

Anex Community Research Drug issues and harm reduction: community attitudes and knowledge

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Key Findings

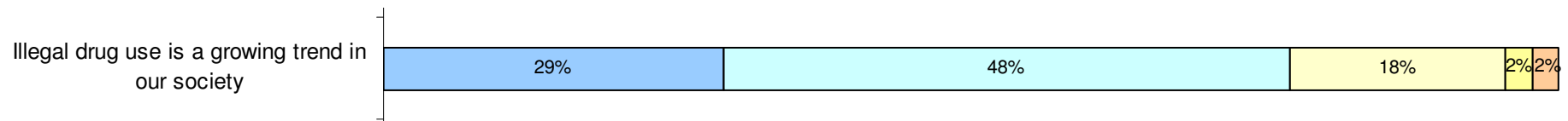
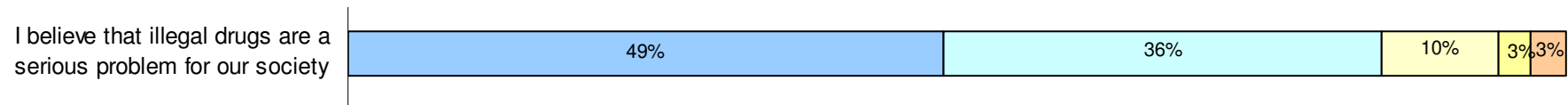
- The general public is fearful when it comes to drug issues and they regard drugs as an important societal issue
- Many people want to see a greater emphasis on harm reduction and prevention
- The community's knowledge of the more detailed aspects of drugs, their effects and programs to address drug related issues is relatively poor, but people are generally not open to learning more
- A way forward is to adopt a 'marketing approach' to generate better knowledge and understanding of drug related issues in the broader community

Demographics

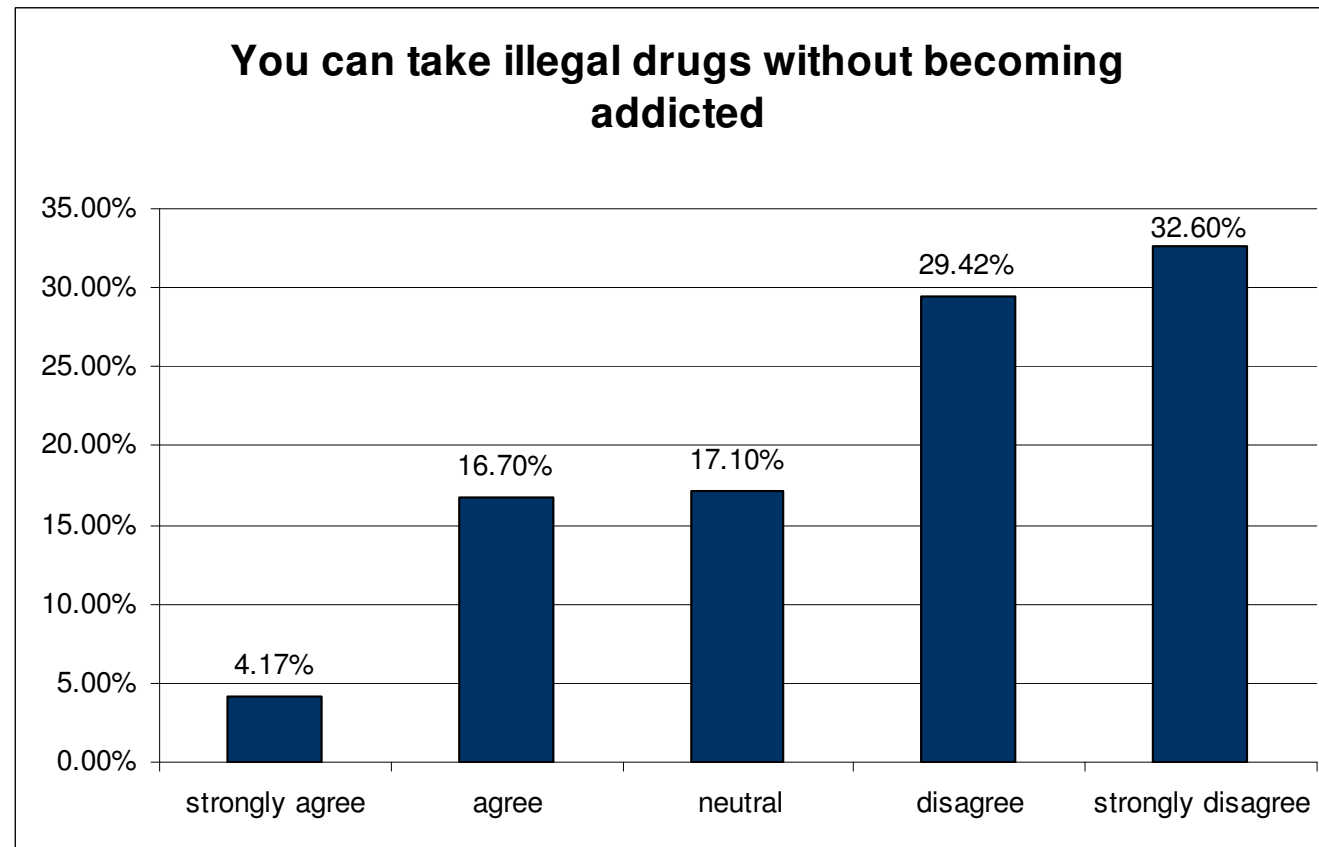
- 257 (51%) female : 246 (49%) male
- Labour force status matched ABS figures
- Educational attainment higher than ABS figures
- 45% females and 43% males had tried marijuana at some time
- 19% had tried *other* illicit drugs in their lifetime
- 9.4% of respondents stated that they currently use illicit drugs
- 21% of respondents are tobacco smokers
- 23% of respondents do not drink alcohol
- 46% of drinkers average 1-2 drinks, 31% reported drinking 3+ drinks

