problems, so delay onset of use
- ↑↑ impulsive & risky behaviour
 - Accidents & injuries (even death)
 - Social misadventures
- Unpredictable impact on mood – ↑↑ risk of depression, DSH
- ↑↑ risk of both aggression & being victim of violence
- Other things getting squeezed out of the diary (sport, hobbies)
- Less money
- Possible negative impact on relationships with family, friends
- Hampers acquisition of healthy coping skills
- Lose ability to “have fun” sober.....

Figure 23: Source of alcohol



34%



A Parent/Guardian gave it to me

8:58

4G

8:58

4G

9:05

3G

089 [REDACTED] 26
 089 [REDACTED] 26
 089 [REDACTED] 26



@j. [REDACTED]

Like pillow cases lads good 6 g just for the
 next few hours 🤞🤞🤞



2 days ago from Camera Roll

20s, 30s, 50s,

quarters 🔥🍁



Back active with
 what ever yous
 need 🤔🔥

085 [REDACTED]

Givaway

28gs of tropicana-new

smoke 🌫️

14gs of ammo haze

3.5 of Raw

@ [REDACTED] klo

2 bottles jamsons

whiskey 🍷🍷

Keep shearing
 lads

Givaway will be
 done this
 Saturday night
 lads and it will
 be done live so
 everyone can

Stash an dash
 will be done
 today also 2 5g
 for my loyal
 customers

see



Send a Chat



cs Banking Money Markets Project Syndicate B2B

High stakes: cannabis capitalists seek funds to drive drug trade

London conference pushes uses ranging from reducing pain to increasing orgasms

● Cannabis capitalism: who is making all the money?

Q Search

Bloomberg

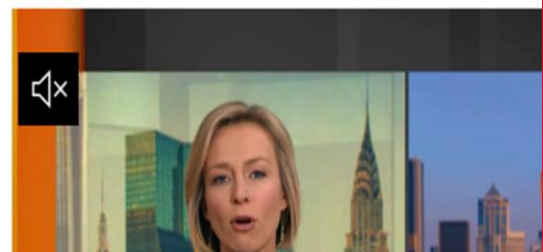
Business

AB InBev Joins Pot Industry With Tilray Beverage Partnership

By [Kristine Owrant](#)

December 19, 2018, 9:30 PM GMT Updated on Dec 19, 2018

- ▶ Firms to invest \$100 million in joint research partnership
- ▶ Goal is to create drinks that 'delight consumers': Tilray



Advertisement



Forbes

EDITORS' PICK | Feb 9, 2021, 06:00am EST | 38,916 views

How Tobacco Giant Altria Is Becoming A Cannabis Company



Chris Roberts Contributor

Vices

I cover cannabis capitalism: legalization's winners, losers, scammers and suckers.



