

**HOW PREPARED ARE MONITORING SYSTEMS TO RESPOND TO
RAPIDLY CHANGING DRUGS MARKETS IN REGIONS
BORDERING THE EUROPEAN UNION
FOCUS ON LEBANON**

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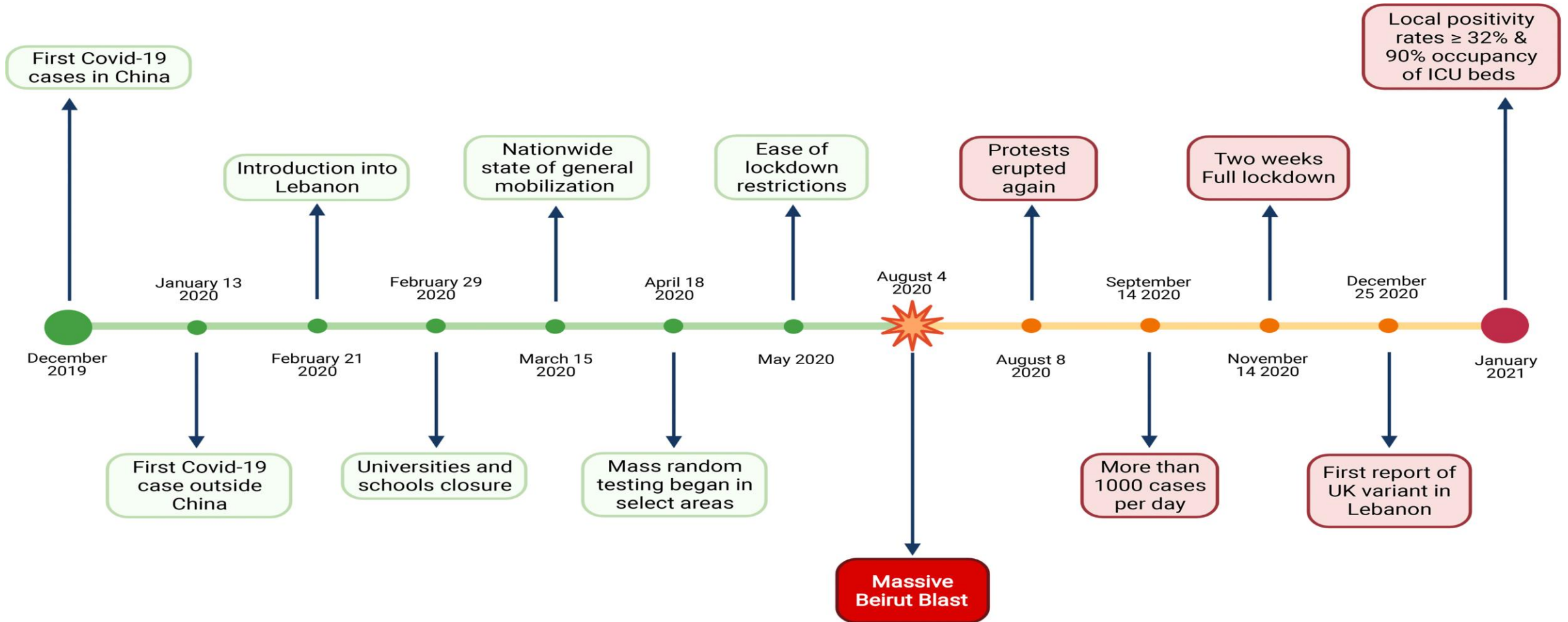