Attitudes and Knowledge

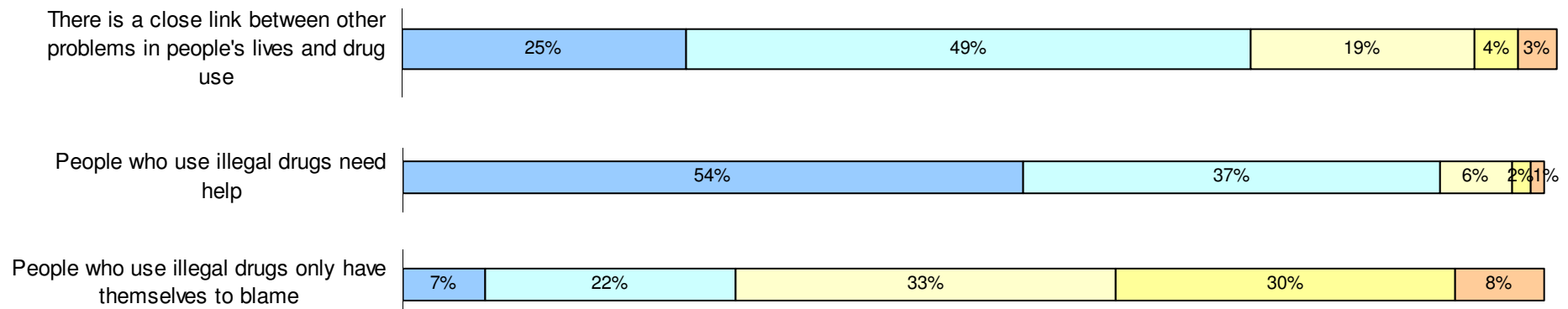
Drugs are regarded as a serious problem and a growing issue for society



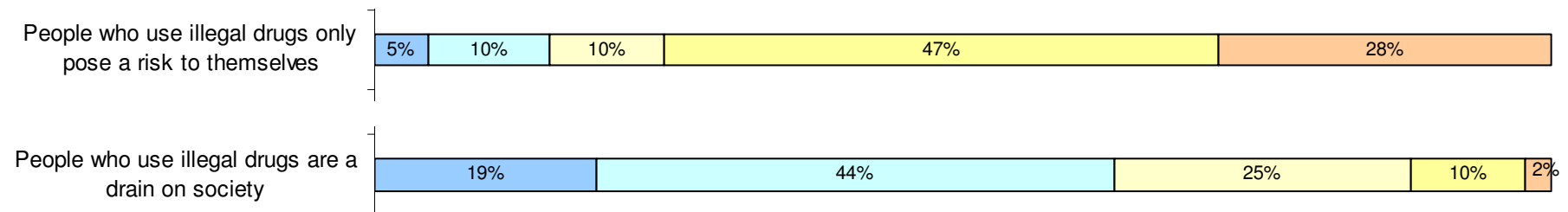
■ strongly agree
 ■ agree
 ■ neutral
 ■ disagree
 ■ strongly disagree