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-03:51

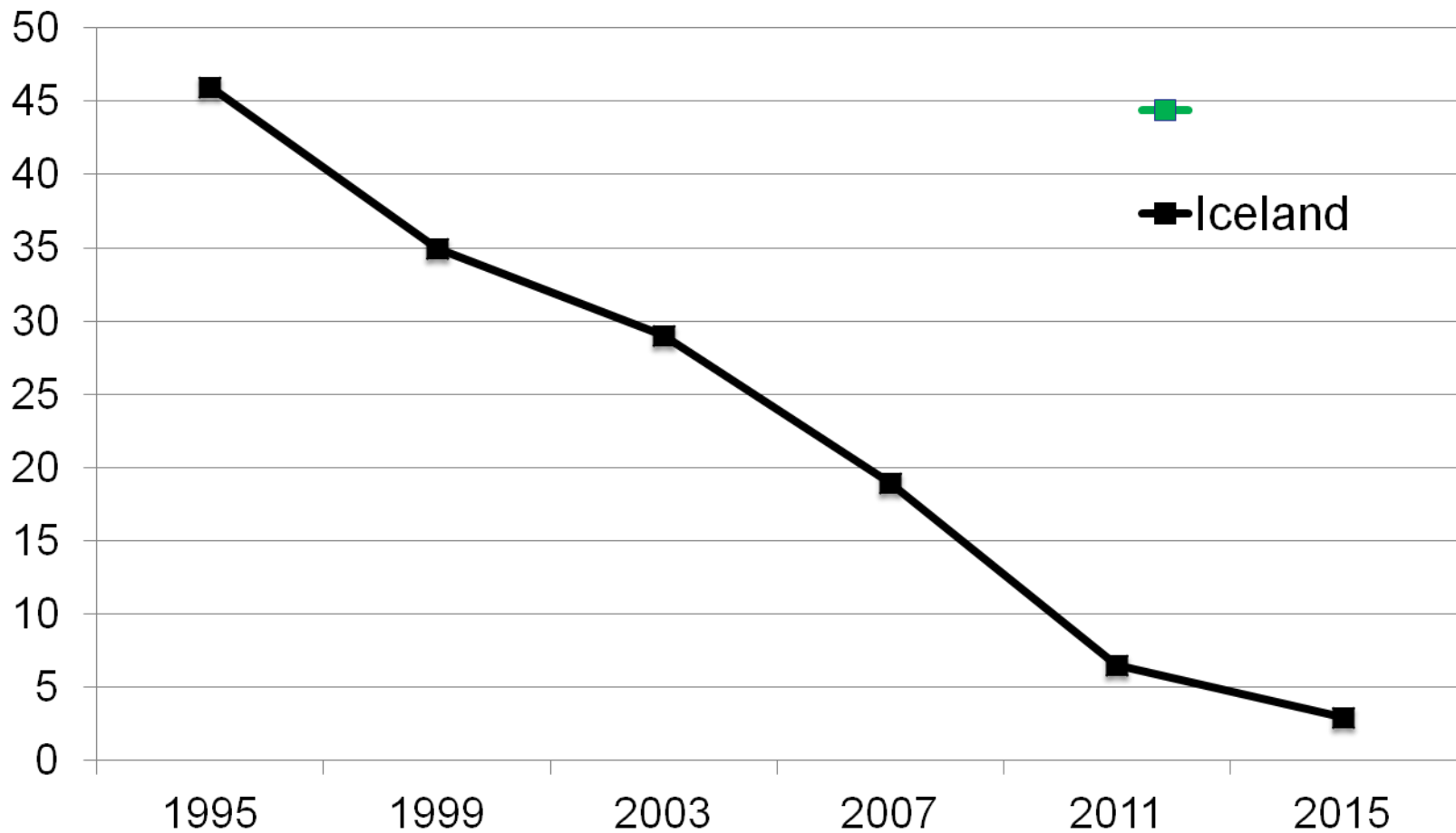


ICELAND

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Past Month Drunkenness -ESPAD

'95 to '15



Learning from success of others - Iceland.....

From 1998 to 2014 – teens-

Past month drunk- 42% to 5%.

Daily smoking - 23% to 3%

Cannabis lifetime use 17% to 7%

Sports participation - 23% to 42%

14-16yo who Spent considerable time with their parents - 23% to 50%

% of 14-16 years old outside after 10 pm - 53% to 23%.