OVERVIEW

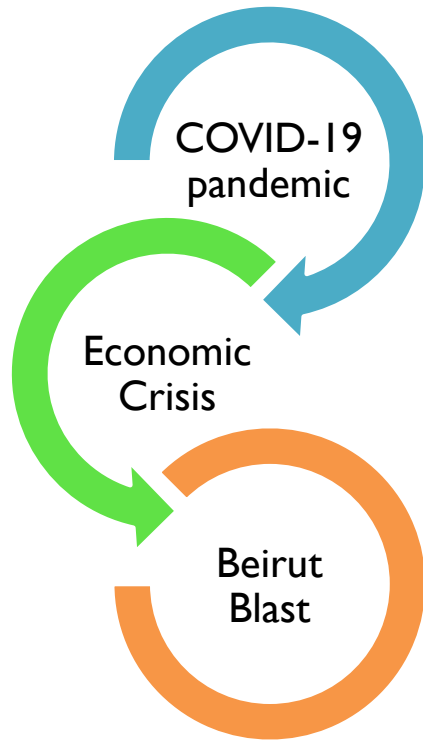
- Lebanon is a country of 4 million inhabitants on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean.
- A combination of political and economic factors contributed to a long phase of instability
 - Aggravated by the flow of refugees following the Syrian crisis in 2011, economic crisis, Beirut Explosion



OVERVIEW



OVERVIEW



- Health system under pressure
- Great harm on the mental health

OVERVIEW

In Lebanon: Limited data on prevalence

- Prevalence lifetime use among persons aged 18-44: 0.6% in 2003
- 12 months prevalence of drug use disorder: **0.3%**
- **Ghandour et al:** Alcohol is the substance most likely to be tried at an early age (70%). Cannabis was the second most commonly tried substance among high school students (6.8%) vs. tranquilizers in university students (13.1%).
- **Abbas et al:** Alcohol was the most reported substance among refugees in Lebanon. The most reported substance among illicit substances was cannabis accounting for 60% of users, followed by cocaine and Opioids
- **WHO data published in 2020:** Drug Use Deaths in Lebanon reached 281 or 0.82% of total deaths. The age adjusted Death Rate is 4.25 per 100,000 of population ranks Lebanon #14 in the world.

OVERVIEW

Lebanese High School & University Survey:

Mean age: 17.1 (\pm 0.9) years

- Illegal drug once or more: 9%
- Hashish/marijuana only, cannabis: most used
- 1.7% cocaine
- Heroin: 0.8% ; Mean Age 15.1 year

Perceived availability of substances:

- 44.2% : easy/very easy to obtain tranquilizers
- 15.5%: Heroin easily/very easily available

Observational survey on 1945 university students: high prevalence of substance use among university students in Lebanon

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS ON SUBSTANCE USE

- **El Othman et al:** The Lebanese economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic were conducive to an increased drug addiction especially for students with unguaranteed future in Lebanon, as well as psychological fragility of the Lebanese people.
- **Chalhoub et al:** Given the economic and political crisis that are superimposing on the already alarming pandemic in Lebanon and the unemployment situation of youth, university students appear to be exceedingly affected toward smoking, alcohol, drugs, and other consumption behaviors.

MONITORING SYSTEM

- Annual statistics
- Gathered by the ministry of public health, narcotics department
- Secondary data from treatment centers and rehab

**MOPH
annual
report**

- A centralized information system (OSTIS)
- Annual report
 - Demographic data
 - Clinical follow up

**OST
program**

- Still limited
- Recent increase during crisis

**Surveys
and
studies**

**ISF annual
report/
Reports
from
forensic lab**

- Annual report
 - Number of convicted persons/substance
 - Seizures by substance
 - Reported cases of death

MONITORING & SURVEILLANCE

- Integrate a core set of substance use treatment and rehabilitation service utilization indicators (taking into consideration vulnerable groups)
- Publish and disseminate reports on service utilization using indicators
- **Establish an evidence-based national drug observatory at the MOPH in line with international guidelines to collect, analyze and generate evidence**
- Establish a monitoring mechanism to monitor substance use facilities regularly to ensure protection of human, child and women's rights.
- Establish a unit under the MOPH for testing psychoactive substances



NATIONAL OBSERVATORY FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION

NODDA

Lunched in collaboration between narcotics department and Mental health program with the technical support of the EMCDDA



NATIONAL OBSERVATORY FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION

The first report of the Observatory was issued in collaboration with several ministries and related bodies

- Secondary data
 - Prevalence
 - Size of the **Drug Market in Lebanon**
 - Drug Related policy
 - Prevention and Treatment



NATIONAL OBSERVATORY FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION

Drug Supply: Types and quantities of drugs seized (2012-2016)