There is concern for drug users



Counterbalanced by social concerns



■ strongly agree
 ■ agree
 ■ neutral
 ■ disagree
 ■ strongly disagree

'harm reduction'

"not sure possibly education"

"The less potent the drug the less harm it may do"

"addiction"

"making sure the person using is in safe environment"

"I have no idea. I haven't heard that term used in relation to a drug problem"

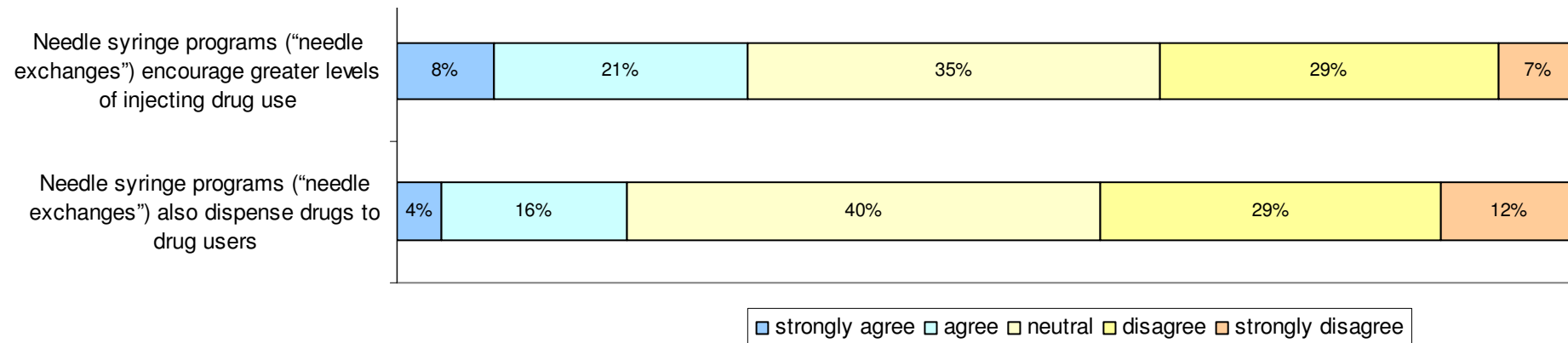
"Doing nothing other than condoning the drug use"

"Have not heard of harm reduction but would say that it means not to use a lot of this drug"

"drugs that will help or non addictive"

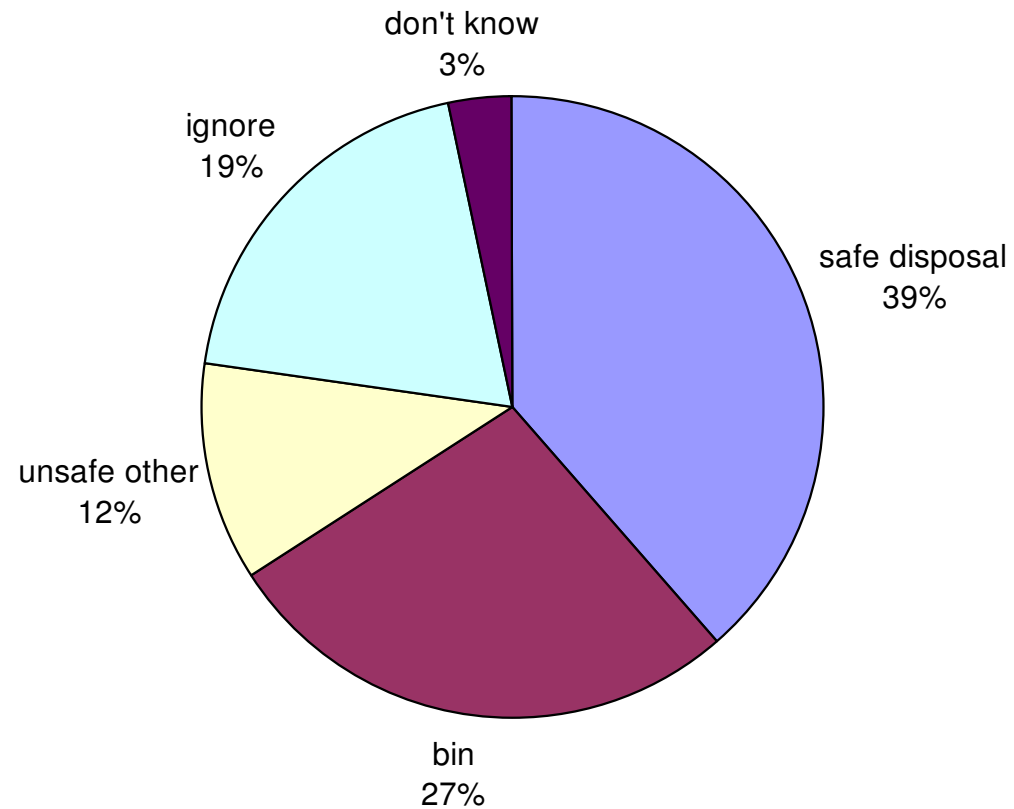
"I don't think there can really be "harm reduction" if the drugs can be obtained fairly easily. So the only "harm reduction" I could think of would be abstinence."