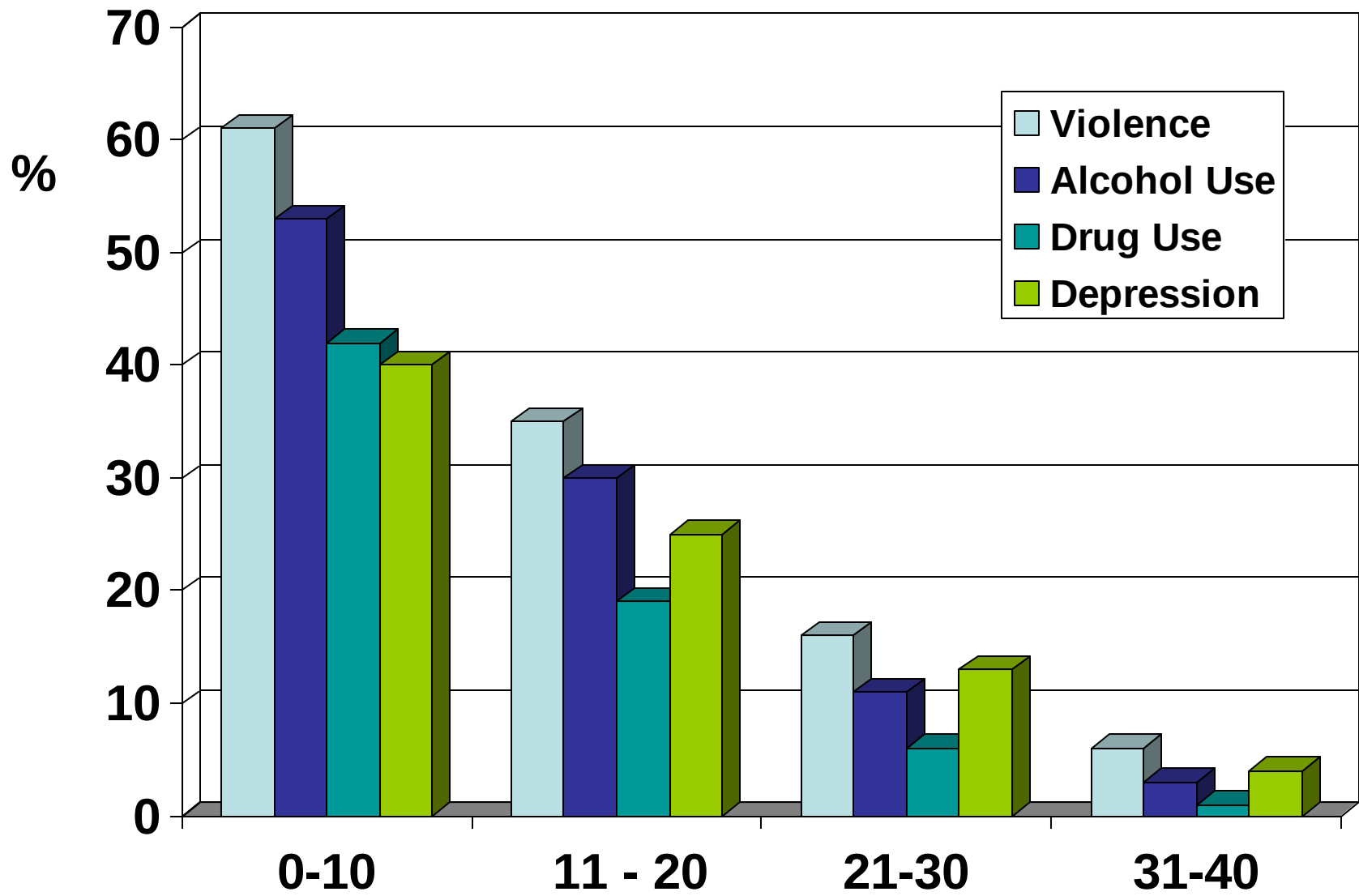
How was this achieved?

1. “Curfew” on 13-16yo can’t be outside unaccompanied after 10pm (12pm in summer)
2. Prohibited sales of tobacco to minors and alcohol to anyone under 20.
3. Alcohol is only sold in state-run stores and taxed at more than 80 percent.
4. €300 per child 6-18yo to pay for extra-curricular activities, including sports.
5. Ban alcohol advertising and sports sponsorship
6. Build expectation that parents spend more time with their teenagers

