

# **What, How** and **Why** – Questions policy makers ask epidemiologists and how we try to answer them in Austria

Addiction Competence Center  
REITOX–Focal Point Austria  
Martin Busch

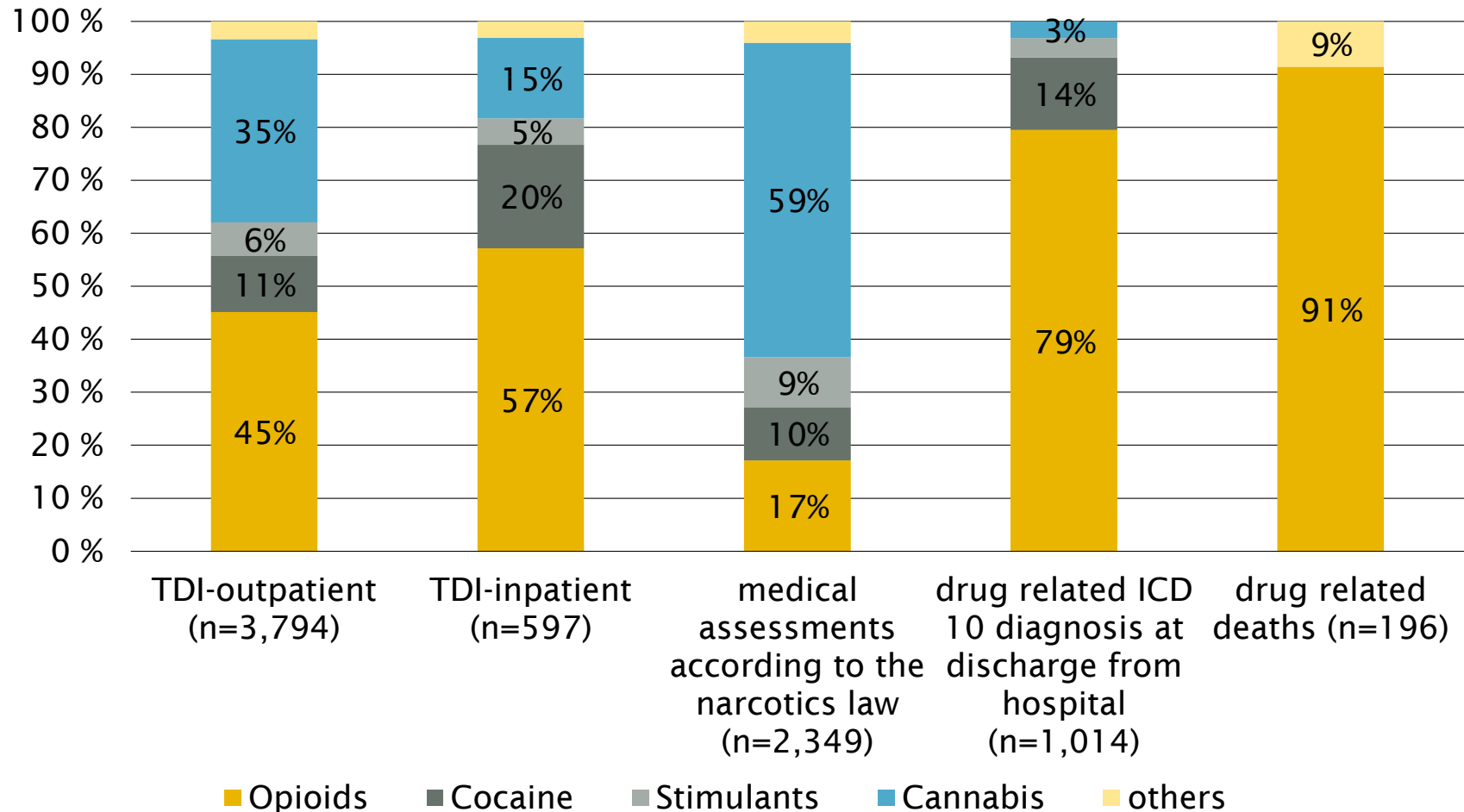
EMCDDA–Meeting on Problem Drug Use  
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# What, How and Why?