Type of Drug Seized

Type of Drug Seized	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Cocaine (kg)	27.8	53.2	72.7	168.4	184.7
Opium and Opiates					
Heroin (kg)	20.2	17.4	3.9	5.7	4.4
Cannabis					
Herbal Cannabis (kg)	1016	161.3	3 063.1	-	7 637.3
Cannabis Oil (mL)	10	-	29	75	8
Cannabis Seeds (kg)	551.7	12.4	1 641.9	-	83.5
Amphetamine-type stimulants					
Amphetamine (g)	105 000	5 700	-	0.5	-
Fenetylline (Captagon) (pills)	463 977	12 390 124	35 276 219	15 065 081	12 758 882
Ecstasy (pills)	3 040	1 786	169	1 047	2 256
3,4-methylene-dioxymetamphetamine (MDMA) (g)	-	27.5	63.8	1.6	584
Hallucinogens					
D-Lysergic acid diethylamine (LSD) (pills)	-	-	-	1 947	-
News Psychoactive Substances					
Salvia (kg)	-	-	-	-	13.6
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016

Data source: MOIM 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016b

Over 5-years (2012-2016): **54%** increase in drug seizures; among all criminal intention of use, and **33%** decrease in drug seizures among producers.

NATIONAL OBSERVATORY FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION

Drug access: Price Comparison 2016 Vs 2021

Substance	Unit of acquisition (eg: g, kg, pill etc.)	Average reported cost (in LBP)	
		2016	2021
Heroin	g	15,000-30,000 LBP	300,000 LBP
Cocaine	g	60,000-120,000LBP	3,200,000 LBP
Cannabis	g	1,500– 7,500 LBP	12,000 LBP
BZD	pill		100,000 LBP
Tramadol	pill		100,000 LBP
Amphetamine	g		2,500,000 LBP
Other, please specify: _salvia	25 g		300,000 LBP

EU4MD PROJECT: TWO SURVEYS

- **The EFSQ and EU web surveys** were conducted in collaboration with focal points from the narcotics department in the ministry of public health in Lebanon. **The EU web survey** was handled in collaboration between the narcotics department and Skoun Addiction center.
- Arabic version of the EU-web survey and arabic and french versions of the EFSQ were translated from the English version and piloted to make any necessary adjustments
- EU web survey: A pilot survey was conducted with 10 participants through face to face interviews to assess necessary modifications
- EFSQ Pretesting: A Sample was sent to 3 institutions for feedback on the questionnaire

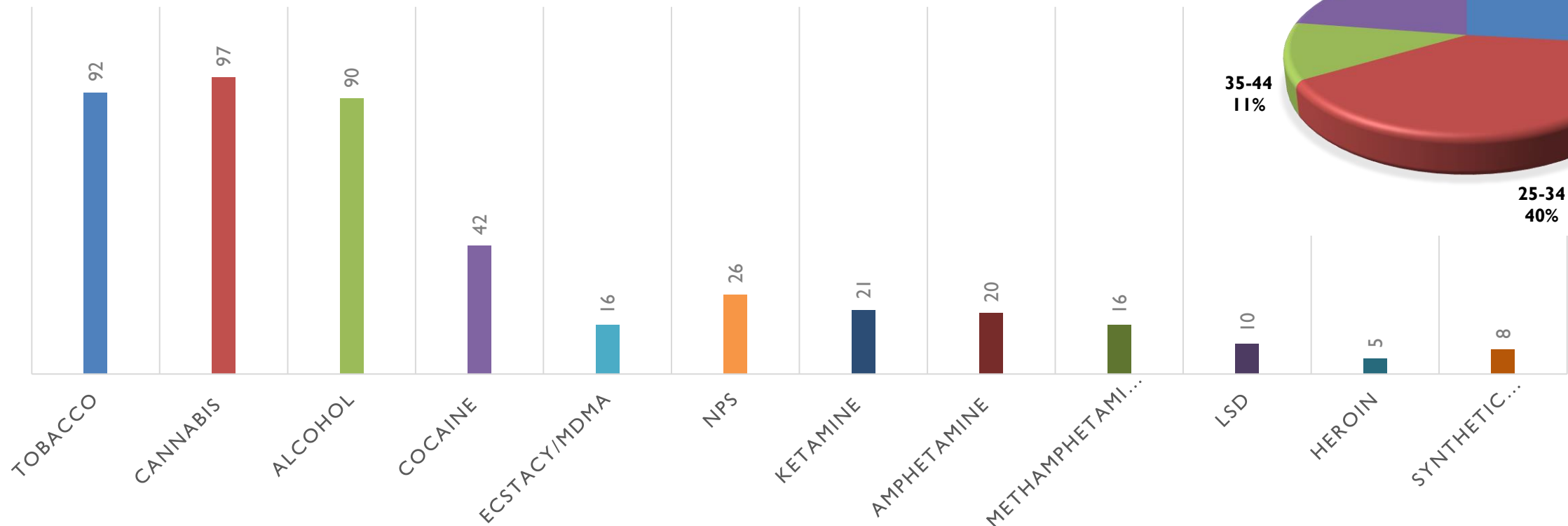
Both studies were approved by the Ministry of Public Health