Promoting resilience

Assets Approach

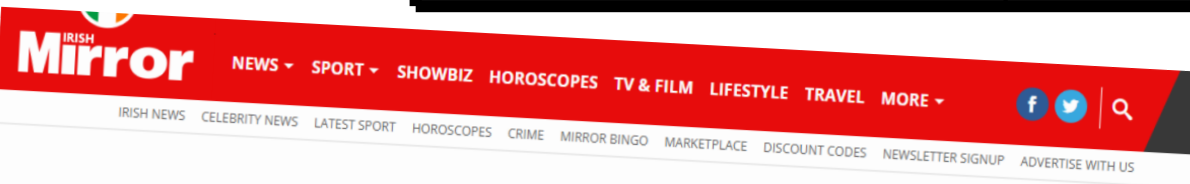
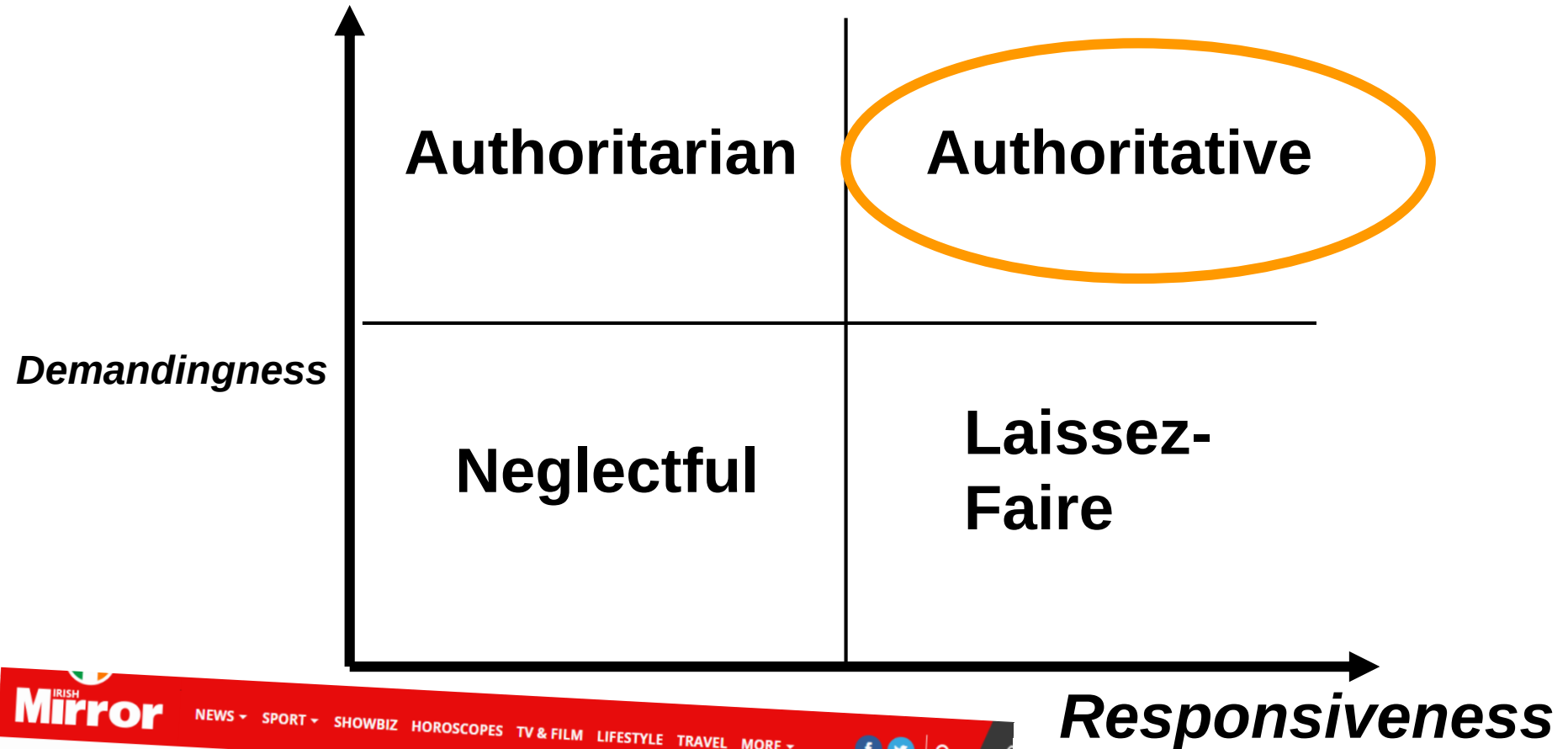
<https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/>



Leffert et al, 1998



Parenting Styles



Irish parents are the most lenient in Europe and less likely to make kids help at home

Drinking by Adults

14. Adult role models -
Parent(s) and other
adults model positive,
responsible behavior.





Alcohol and Drugs: A Parent's Guide

Practical advice to help
you communicate with
your child about alcohol
and other drugs



DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support



KNOW THE SCORE: DRUGS, BRAIN & DEPENDENCY



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service



ask about
alcohol.ie

DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

Parents Matter Webinar - 21st June



<https://www.drugs.ie/parents>

Thinking specifically about alcohol & drugs.....

