

Changes of drug use in the general population due to COVID-19

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Possible impacts of COVID-19 on drug use

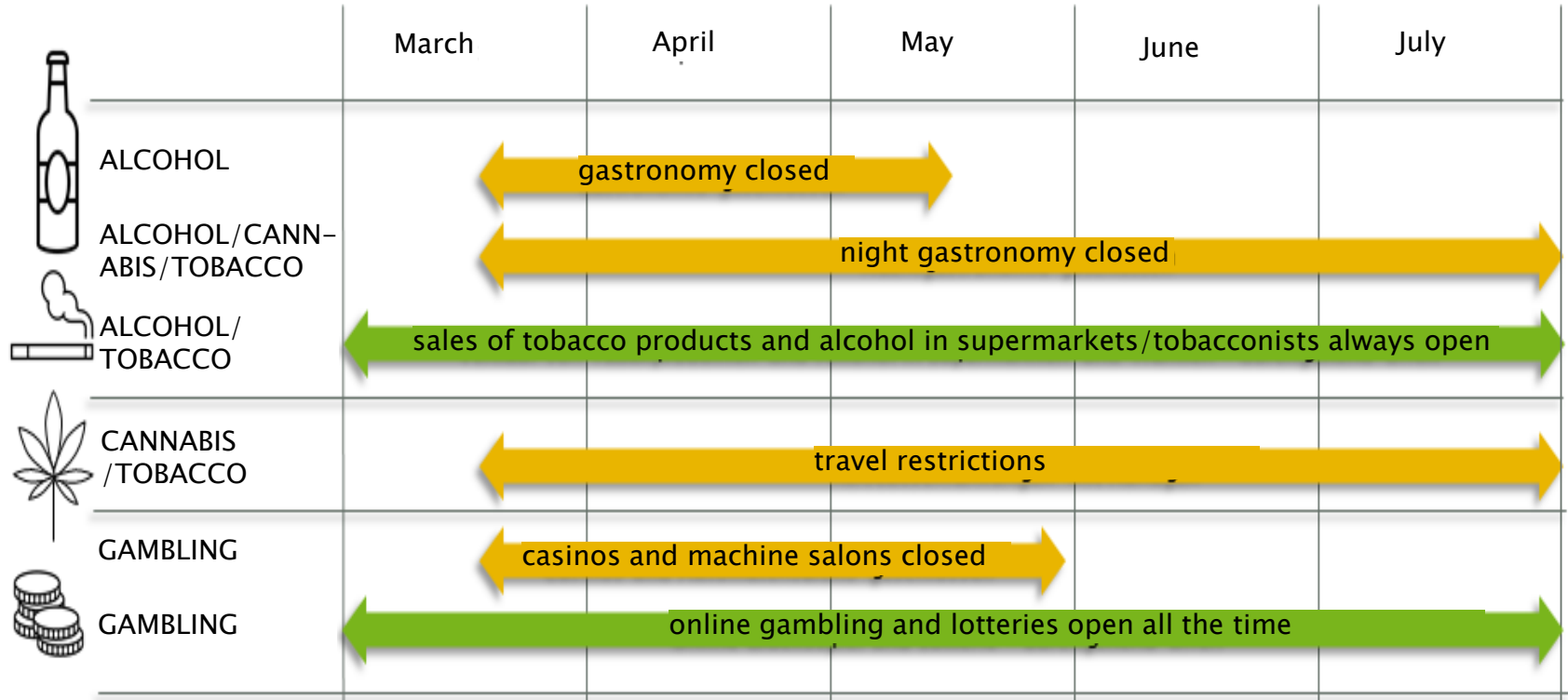
Some experts claim that there has been an **increase in substance use** due to more stress and more leisure time

while

others claim that there has been **a decrease** due to fewer social contacts and fewer consumption situations outside the home (e.g. drinking in bars and restaurants, parties, etc.).

These claims are largely based on assumptions and hardly on reliable empirical data.