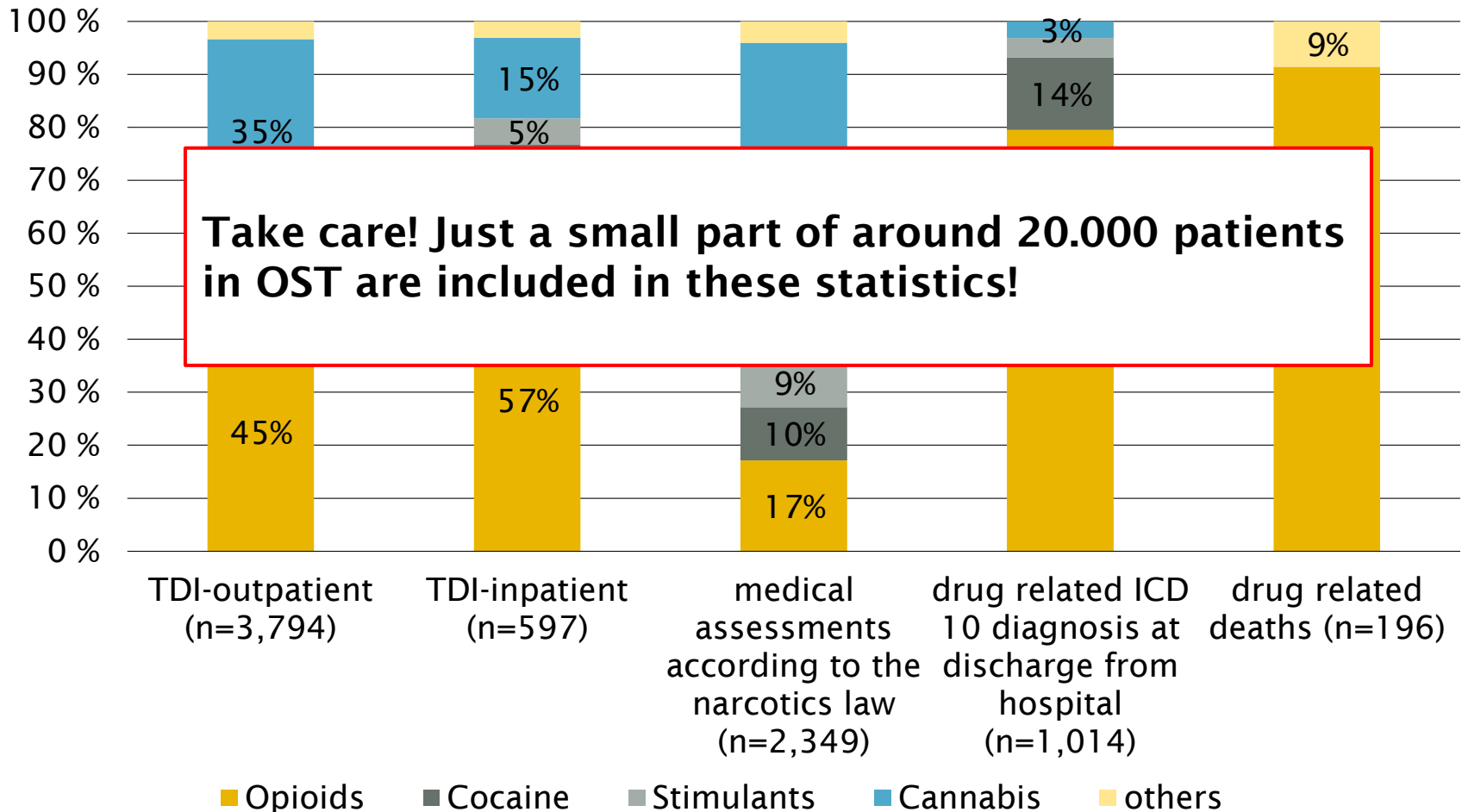
# What is the drug problem in Austria 2019?

