

Poly social-drug use in the Australian population

Data from the Australian Longitudinal
Study of Health and Relationships

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Social drugs – just to be clear



Aim

- Using data from an Australian cohort:
 - To provide a descriptive account of poly social-drug use in the general population
 - To highlight the interactive patterns between poly social-drugs
 - Describe patterns of use WRT
 - Employment status
 - Rurality
 - Education

Background

- Literature in the drug and alcohol field typically highlight the prevalence of co-existing substance use for a given population of interest...

For example, in a recent study about amphetamine users Baker et al (2004) write “Virtually all participants were poly-drug users, with tobacco (92.1%), cannabis (72.4%) and alcohol (71.0%) being the most commonly used drugs after amphetamines”

Background

- Likelihood of poly social-drug use in populations of those who use other drugs is known to be high
- Question is – how common is the use of these social-drugs in the Australian population?
 - And, do the patterns of social-poly drug use for employment, rurality and education status differ?

Method

- Data from the Australian Longitudinal Study of Health and Relationships - LongSex
 - Began in 2005
 - Conducted yearly - panel 4 currently underway
 - Data from intake interview
- 8656 Australians aged 16–64
 - 4366 females, 4290 males
- Representative household sample
- Selected by random digit dialing
- Computer-assisted telephone interview

Social drug use - definition

Using questions similar to the National Drug Study (NHSDS)

- Tobacco – 100 cigarettes or equivalent amount of tobacco
- Alcohol – more than 10 drinks
- Cannabis – at least 10 times

Do not quote or cite

Results

Ever used (n≈8656)

