

This is the English translation of brochure describing outcomes of the study involving people living with HIV in Japan.

# When a close friend wants to talk about drugs

This pamphlet provides guidance about what to do when a special person in your life asks about drugs. It introduces background information for drug use situations and explores drug use for mental health, physical health, and stressful conditions in life.

## Catalyst for starting to use drugs

The main catalysts (Survey C results) are listed below.  
Anyone could experience these situations.

Out of curiosity...



"I started using drugs because I wanted to get along with everyone, and before long, I used up my disposable income and living expenses. And before I knew it, my friends had disappeared."

Invited by someone...



"The intention was to enjoy sex, but before I knew it, drugs became the main course."

To lift one's mood...



"Before I started using drugs, I worked hard, but in the end I lost my job due to drugs."

# Usage status of drugs

A survey (Survey A) of HIV-positive persons revealed that 55.0% of the respondents had experienced using some form of drug (used in the past year, plus have used in the past).

For those who used drugs in the past year and prior years, 51.2% used Rush, 32.3% used erectile dysfunction drugs, 25.6% used 5MeO-DIPT, 17.3% used quasi-legal drugs, and 11.1% used stimulants.

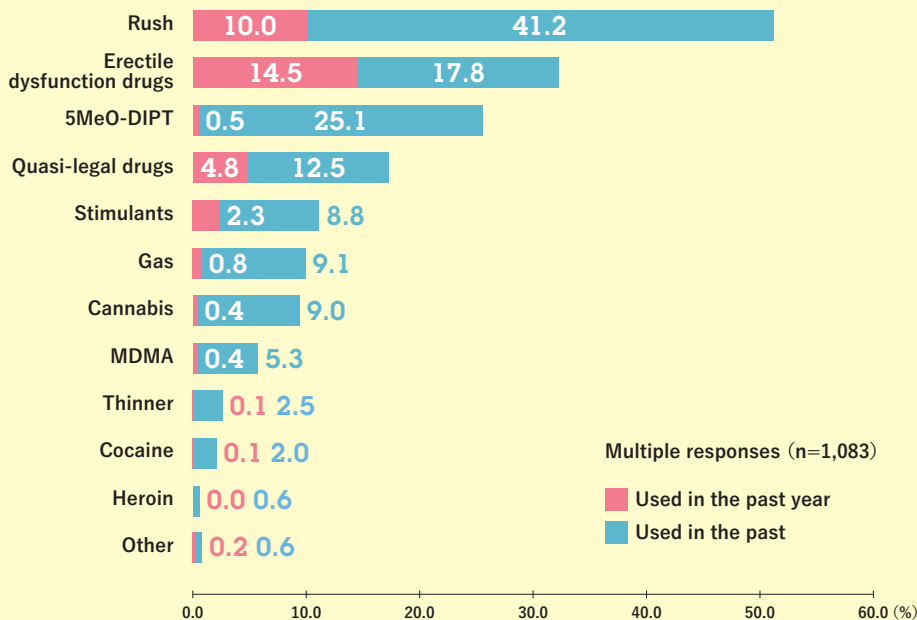
For those who used drugs in the past year only, 14.5% used erectile dysfunction drugs, 10% used Rush, and 4.8% used stimulants and 4.8% used quasi-legal drugs.

According to the survey, the number of respondents who started drug before an HIV diagnosis is greater than those who started after an HIV diagnosis.

Also, the survey shows clear evidence that drugs are often use in conjunction with sex. So, we can say that drug use is a health issue, as well as it is an issue that people often encounter in the process of developing relationship, such as dating and romantic relationship.

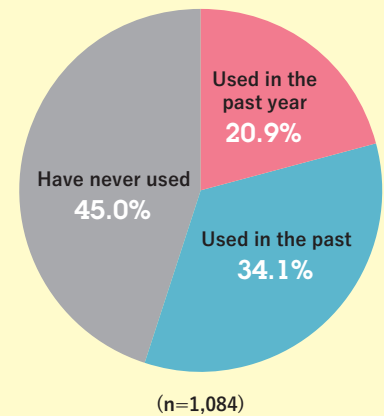
\*Among the drugs mentioned here, 5MeO-DIPT, Rush, and some quasi-legal drugs (dangerous drugs) were unregulated until 2005, 2006 and 2014 respectively.