## Problem drugs in different sources of data



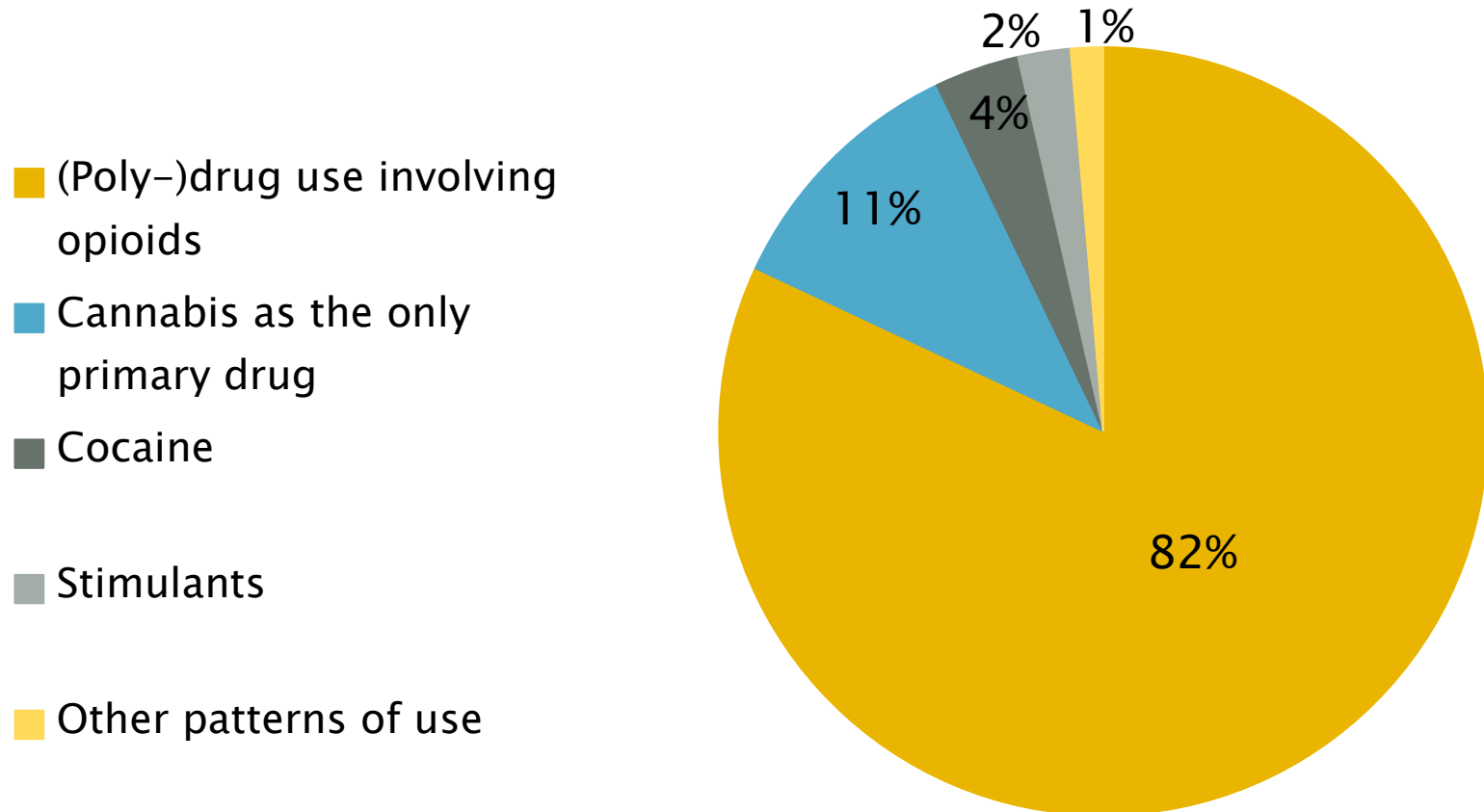
# What is the drug problem in Austria 2019?

## Problem drugs in different sources of data



# What is the drug problem in Austria 2019?

Problem drug use: TDI and OST combined (n=25.730)