Tobacco
51%

Alcohol
91%

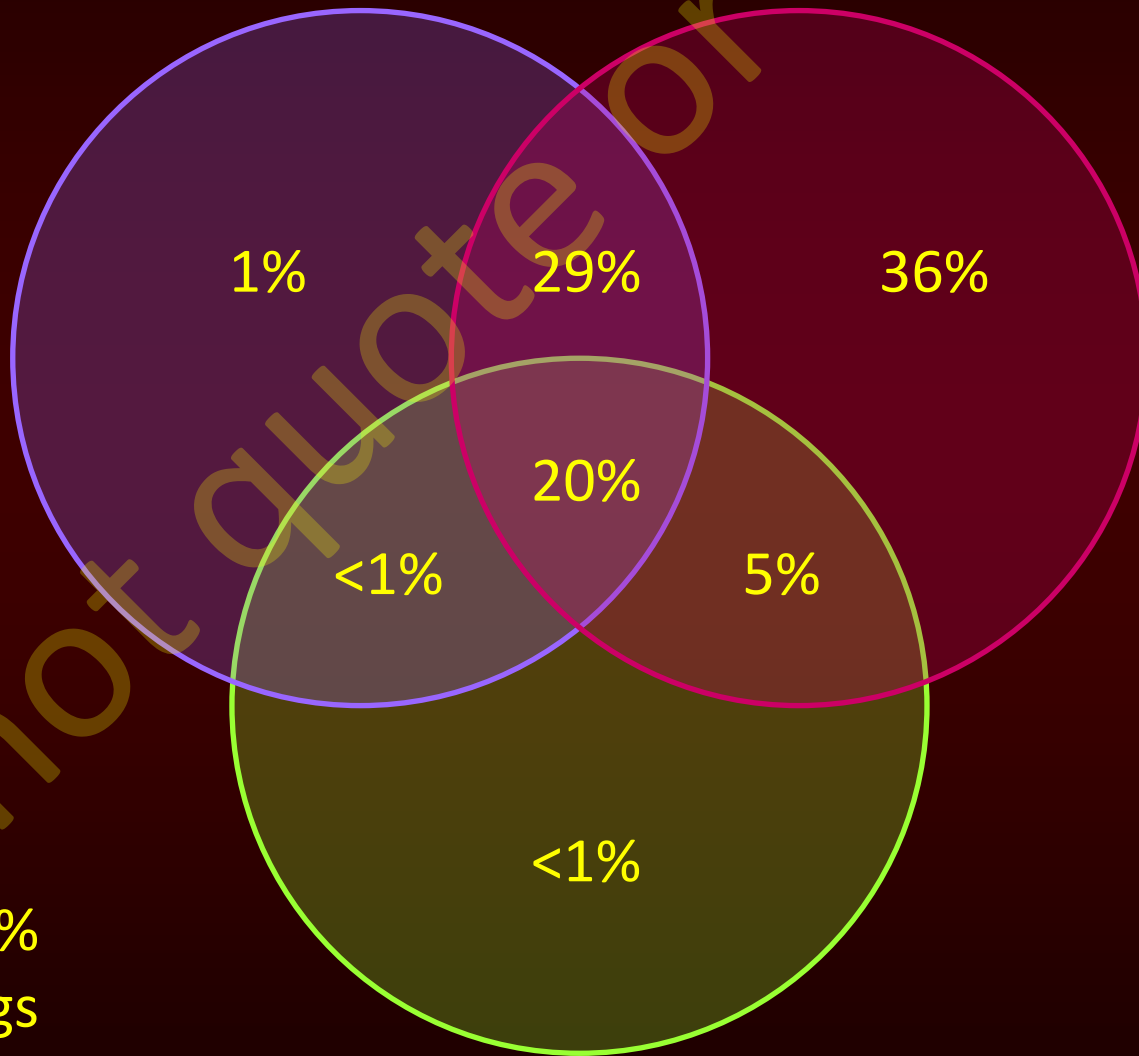
No social drugs
7%

Cannabis
26%

Ever used (n≈8656)

Tobacco
51%

Alcohol
91%



7%
No social drugs

26%
Cannabis

Ever used

Any use (%)	Men (n≈4354)	Women (n≈4302)
Tobacco (T)*	54	48
Alcohol (A)*	93	88
Cannabis (C)*	31	20
Type of use (%)		
T (only)	1	2
A (only)	33	39
C (only)	0	0
TA	29	29
TC	1	0
AC	7	4
TAC	24	16
None	5	10

* Proportions of use are similar to data in NDSHS 2007
(except tobacco which is slightly higher)

Previous 12 months (n \approx 8656)