## What proportion of persons are using drugs?

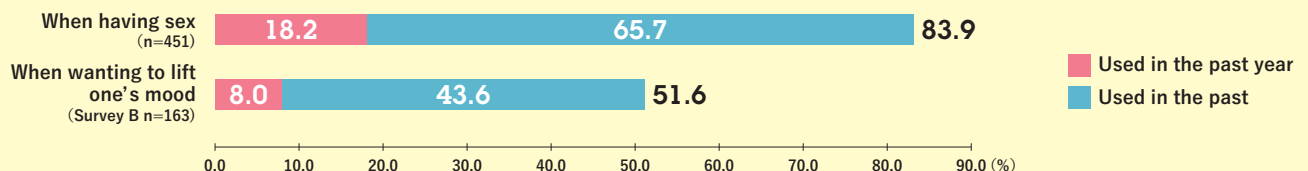


\*The responses for erectile dysfunction drugs are thought to include drugs obtained online or from other persons, in addition to drugs prescribed by doctors.

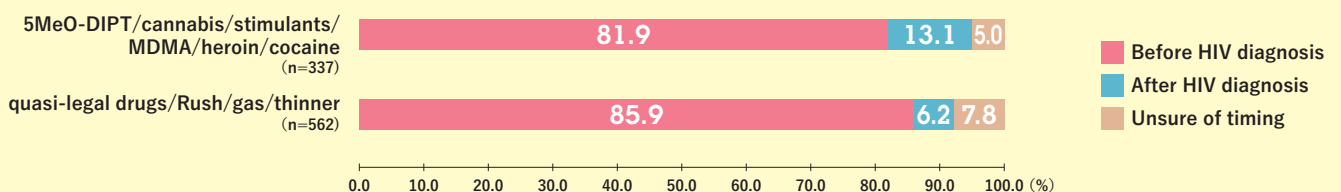
## HIV-positive persons and drug usage



## At what kind of times are drugs used?



## Timing of using drugs for the first time

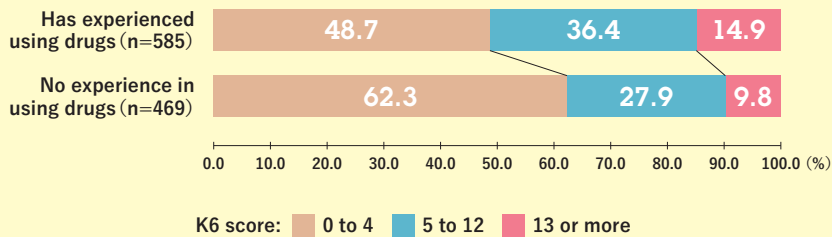


HIV-positive persons as a whole

HIV-positive persons who have experienced using drugs

# Impact of drug usage

## Drug usage and mental health



According to the K6 scale which measures the level of mental health, those who had used drugs tended to have poorer levels of mental health compared to those who have not used drugs.

\*On this scale, the higher the score, the poorer the mental health. A score of 5 or more indicates that the person has some kind of mental burden, while a score of 13 or more indicates a high possibility of a serious problem. Cut-off value: 5/13