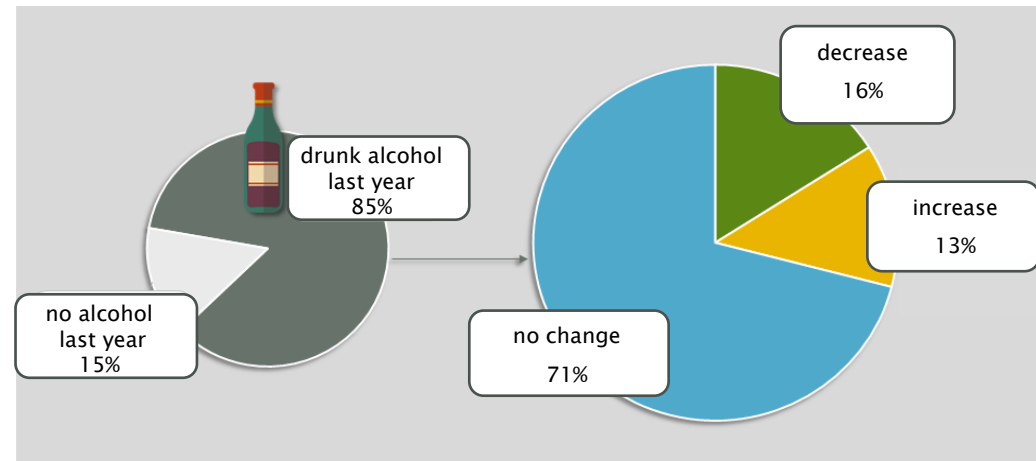
Measures to get control over spreading of COVID-19 (lock down measures) in Austria



Representative online survey on consumption of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, psychoactive medicines, gambling and gaming (N=6000)

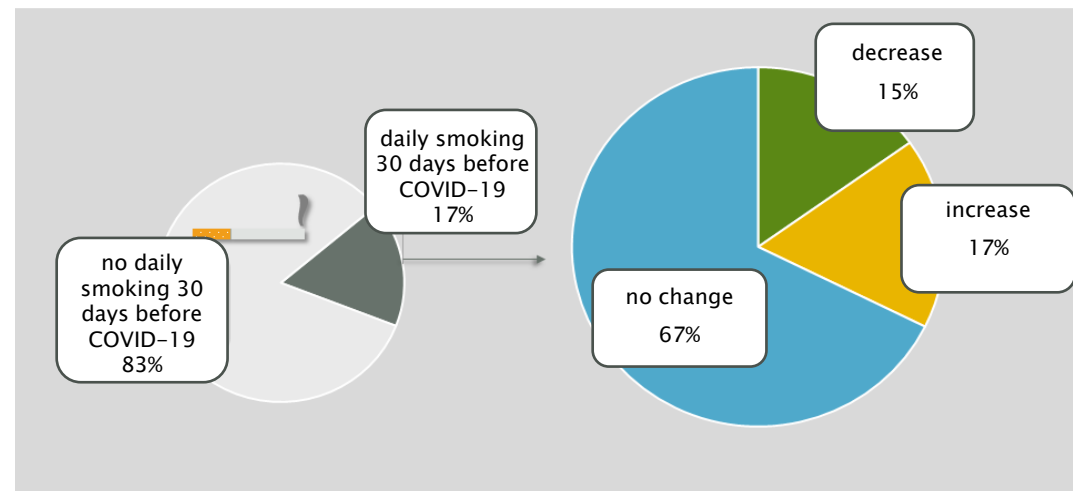
Alcohol – some results

- » 44 % of young population (age 15 to 34) changed alcohol consumer behaviour versus 14 % in the age group 65+.
- » Main motives for increase were more free time (43 %) but also more stress (26 %).
- » People who feel more burdened by the corona crisis were more likely to increase their alcohol consumption.



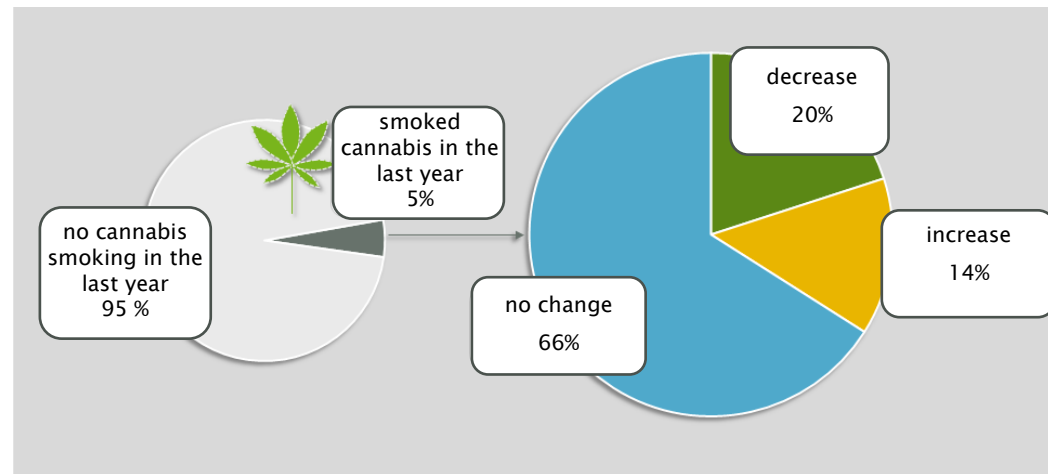
Cigarettes – some results

- » 40 % of young population (age 15 to 34) changed tobacco smoking behaviour versus just 20 % in the age group 65+.
- » 21 % of females and 14 % of males increased smoking.
- » Main motives for decrease were less opportunities (one third). One quarter mentioned health related considerations.
- » Main motives for increase were more stress and more free time.