Tobacco
28%

Alcohol
85%

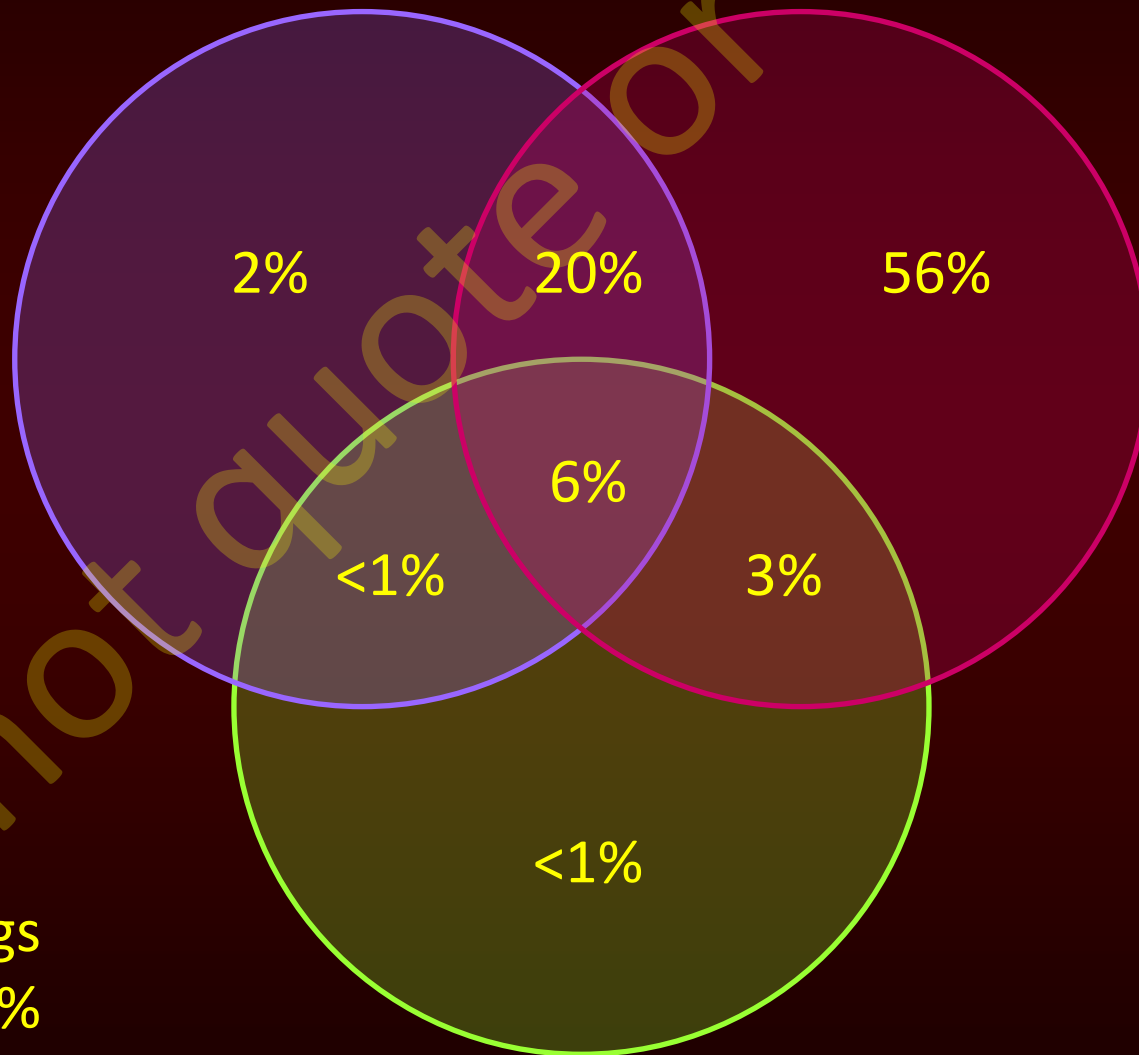
No social drugs
12%

Cannabis
9%

Previous 12 months (n≈8656)