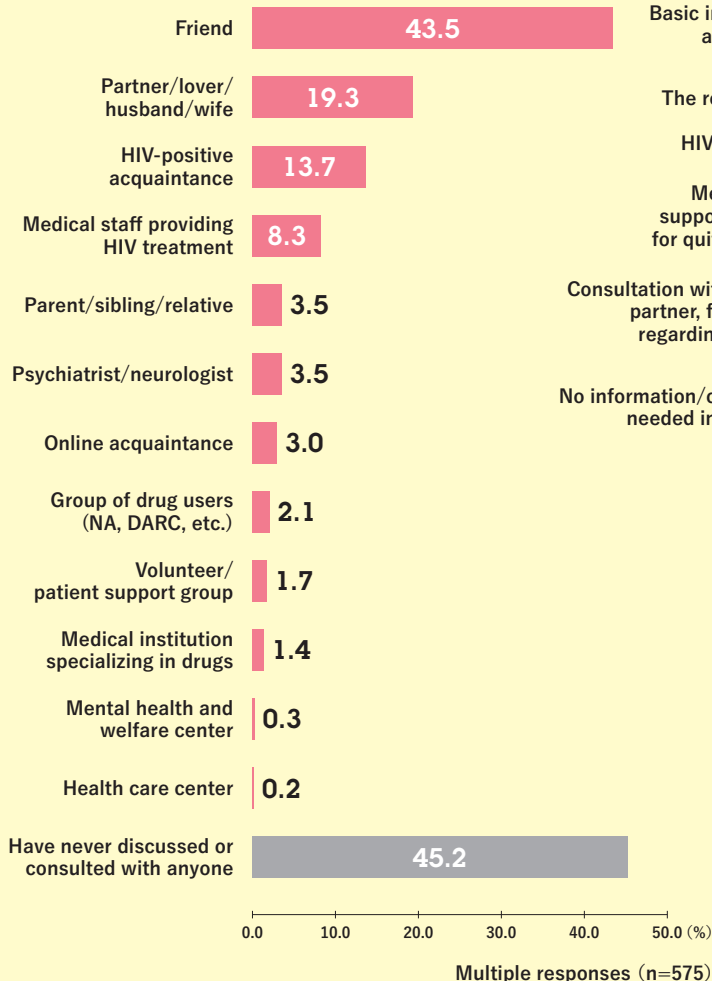
## Drug usage and HIV infection

When using drugs during sex, condom use tends to become more difficult. This makes the users more susceptible to infection by HIV, as well as HCV (Hepatitis C virus) and other sexually-transmitted infections. It was also reported that the use of drugs is linked to interruption of outpatient treatment for HIV. Furthermore, care is required as a number of drugs may cause severe side-effects when they interact with the medicine used to treat HIV.

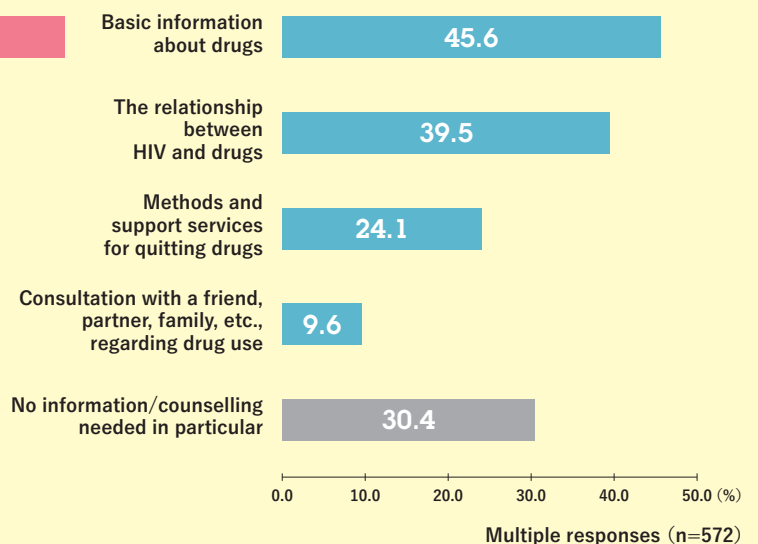
# Consultation status and information sought

HIV-positive persons who are using drugs actually consult more with close friends, partners and HIV-positive acquaintances more than counsellors. Also, they responded that they need the following kinds of information.

