

Trends in primary drug mentioned by patients entering treatment for drug use in Belgium

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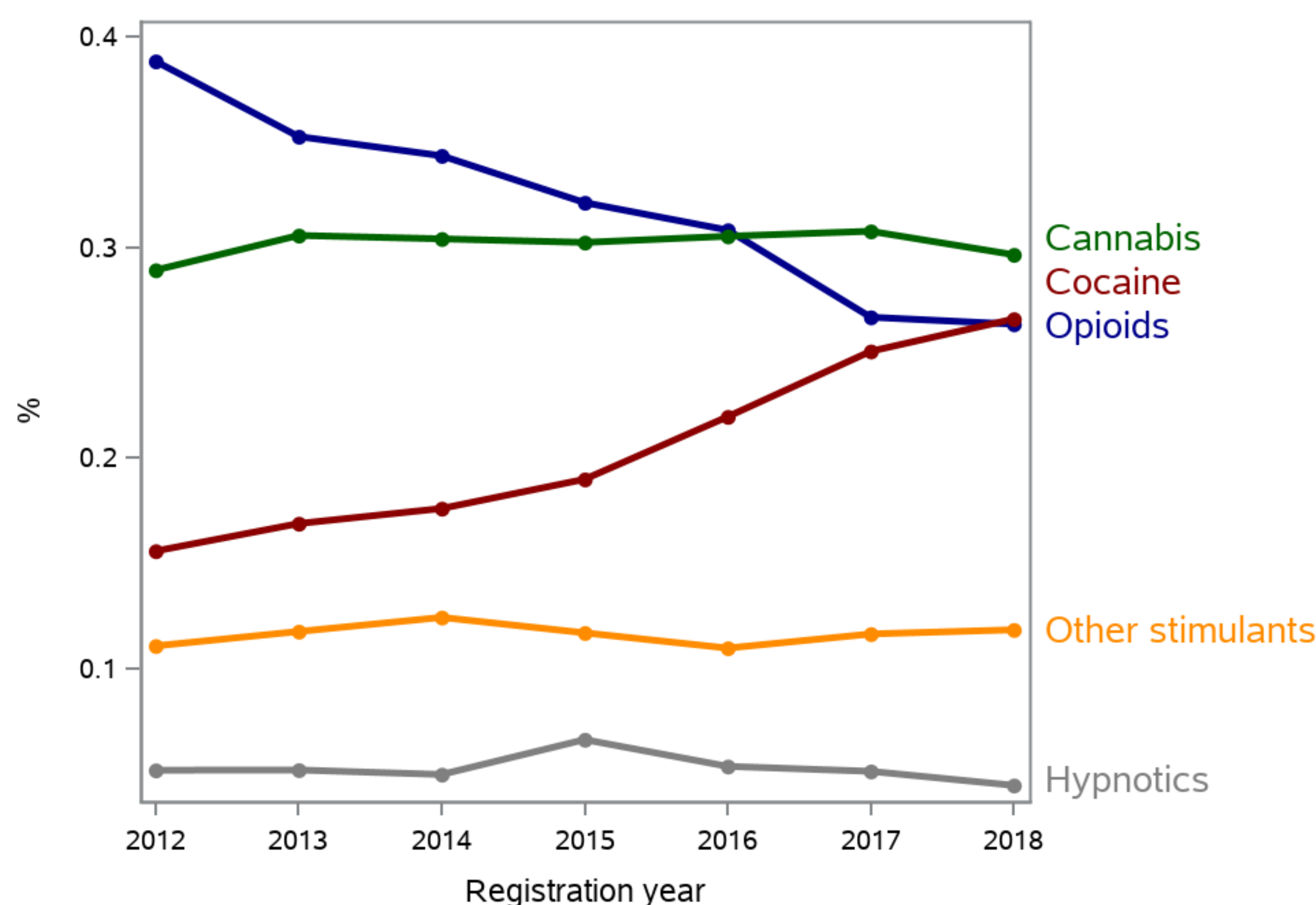
Context & objective

- Monitoring the trends in primary drugs among patients entering drug treatment is of key importance in order to correctly treat and support their needs through adapted services
- Trends in primary drug may be the results of e.g. changes in drug use patterns, drug market or drug policy
- The objective is to analyse these trends in Belgium between 2012 and 2018 in general and in different subgroups of patients