Tobacco
28%

Alcohol
85%



No social drugs
12%

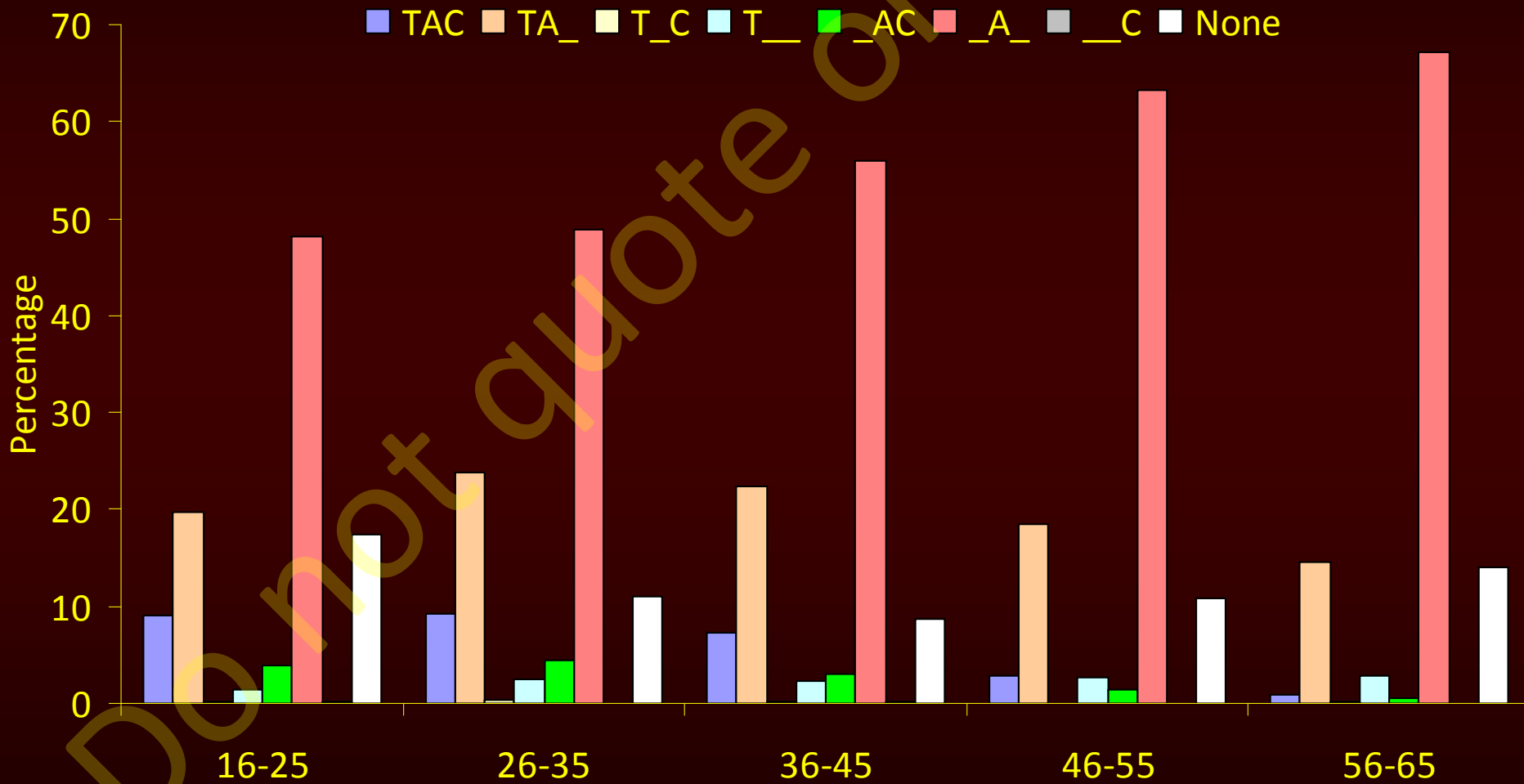
Cannabis
9%

Use in the last 12 months

Any use (%)	Men (n≈4354)	Women (n≈4302)
Tobacco (T)*	30	27
Alcohol (A)*	89	82
Cannabis (C)*	11	6
Type of use (%)		
T (only)	2	3
A (only)	57	56
C (only)	0	0
TA	20	20
TC	0	0
AC	4	2
TAC	8	4
None	9	15

* Proportions of use are similar to data in NDSHS 2007
(except tobacco which is slightly higher)