- Decide as parents what you think is acceptable
- If you draw a line, know why you have drawn the line there
 - See the list of harms/risks to inform your decision
- Decide upon consequences if behaviour falls short of expectations
- If you don't know much about drugs, find out more....
 - Via older sons/daughters
 - Alcohol & Drugs: A Parents Guide

Ryan et al, 2010. Systematic Review

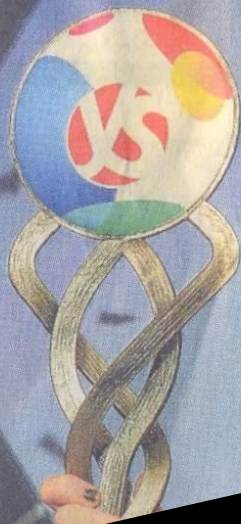
1. Parental drinking increases risk
2. Provision of alcohol by parents to their children increases risk
3. Presence of clear rules in the family home reduces risk
4. Parental monitoring of their children's activities reduces risk
5. Warmth and affection in the relationship between parents and children reduces risk
6. General positive communication between parents and children reduces risk

YOUNG SCIENTISTS 2015

Jack O'Sullivan and Eimear Murphy, 16-year-old transition year students Coláiste Treasa, Cork

Project Alcohol consumption – Does the apple fall far from the tree?

Judges' comments The message from this important research can help shape family alcohol behaviour in a very positive way into the future.



Project on parents' drinking habits wins top award

6°

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THE IRISH TIMES



Sections

Social Affairs

Rising parental tolerance of underage drinking a mounting concern

One in five teenagers get alcohol regularly from parents, according to research on west of Ireland youth

by Cork student Jack O'Sullivan and Eimear Murphy looking at teenage alcohol consumption has claimed top prize at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition.

The best individual prize went to Co Louth student Rachel Ní Dhonnachadha for her development of a wrist support for boxers. The top four awards in the exhibition were announced last night in the RDS in Dublin.

Ian and Eimear looked at whether parental alcohol consumption had an impact on the drinking habits of their teenage children.

"We wanted to see if there was a parental effect on their kids' consumption of alcohol," said Eimear. They created a

particularly of the father, had a major impact on children's drinking. They also found that the children of parents who believe it is acceptable for their children to drink on special occasions were up to four times more likely to engage in hazardous drinking than other adolescents.

They receive the BT Young Scientist perpetual trophy, a cheque for €5,000 and a chance to represent Ireland at the European Union Contest for Young Scientists taking place later this year in Milan.