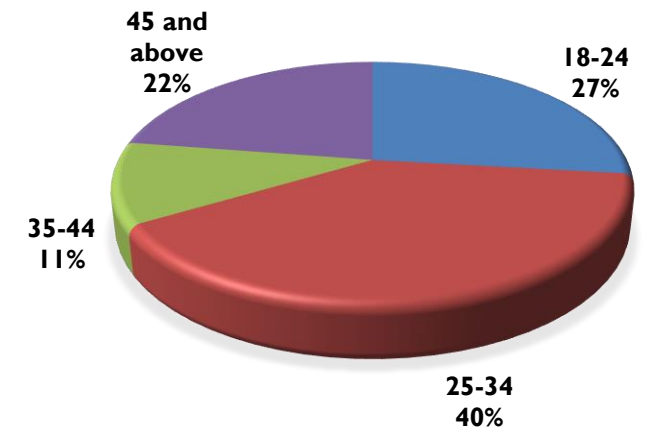
Funded by the
European Union

EU WEB SURVEY : RESULTS

Prevalence in the Last Year



AGE GROUPS

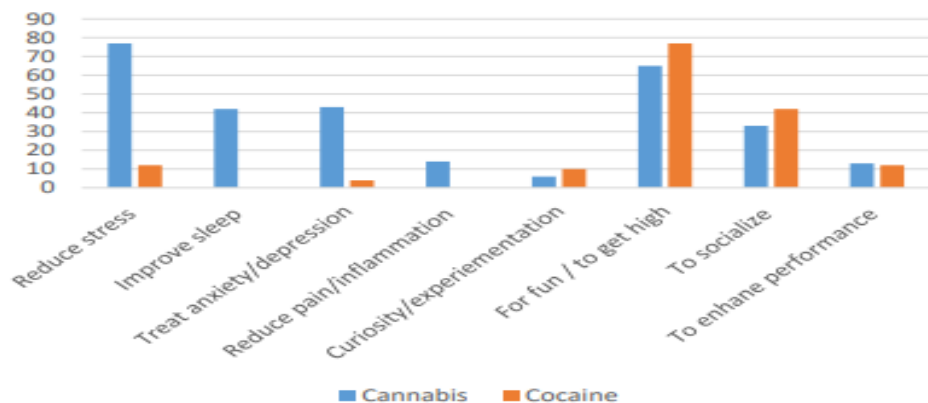


Top 5 most used drugs in the past 12 months since completion of the survey were **Tobacco (92.1%)**, **Cannabis/hash (92.6%)**, **Alcohol (89.89%)**, **powder/crack cocaine (42.3%)**, and **MDMA/ecstasy (32.1%)**.