People don't know what NSPs are and what they do

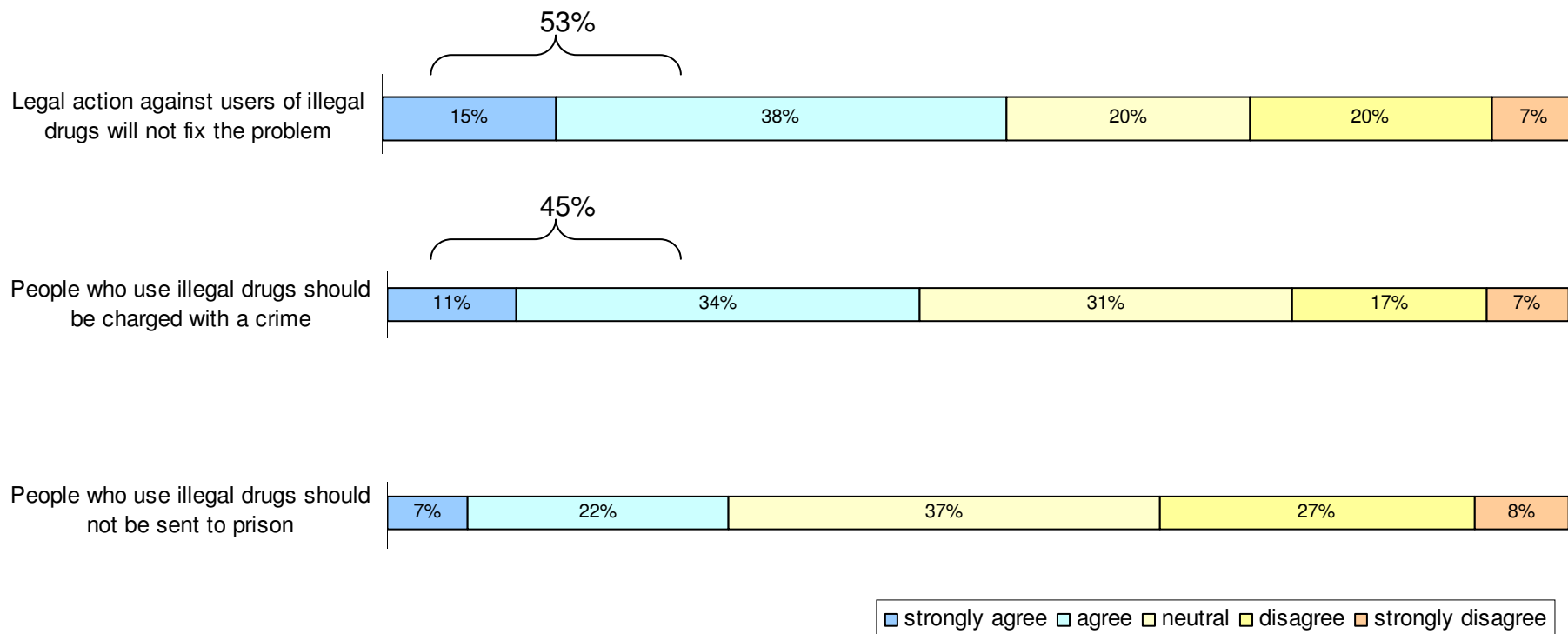


Less than half of people are aware of how to safely dispose of a discarded syringe