Boxing injuries

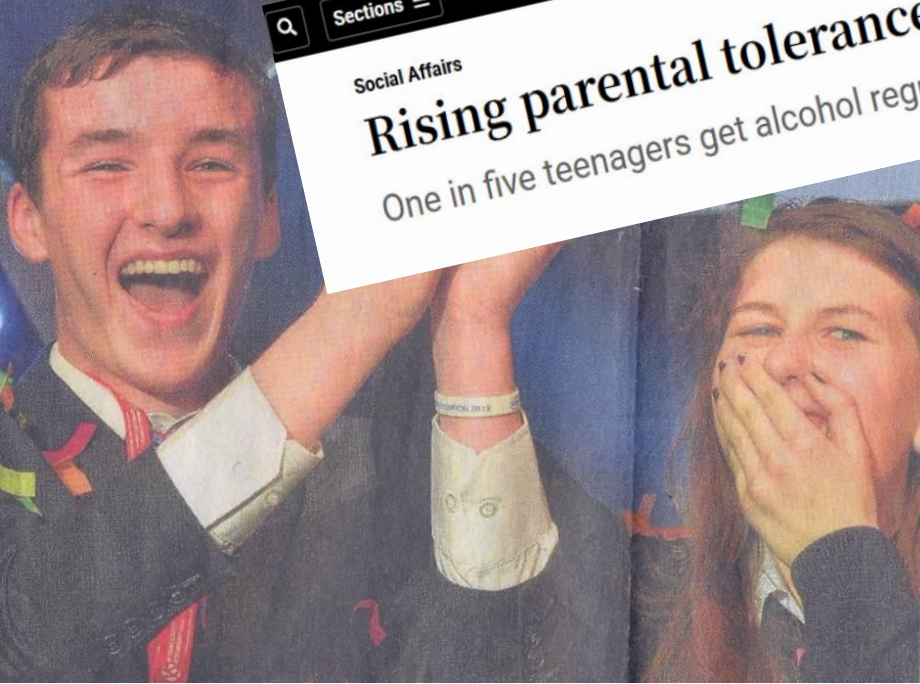
Rachel Ní Dhonnachadha (16), a fifth-year student at St Vincent's Secondary School in Louth, looked at wrist injuries, a common problem in boxing. As a former boxer, Rachel designed a glove-like wrist sup-

ported Rachel. She received a perpetual trophy and a cheque for €2,400.

The runner-up group prize went to transition year students Patrick Sweeney, Chloe Daniels and Annette Moran. Their study looked at whether birdsong may have been the inspiration that caused similarities between African and Irish traditional music.

Migrating swallows and other species spend time in Ireland and Africa, and musicians looking for inspiration could have picked up melodies from the birds, according to the theory proposed by the students from Carrick-on-Shannon Community School, Leitrim.

The runner-up individual prize went to Jack O'Sullivan (16) of Kilkenny College, Kilkenny. He developed a way to turn an ordinary smartphone into a fully functional desktop computer. The runners-up received a perpetual trophy and



HOME PAGE / NEWS

Teenagers whose parents are not against cannabis use four times more likely to take drug, study finds



LATEST

GAA club c
still withou

Mark Trave
Festy Ebo

Robert F K
begin in bl

Hamas set
this week

MOST R



1.
2.