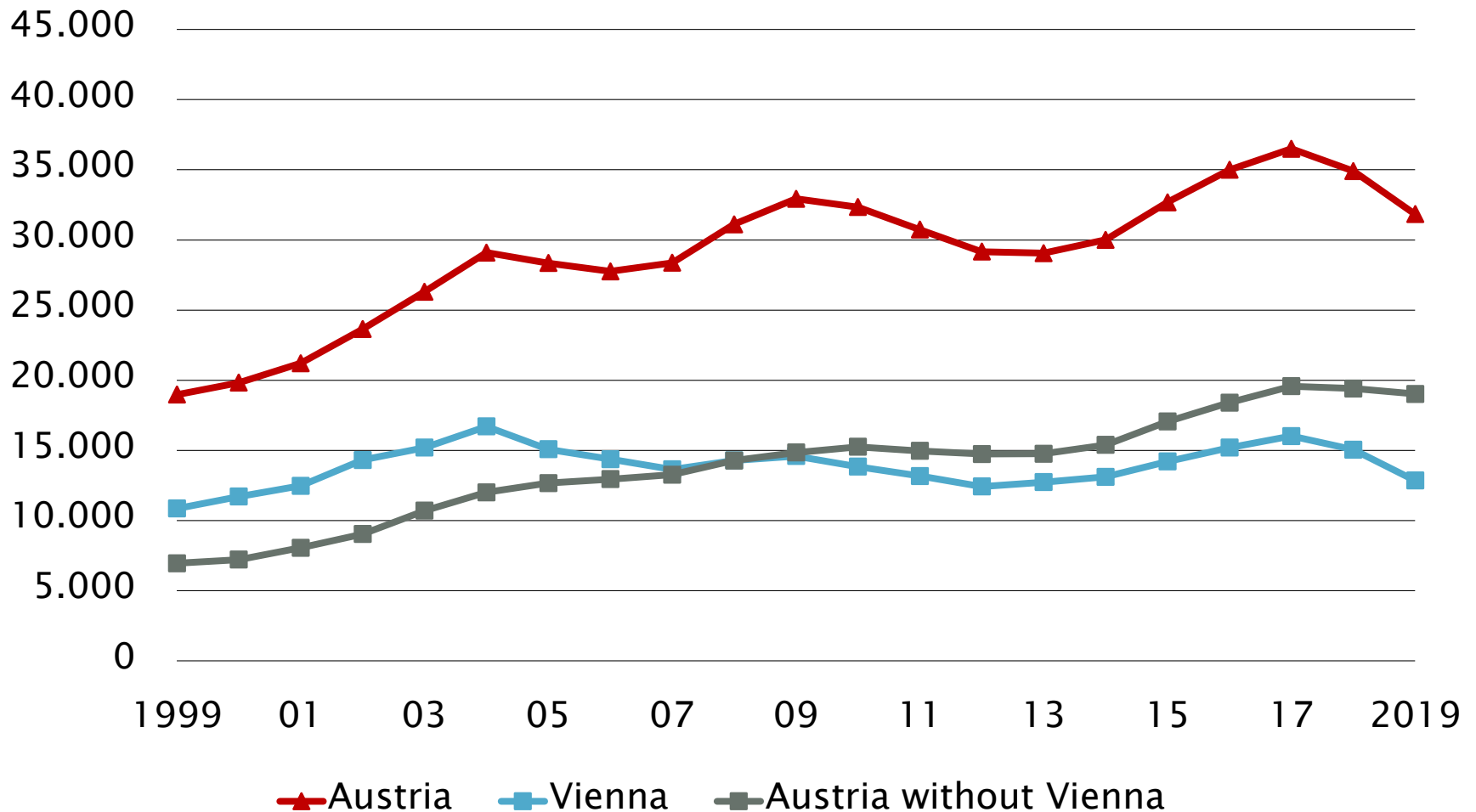
## What is the drug problem in Austria?

### Conclusions.....

- » High-risk drug use in Austria focuses mainly on opiate/opioids (82 % of treatments).
- » The second large (but much smaller) group in treatment are clients with „cannabis only“ as their primary drug (11 % of treatments)

