

# LADIS News Flash

APRIL 2006

## Treatment demand of cannabis users 2004

### Summary

- Approximately 3% of current cannabis users apply for outpatient treatment.**
- From 2001 to 2004, treatment demand of cannabis users increased by 43% to about 13,000 clients.**
- More than 1,100 of these clients were under the age of 20.**
- There was a 67% increase in treatment demand for this age group.**

The organisation for Information Systems in Care (SIVZ) has been mandated by the Dutch government to collect, manage and report the information of the Dutch National Alcohol and Drugs Database (LADIS)<sup>1</sup>.

LADIS has been operational since in 1986, and has been anonymously tracing unique clients through the years. By matching individual records, client careers can be described and identified.

LADIS covers the whole of the addiction outpatient services in the Netherlands. The publication of Key Figures<sup>2</sup> identifies annual trends. The LADIS database is also used for research, policy evaluation and benchmarking.

This news flash highlights topical themes using LADIS data.

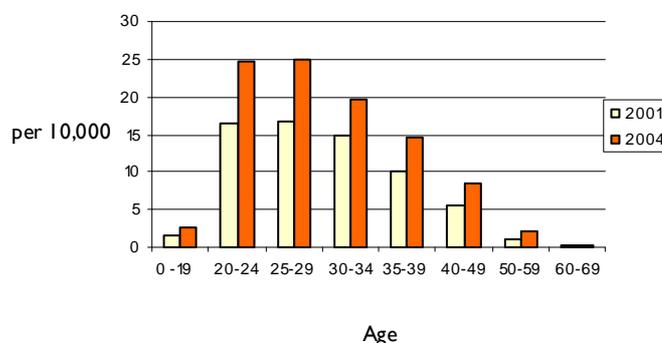
### Increased cannabis use among youth?

What is the extent of increased cannabis addiction among youth? Are more youth seeking help for their cannabis addiction?

In 2004, more than 13,000 users applied for outpatient treatment due to varying degrees of addiction. This figure includes those with cannabis as 'only' a secondary problem. More than 1,100 users were under the age of 20.

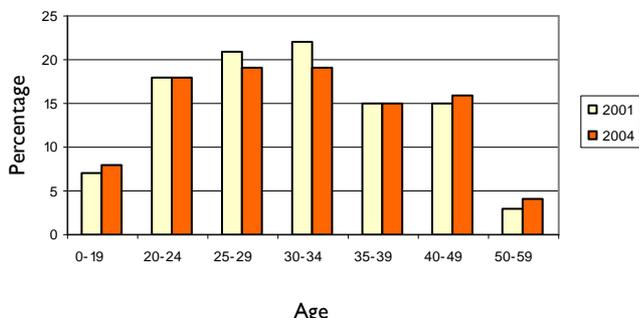
Estimates show that more than 400,000 persons use cannabis in the Netherlands (NDM 2004)<sup>3</sup>. Assuming this number of current cannabis users, approximately 3% apply for outpatient treatment.

Since 2001, the average age of the group of cannabis users has remained stable at around 31 years of age, making it the youngest group of drug users. The graph below depicts treatment demand per age group per 10,000 contemporaries.



Since 2001, the average increase for all age groups has been 43%. There has been a 67% increase among the youngest group.

The graph shows that this was a relatively small group compared to the older groups (2.8 versus 25 per 10,000 contemporaries). The graph also depicts the shift between the age groups.



In 2004, 8% of clients belonged to the youngest category, as compared with 7% in 2001.

Age	2001	2004	Growth %
12	0	0	0
13	4	1	-75
14	13	29	123
15	38	60	58
16	73	140	92
17	109	228	109
18	189	290	53
19	219	354	62

The table above shows the distribution of the various age groups within the youngest group.

## Exclusive or multiple use

Cannabis is increasingly mentioned as a primary drug. In 1994, 30% of individuals applying for cannabis treatment had cannabis as the primary drug. In 2004, 57% mentioned cannabis as the primary drug.

In addition to the rise of cannabis as the primary drug, we also see an increase in the number of clients reporting cannabis as 'exclusive' drug. This exclusive treatment demand increased from 17% in 1994 to 27% in 2004.

The 27% is divided between two age groups in the table below.

Multiple treatment demand refers to problems due to the use of other substances (other drugs, alcohol) in addition to cannabis.

Treatment demand in 2004 (N= approx. 13.000)	Exclusive	Multiple
< 20 year	4%	4%
> = 20 year	23%	69%

The incidence of exclusive and multiple treatment demand is the same among youth, while multiple demand for treatment predominates among older individuals.

## New applicants

Approximately 24% of the clients in 2004 applied for treatment for the first time. This group of newcomers is compared with the total group in the table below.

Treatment demand in 2004	First time (24%)	Total (N= approx. 13.000)
Average age	27,8	31,5
Female	20%	15%
Ethnic minorities	15%	17%

The newcomer group is 4 years younger on average. There are more women and somewhat fewer ethnic minorities. Only 8% of the young newcomers (< 20 years of age) is from an ethnic minority.

<sup>1</sup> [www.sivz.nl](http://www.sivz.nl)

<sup>2</sup> Key figures for 2004 can be found at [www.sivz.nl](http://www.sivz.nl)

<sup>3</sup> NDM, Nationale Drugmonitor [www.trimbos.nl](http://www.trimbos.nl)

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