**If I came across a discarded syringe
my home I would...**

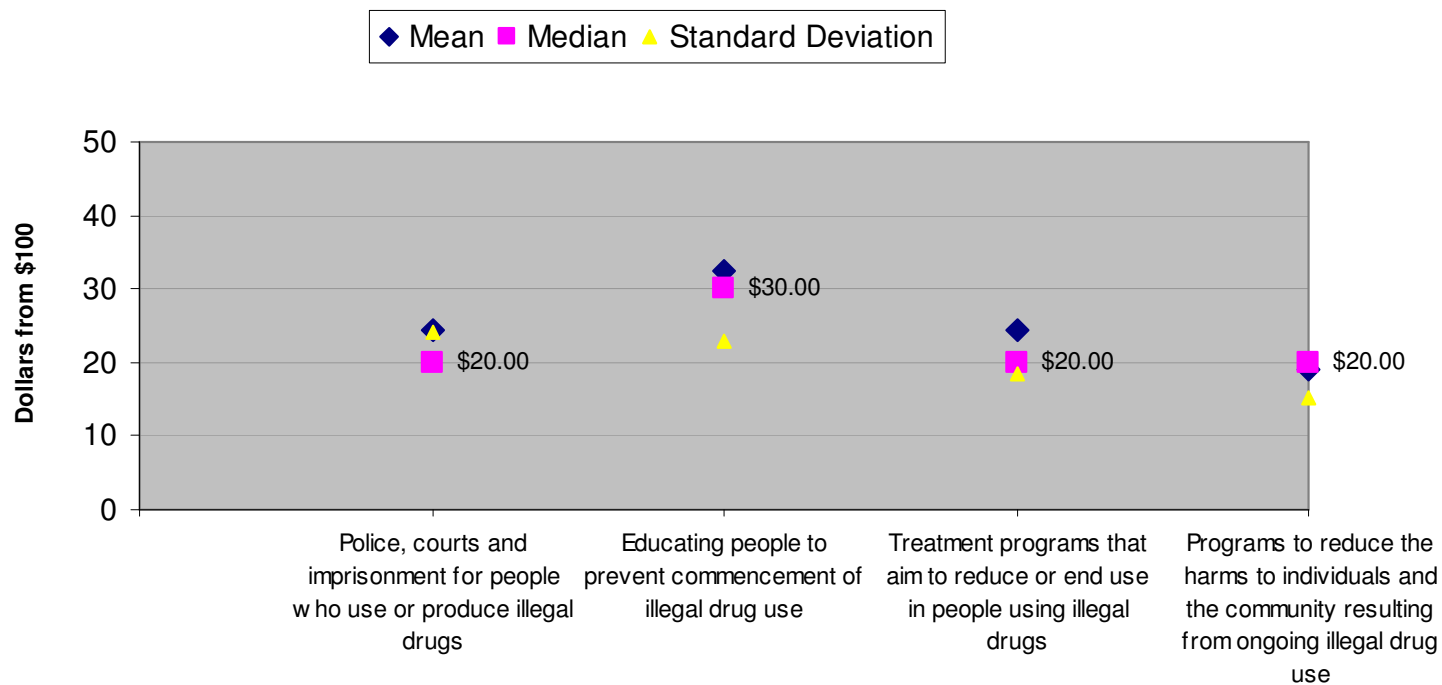


There is division in the community over the role of law enforcement in drug policy responses



The majority of people do not agree with the current drug budget structure and quantum