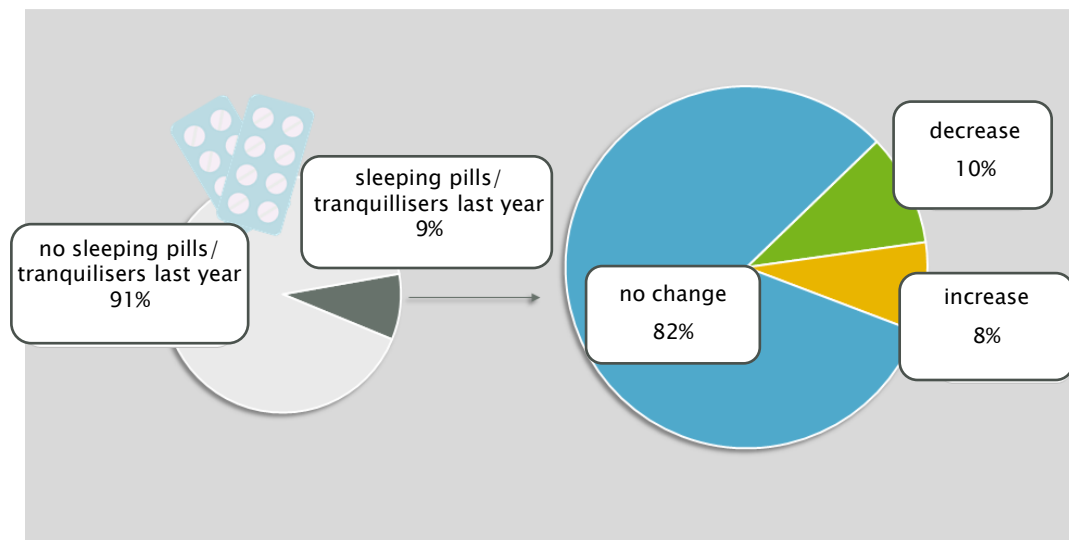
Cannabis – some results

- » Main reason for decrease was no opportunities.
- » Main reason for increase were more free time (two third) but also more stress (one third).



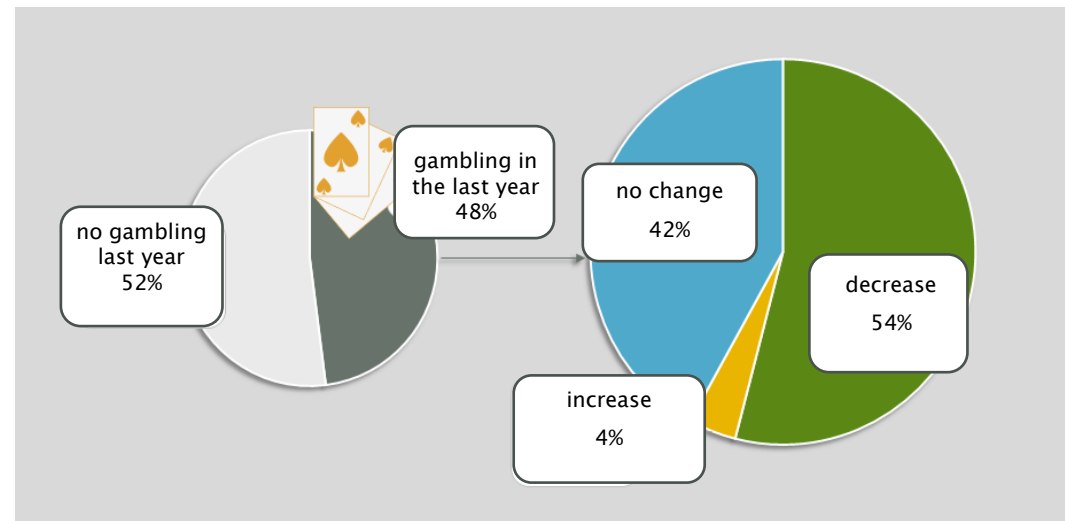
Sleeping pills/tranquillizers – some results

- » 5 % of males and 10 % of females reported an increase.