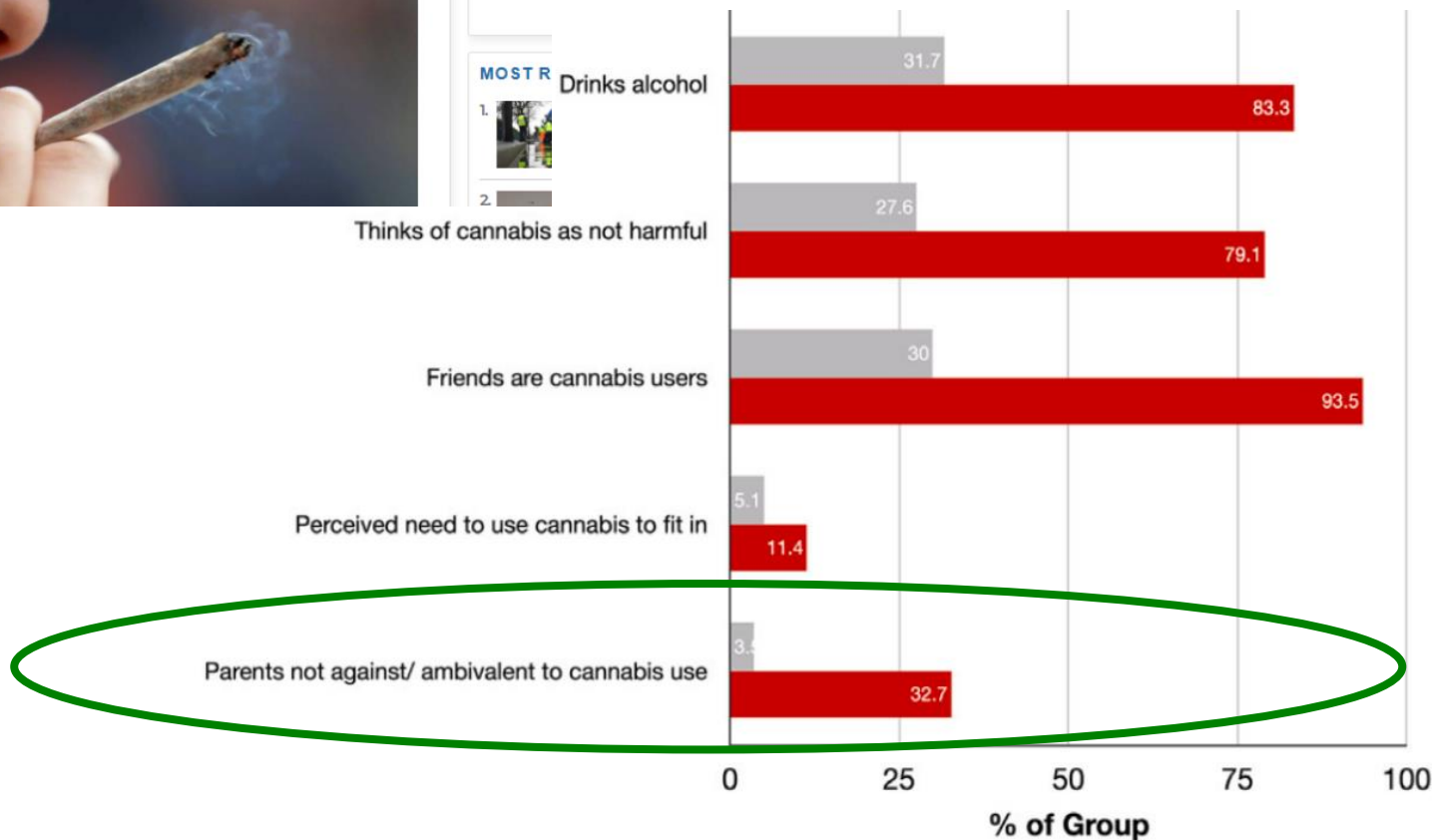


Figure 1. Prevalence of risk factors between current cannabis users ($n = 302$) and non-users ($n = 3770$) in adolescence.

If you decide to permit drinking..

- The drinking you see at home is likely to be an inaccurate reflection of the drinking which occurs out of home
- Alcohol is a wonderful camouflage for intoxication via other drugs
- It's hard to put the genie back in the bottle
- You must still decide where to draw the line

Talk to your children about your legitimate concerns

- Get their views on alcohol and drug use
- Stay calm
- Express your views/concerns
- Outline clearly your expectations
- Outline your desire to support them in having increasing autonomy and freedom, but that you will place increased restrictions on them if they demonstrate an inability to manage this degree of freedom, by making poor or unhealthy choices
- Accept their right to be irritated by your views and decisions.

- Listen to their views and opinions
- Based on this discussion, agree expectations/consequences
- Monitor and affirm adherence to the agreed expectations
- Withdraw rewards &/or impose the agreed sanction if behaviour falls short of expectations
 - If this happens, move on and don't hold a grudge

Conclusions

- View teenagers are apprentice adults
- As they grow in competence, we give them increased autonomy
- Teenagers differ, & the fewer internal Assets they have, the harder you have to work!
- Parents are a powerful influence on teenagers
 - While you cannot eliminate risk, you can influence it.
 - Be optimistic!
- There are many advantages to delaying their introduction to intoxicating substances
- Increasing the Assets in their lives yields multiple benefits

Resources

- @bobbysmyth4 



Alcohol and Drugs: A Parent's Guide

Practical advice to help
you communicate with
your child about alcohol
and other drugs



- Alcohol & Drugs: A parents guide
 - https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/29435/1/Alcohol_and_drugs_a_parents_guide.pdf
- <https://www.drugs.ie/parents>
- <https://nida.nih.gov/>
- 40 Developmental Assets

<https://policywise.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/40-Developmental-Assets.pdf>