
Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) and presents trends in: alcohol and other drug (AOD) related hospitalisations; AOD-induced deaths (i.e., overdose and other drug-induced deaths where drugs have been deemed the underlying cause of death); AOD treatment episodes; and past year AOD use, among Australians aged 15-50 years.

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7,211 hospitalisations, 79% of all
tions), and this has remained
decade (76% of all AOD-related
03). However, the largest increase
observed for amphetamine-type
sed thirteen-fold between 2002-
le) and 202021 (12.0 per 100,000

Jurisdiction

In 2020-21, AOD-related hospitalisations in the Northern Territory (1290.3 per 100,000 people) were more than double that observed in other jurisdictions. However, increases in AOD-related hospitalisations have been observed in all jurisdictions between 2002-03 and 2020-21.

AOD-Induced Deaths

Overall

Preliminary data show that there were 1,933 AOD-induced deaths (including those from drug overdose) among Australians aged 15-50 years in 2021. This equates to 21.6 deaths per 100,000 people, which is almost twice as high than

AOD Treatment Episodes

Overall

In 2020-21, there were 33,531 AOD treatment episodes among Australians aged 50 years. This equates to 375.0 treatment episodes per 100,000 people, double that reported in 2002-03 (151.4 per 100,000 people) but remaining lower than what was reported among Australians of all ages (486.1 treatment episodes per 100,000 people).

Sex

In 2020-21, AOD treatment episodes among Australians aged 50 years were almost twice as frequent among males (489.2 per 100,000 people) than females (266.8 per 100,000 people). This trend has remained relatively stable over the past two decades.

Age

In 2020-21, the highest rates of AOD treatment episodes continued to be observed among the 50-59 age group (759.7 per 100,000 people), however the rate of treatment episodes has more than doubled across all age groups.

Remoteness Area

The rate of treatment episodes has consistently been highest in remote and very remote areas, with the rate of treatment episodes in these areas more than doubling over the past two decades (315.0 in 2001-02; 825.2 per 100,000 people in 2020-21).

Principle Drug of Concern

In 2020-21, the most common drug type involved in treatment episodes was alcohol (68%, 254.4 treatment

and not to consume more than 4 standard drinks on any single day) – this was highest among those aged 60-69 years (33%) and lowest among those aged 80 years (18%).

- o Older adults who use opioids and/or benzodiazepines . In 2021 in Australia, the most common drug types
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- o **Polysubstance use** . In 2021, two thirds of AOD-induced deaths involved more than one drug class, with the most common polysubstance use profiles comprising opioids and antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and