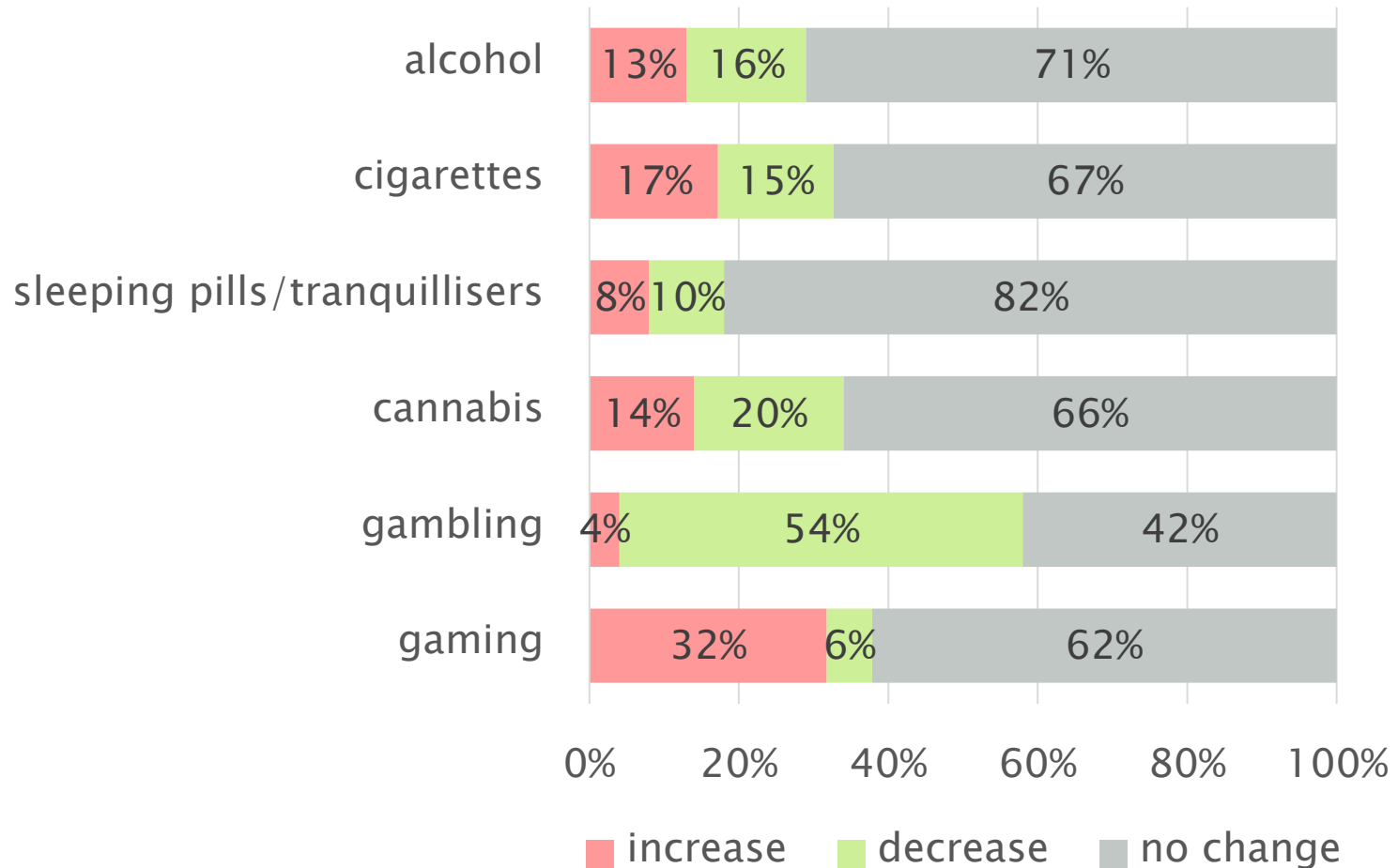


Gambling – some results

- » Main reason for decrease was lack of opportunities (due to lockdown)



Change of consumption habits in times of lockdown measures



Conclusions

- » For all substances the group with „no changes“ was by far the biggest.
- » Concerning gambling the group with decrease was the biggest.
- » Changes in habits varies a lot between different substances and behaviours.
- » In general there were more changes in consumption habits of young population than among the elderly.
- » Main reasons for increase were more free time and more stress (due to Corona).
- » Main reasons for decrease was lack of opportunities (no parties, no restaurants).
- » **Restrictions: Snapshot April to June 2020 – At present, there is no way of knowing anything about longer-term trends!**
- » **Data concern the general population and NOT people with problem patterns of use.**

The Addiction Competence Center
of the Austrian Public Health Institute
thanks you for your attention!