Use in the last 12 months – by age



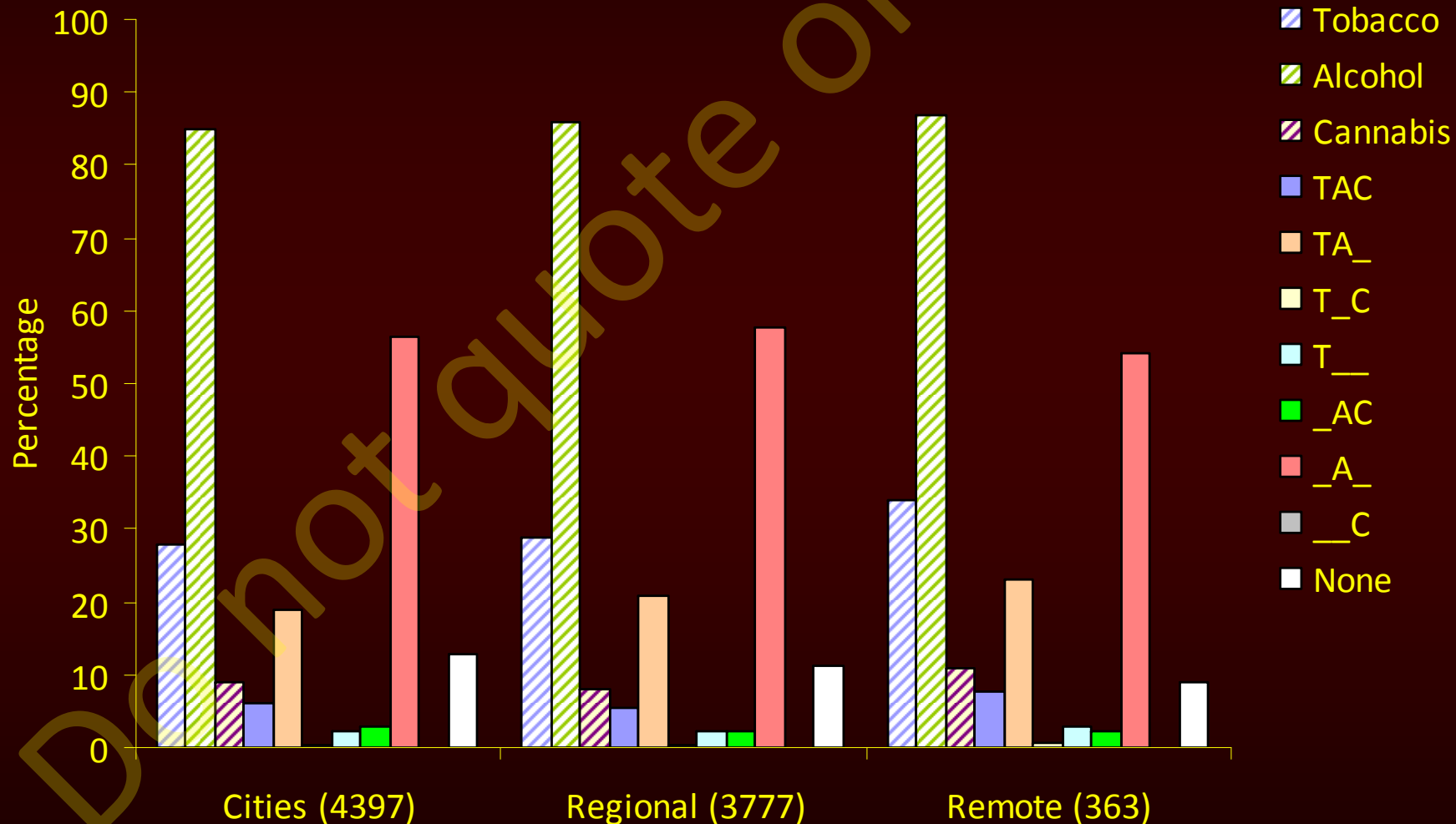
Other demographics

Use in the last 12 months Employment

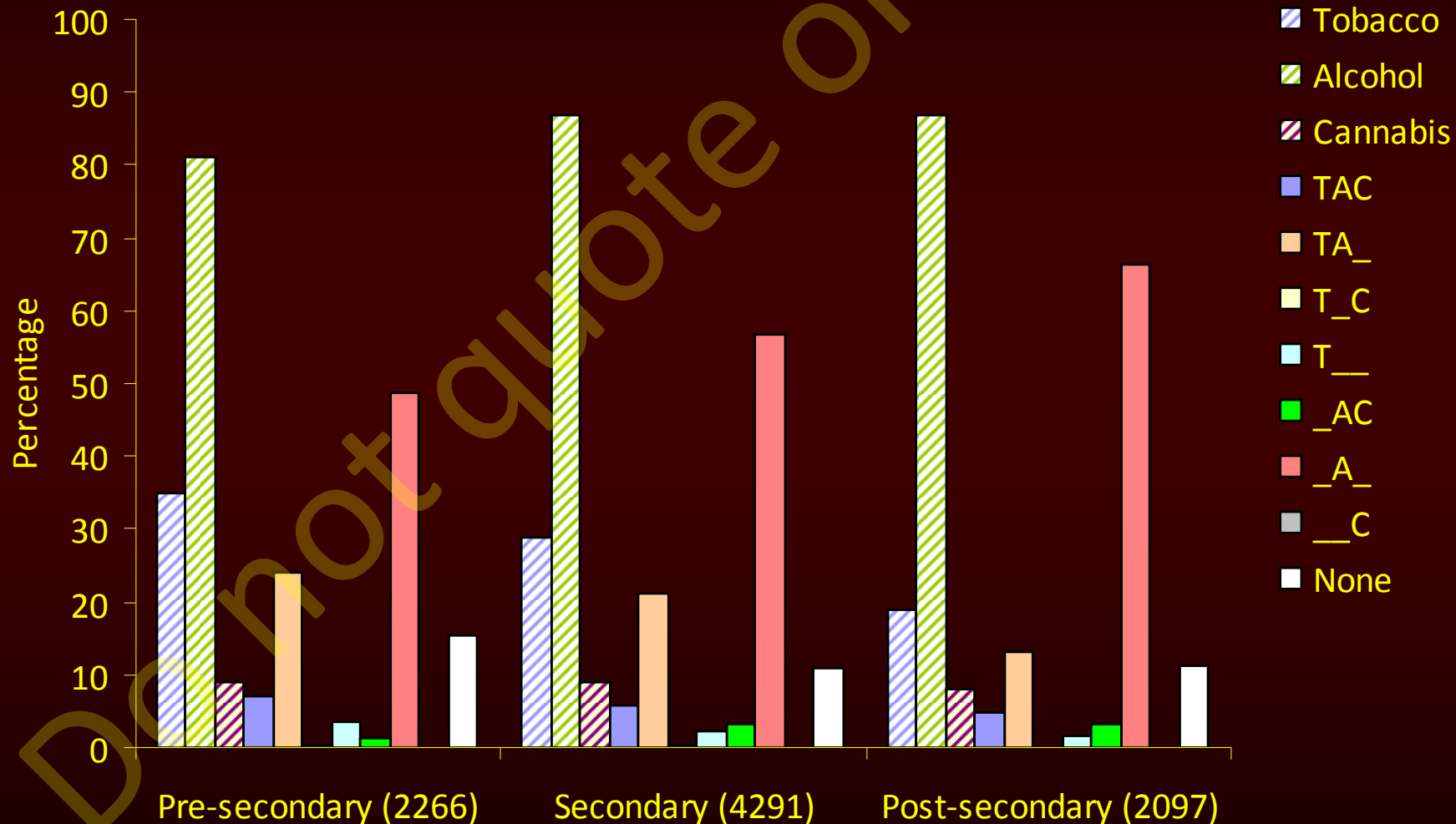


Use in the last 12 months

Rurality



Use in the last 12 months Education



Discussion

- The purpose of this data is to highlight patterns of poly social-drug use in the Australian general community
- People who use cannabis in the last 12 months – also use tobacco or alcohol or both.
- People who use tobacco more than likely also have consumed alcohol
- Alcohol use can be in isolation of tobacco or cannabis

Implications

- The National Drug Strategy Household Survey uses a cross-sectional methodology; ALSHR use a cohort methodology and as such able to report patterns of behaviour across time
- See APSAD poster
“Cannabis use in the Australian population”

Previous 12 months

No illicit drugs (8145)

Illicit drugs (511)