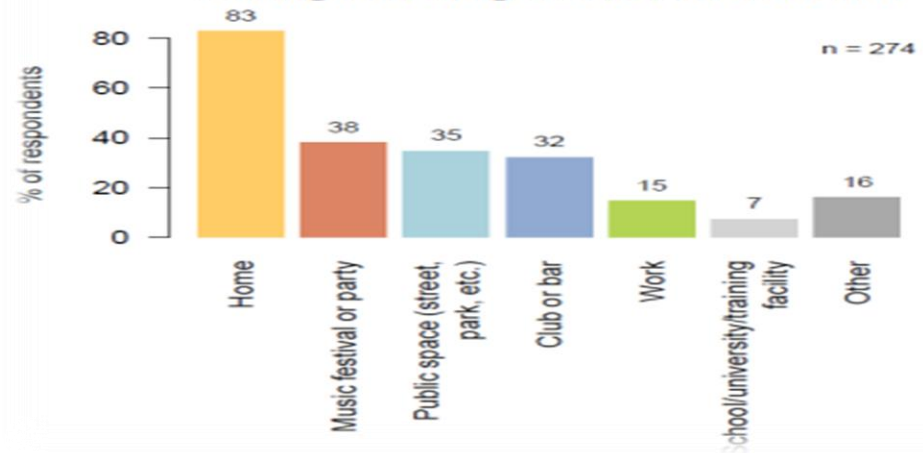


EU WEB SURVEY : RESULTS

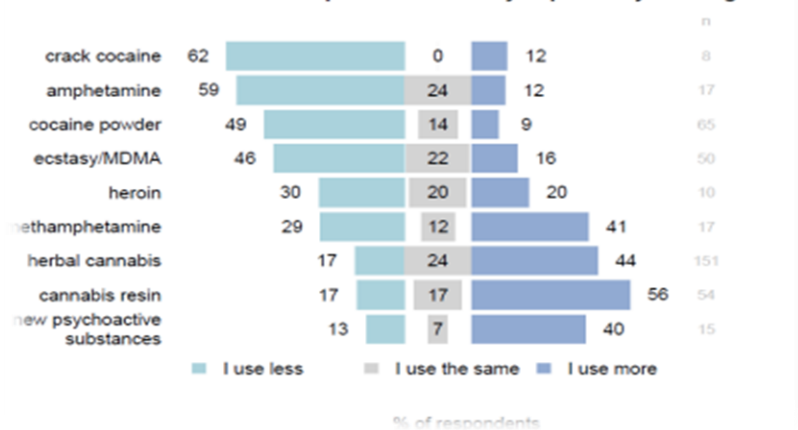
Motivation for Drug Use



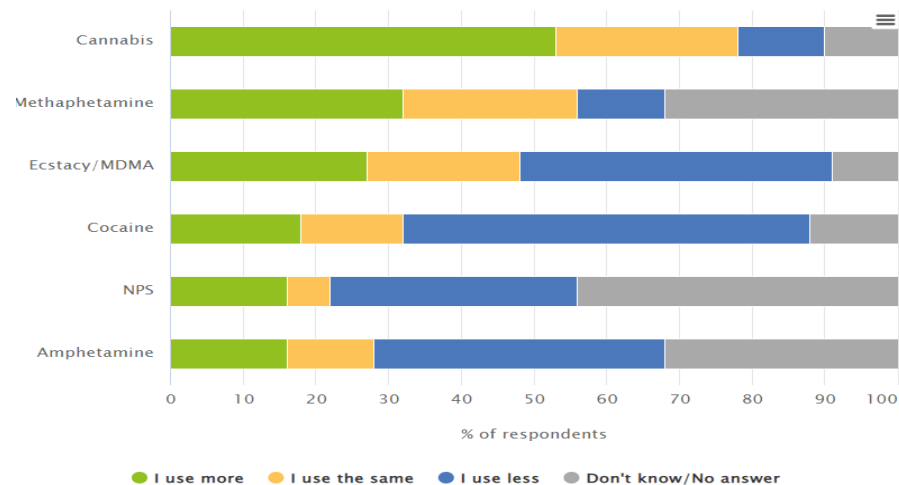
Settings for drug use in last 12 month



Has the covid-19 pandemic had any impact on your drug use?



Did the impact of the explosion in Beirut in 2020 have any impact on your drug use?



TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- **Economic Crisis:**
 - Overcome lack of resources to reactivate national observatory
- **Vulnerable Groups**
 - Refugees
 - Prisoners



THANK YOU

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Questions ?

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