Key findings :

- Significant increase in cocaine treatment entrants by 10% a year
- Significant decrease in opiates treatment entrants by 6% a year
- Ageing of the drug treated population confirmed

Figure 1: Trend in the proportion of primary drug categories among all treatment entrants



Methods

- Use of the TDI data on treatment episodes for substance use problems since 2012 in Belgium (1,2)
- Trend analysis based on a selection of a subset of stable reporting centres to avoid coverage bias
- Trends in the proportion by substance category analysed by Joinpoint regression (3)

Results

General trends

- Significant increase among the older age groups (30-44 and 45+) and significant decrease in the youngest age group (15-29)
- Non-significant trend in most of the other subgroups of patients

Opiates

- Significant decrease (6%/year) in the proportion of treatment entrants for opiates and the decrease remains significant in all subgroups of patients
- Decrease twice as large among first-time treatment entrants compared with people already treated before
- Decrease two to six times larger among the youngest age group (15-29) compared with older age groups (30-45; 45+)

Cocaine

- Significant increase (10%/year) in the proportion of treatment entrants for cocaine and the decrease remains significant in all subgroups of patients
- Stronger recent increase among first-time treatment entrants (13%/year) compared with clients already treated before (10%/year)
- Larger increase in Brussels and Wallonia (14%/year) than in Flanders (8%/year)

Other substances

- Stable trends among cannabis treatment entrants, except significant increase among women (3%/year) and age group 30-44 (2%/year)
- Stable trends among other stimulants treatment entrants, except significant increase in the oldest age group (7%/year)
- Stable trends among hypnotics treatment entrants, except significant decrease in the oldest age group (-7%/year)

Table 1 : Trends in the proportion of treatment entrants by substance category among all treatment entrants, Belgium 2012-2018

Subgroups	All substances		Primary substance									
	LE/UE	APC	Opiates		Cocaine		Other stimulants		Hypnotics / sedatives		Cannabis	
			LE/UE	APC	LE/UE	APC	LE/UE	APC	LE/UE	APC	LE/UE	APC
All	'12-'18	0.4	'12-'18	-6.3*	'12-'18	10.0*	'12-'18	0.1	'12-'18	-1.2	'12-'18	0.3
By treatment history												
First treatment	'12-'14	18.1	'12-'18	-12.7*	'12-'15	5.7*	'12-'18	-3.4	'12-'18	-3.4	'12-'18	0.2
	'14-'18	-2.2			'15-'18	13.1*						
Already treated	'12-'18	1.7	'12-'18	-5.2*	'12-'18	9.6*	'12-'18	2.3	'12-'18	-1.6	'12-'18	0.4
By gender												
Women	'12-'18	-0.2	'12-'18	-6.5*	'12-'18	9.6*	'12-'18	0.7	'12-'18	-4.1	'12-'18	3.1*
Men	'12-'18	0.6	'12-'18	-6.2*	'12-'18	10.1*	'12-'18	0.0	'12-'18	1.8	'12-'18	-0.2
By age category												
15-29	'12-'18	-2.3*	'12-'18	-12.9*	'12-'18	10.7*	'12-'18	-3.0	'12-'18	-0.7	'12-'18	1.5
30-44	'12-'18	1.7*	'12-'18	-6.0*	'12-'18	9.3*	'12-'18	2.3	'12-'18	-0.8	'12-'18	1.6*
45+	'12-'14	15.8*	'12-'18	-2.0*	'12-'18	10.9*	'12-'18	7.0*	'12-'18	-7.4*	'12-'18	1.1
	'14-'18	3.0*										
By region												
Flanders	'12-'18	-0.9	'12-'18	-9.2*	'12-'18	8.4*	'12-'18	1.1	'12-'18	0.7	'12-'18	0.9
Wallonia	'12-'15	10.2*	'12-'15	-2.0	'12-'18	14.2*	'12-'18	4.2	'12-'18	-8.6	'12-'18	0.5
	'15-'18	-1.6	'15-'18	-7.1*								
Brussels	'12-'14	17.5	'12-'18	-5.0*	'12-'18	14.1*	'12-'18	12.2	'12-'18	3.4	'12-'18	-2.0
	'14-'18	-2.2										

LE/UE : Lower endpoint/Upper endpoint ; APC : Annual percent change ; * significance level at 0.05

REFERENCES

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