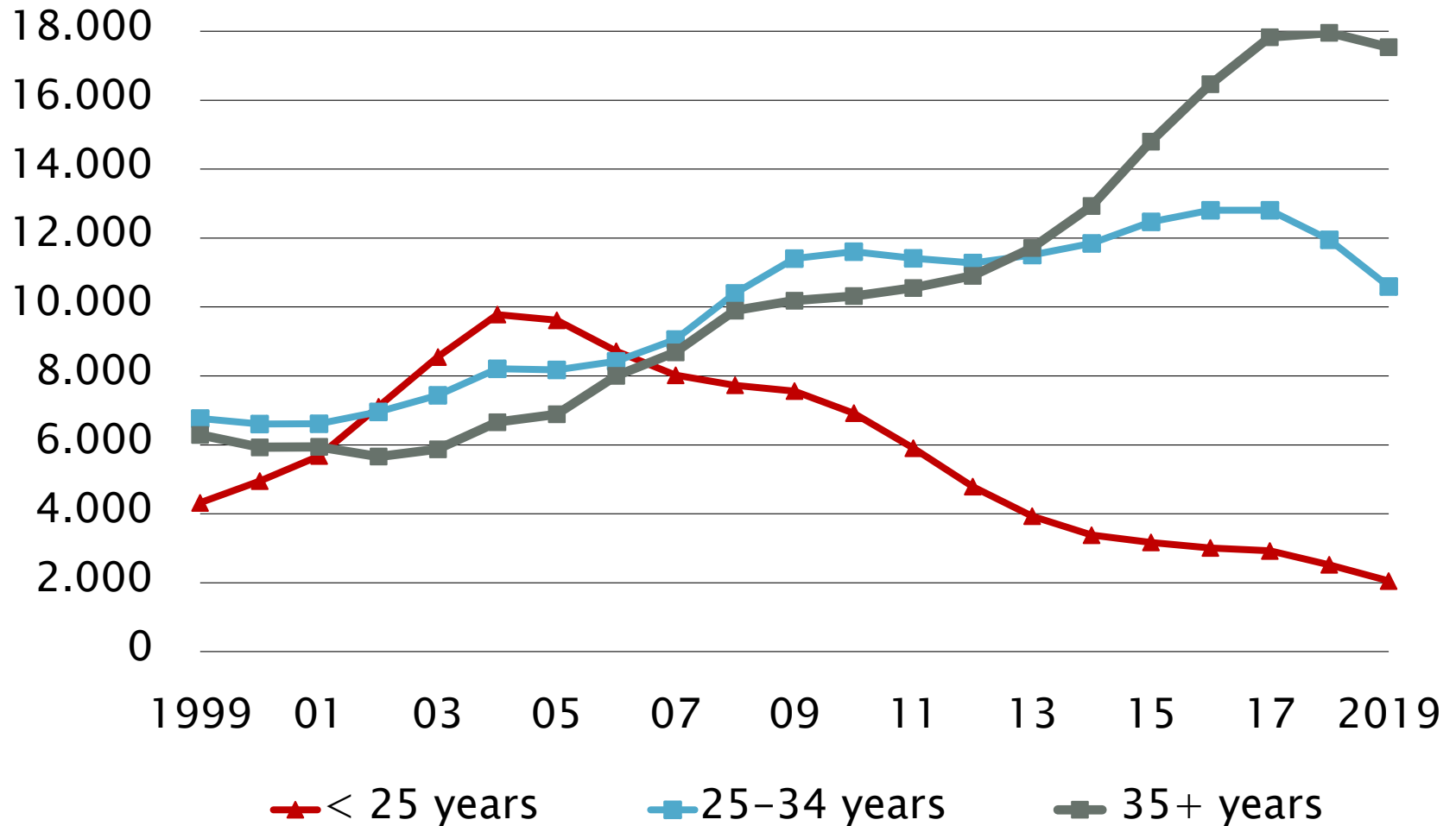
# How does the drug problem develop in Austria?

