

Stigma Snapshot

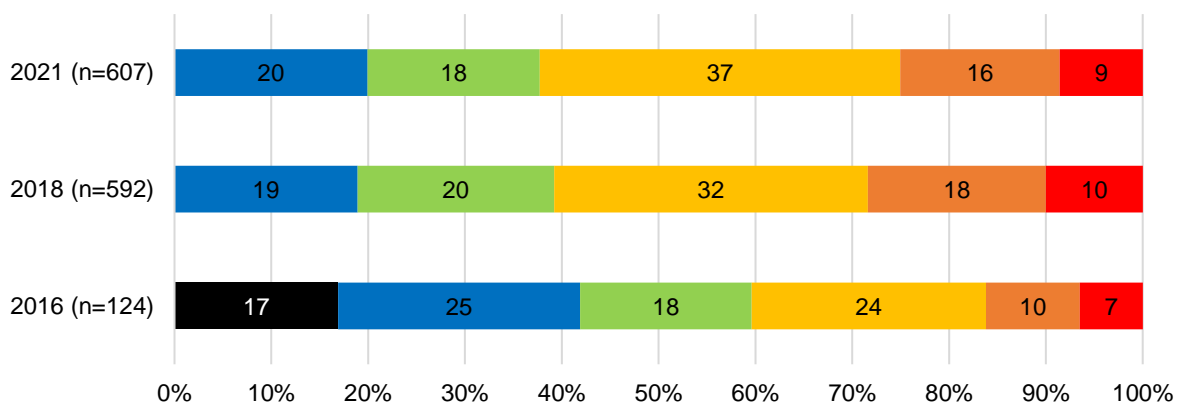
People who inject drugs 2021

Stigma has a major impact on health outcomes for people living with blood borne viruses (BBVs) and sexually transmissible infections (STIs). The Australian Government Department of Health strategies for BBVs and STIs explicitly aim to “eliminate the negative impact of stigma, discrimination, and legal and human rights issues on people’s health”.

In 2021, a survey of people who inject drugs was conducted to investigate their experiences of stigma in relation to their injecting drug use. This followed on from previous surveys of people who inject drugs, conducted in 2016 in 2018.

614 people completed the 2021 survey
56% male – 67% heterosexual – 20% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
54% completed high school – 38% employed

In the last 12 months, have you experienced any stigma or discrimination

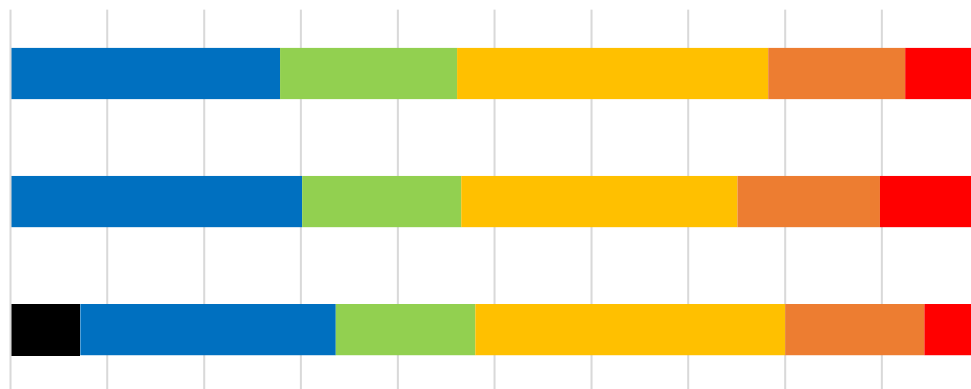


Note: N/A was not provided as a response option after 2016.

In 2021, four out of five participants (80%) reported experiencing stigma within the last 12 months in relation to their injecting drug use, including 25% reporting that they ‘often’ or ‘always’ experienced stigma. These proportions were not significantly different to those reported in 2018.



In 2021, nearly three-quarters of participants (72%) reported any negative treatment by health workers, including 22% who indicated that this was 'often' or 'always' the case. This was slightly higher than in 2018, when 70% of participants reported negative treatment from health workers, though the difference was not statistically significant.



Note: N/A was not provided as a response option after 2016.

Participants were asked additional questions about steps they had taken to avoid being treated negatively by health services.

Most participants indicated that at some point in the past 12 months, they had not told health workers about their drug use (75