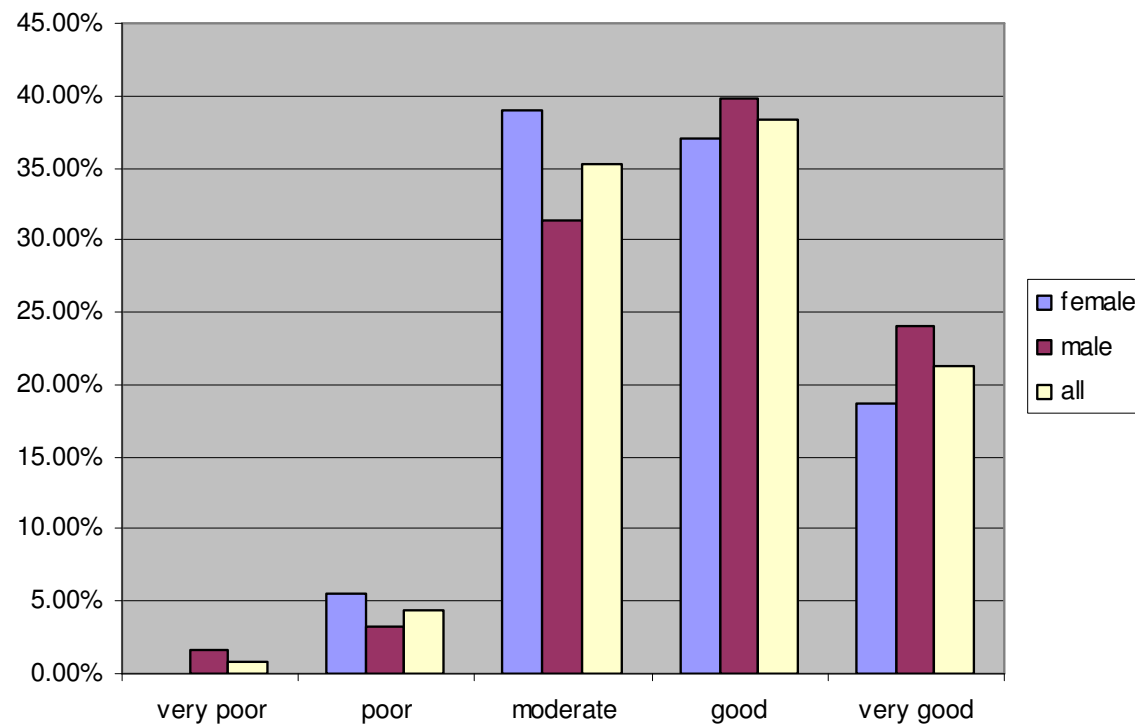
If the government had \$100 to spend on addressing problems associated with illegal drugs how much do you think they should spend on each of the following?



How do we improve knowledge and understanding?

Most people rate their knowledge of drugs and drug issues highly

I believe that my knowledge of drugs, the effects of drugs and drug issues in general is...



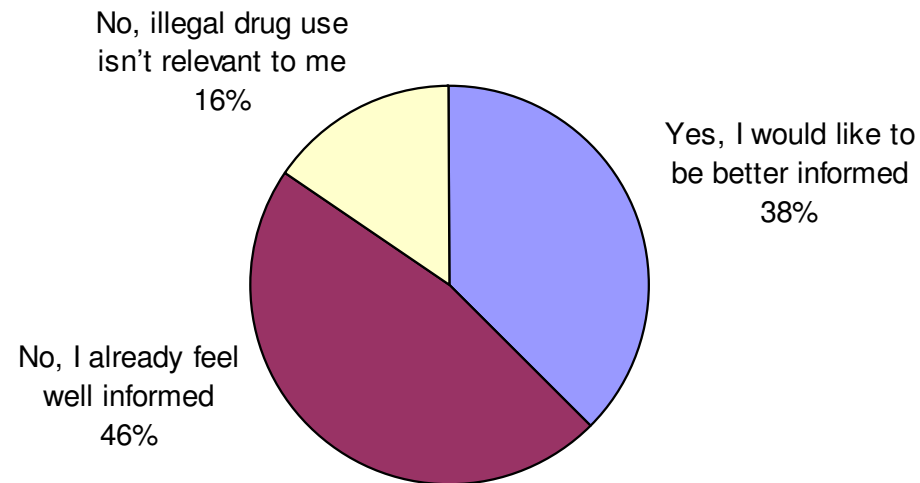
- People who have a family member or friend that they know uses illegal drugs are less likely to be fearful of addiction and harm
- They are also less likely to believe that drug users are a societal drain and in need of help

BUT ...

- A large proportion of people do not *know* of any use by family (73%) and close friends (70%)
- A significant minority (39%) do not believe that drug use is an issue that will touch the life of their family

Many people do not want to learn more

Would you like to know more about illegal drugs, drug issues and their effects?



Further analysis shows that these groups vary by:

- Parental status
- Alcohol consumption
- Previous use of marijuana and other drugs
- Their own assessment of their drug knowledge

Conclusions

- We need to improve the quality of drug information particularly with respect to the effectiveness of harm reduction
- The community want more money spent on harm reduction and prevention
- To improve our communication with the broader community, we need to:
 - Not assume the “general public” is homogeneous
 - Understand what is driving target ‘segments’
 - Tailor our messaging appropriately