Prevalence estimates of problem opioid use by region



# How does the drug problem develop in Austria?

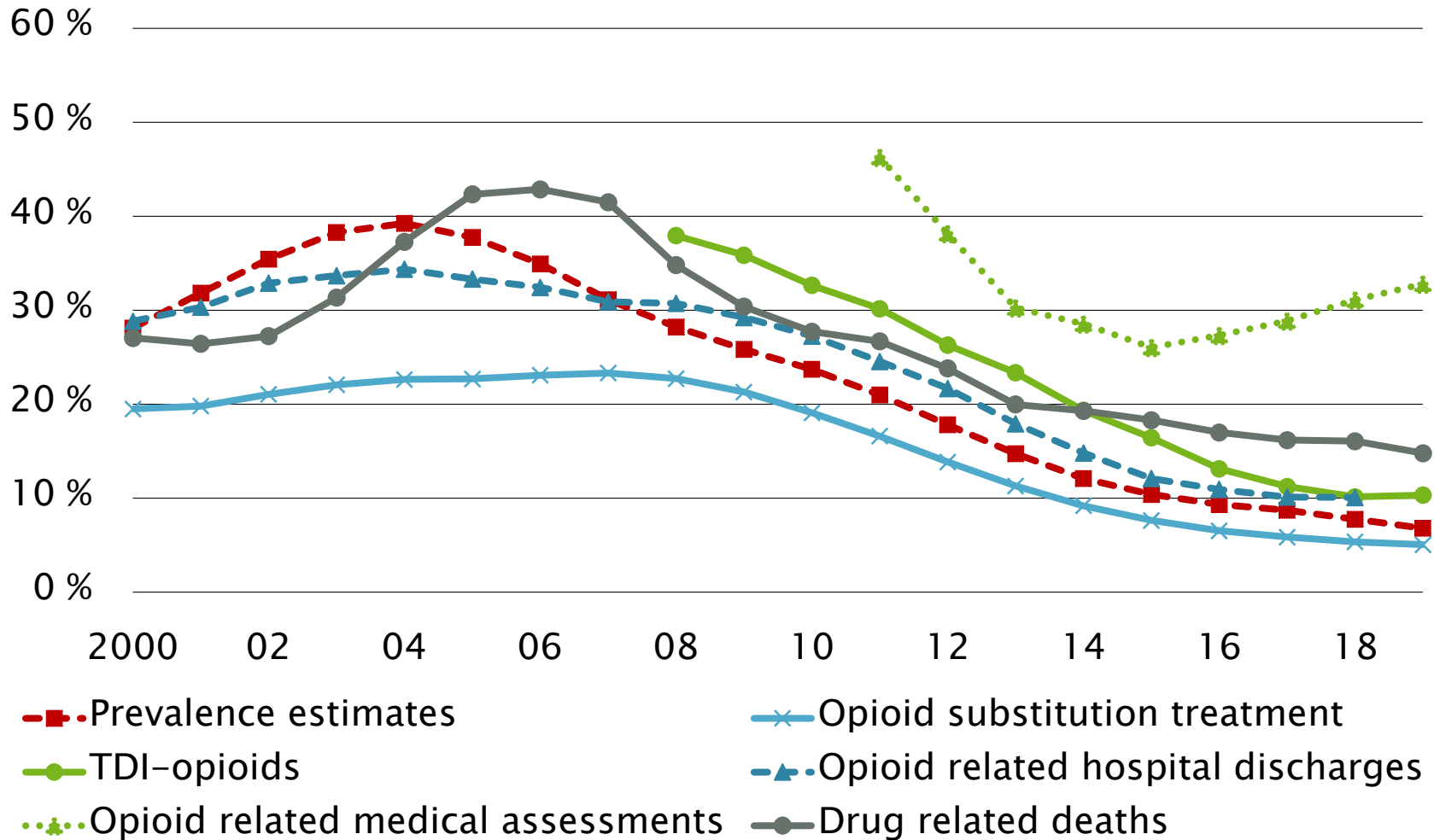
Prevalence estimates of problem opioid use by agegroups





# How does the drug problem develop in Austria?

Cross-indicator analysis – % of agegroup < 25 in different sources of data



## How does the drug problem develop?

### Conclusions.....

- » Current estimates assume that 31,000 to 37,000 people in Austria have risky opioid use.
- » In a time comparison, almost all data suggest an easing of the situation, as the proportion of people under 25 years of age is declining. This can be interpreted to mean that fewer people start risky opioid use.
- » In addition, it can be seen that those affected are getting older, partly due to the chronic nature of the disease and partly due to good therapeutic care in Austria.

## Why does the drug problem develop this way?

### Conclusions.....

- » We do not know – we do not know even how this could be investigated – there are just more or less plausible assumptions.
- » Since more than 50 percent of opioid addicts are in treatment the image of opioid use as a disease is not attractive to young people.
- » Good regulations concerning prescription of opioids.
- » Opioid use is somehow a question of fashion which does not fit to actual society in Austria.
- » Or...

**We do not really know!**

Thank you for your attention