## Who do users consult with?



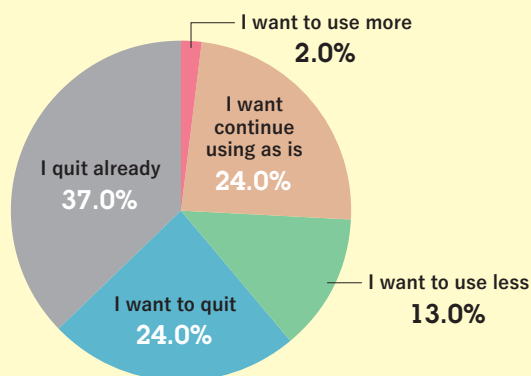
## Information needed about drugs



HIV-positive persons who have experienced using drugs

# Will use/not use in the future?

Intention of persons who used drugs in the past year (20.9%) to continue use in the future



Survey B (n=54)

## As someone close to a user, what can you do to help?

One thing you can do is help direct him/her to several places where he/she can talk about it. These places include specialist clinic and self-help groups, such as NA where groups of users can provide mutual support for their recovery. In addition, users can consult with Mental Health and Welfare Center or Health Care Center in each municipality. The friends of many users can see there is an issue, yet the user thinks he/she is OK. It is still important

to give information about the places where help is available. The information can be used when the users finally acknowledged the need for help. If you are confused or anxious about what to do, telephone counselling can be useful for sorting out your feelings. There are various counselling organizations available. A good way is to try a few of the services to find out what suits you.

### Organisations, groups and counselling services that are available in your area

- ⇒ "Drug OK talk" <http://www.ok-talk.com/>  
Hotline for discussing anything about drugs (☎090-4599-6444/ Wed, Fri 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.)
- ⇒ "Freedom" <http://www.freedom-osaka.jp/>  
Telephone counselling for drug addiction (☎06-6320-1196/ Sat 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.)
- ⇒ "Narcotics Anonymous Japan (NA Japan)" <http://najapan.org/>  
Self-help group where users can provide mutual support for their recovery
- ⇒ "Nar-Anon" <http://www4.ocn.ne.jp/~nar633/>  
Self-help group for family or friends of persons who have drug issues
- ⇒ "Japan DARC headquarters" <http://www.darc-dmc.info/>  
Inpatient admission/outpatient-type drug rehabilitation facility
- ⇒ "For persons who are concerned about drug issues in the family" [http://www.ncnp.go.jp/nimh/yakubutsu/drug-top/data/family/H25.family\\_all\\_date.pdf](http://www.ncnp.go.jp/nimh/yakubutsu/drug-top/data/family/H25.family_all_date.pdf)
- ⇒ "HIV map" <http://www.hiv-map.net/>
- ⇒ "Futures Japan" <http://futures-japan.jp/>
- ⇒ "PLACE TOKYO" <http://www.ptokyo.org/>  
Counselling services for HIV-positive persons

These services are available in Japanese.

See the website below for more detailed information.

**"Website for supporting people living with HIV in regional communities"** ⇒ <http://www.chiiki-shien.jp/>

Contact: #403 Sanko Heights, 4-11-5, Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan 169-0075 Research division of the non-profit organisation PLACE TOKYO

Survey summary:

Aids research programme supported by a grant-in-aid for scientific research from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Research on supporting the mental health of PLHIV in regional communities (Representative: Masayoshi Tarui)

"Factual survey on the health and lives of HIV-positive persons"

Survey A...An anonymous survey was distributed to 1,786 HIV-positive persons who are outpatients of ACC and the AIDS care core hospitals of 8 regional blocks (a total of 9 hospitals), with 1,100 surveys returned (response rate of 61.6%). Conducted from July to December 2013.

Survey B...An anonymous survey was distributed to 687 HIV-positive persons who are outpatients of 22 AIDS care base hospitals, with 369 surveys returned (response rate of 53.7%). Conducted from August 2013 to April 2014.

"Interview survey targeting users of drugs"

Survey C...Paper survey and semi-structured interview conducted individually for 19 HIV-positive persons who have experienced using drugs and are gay/bisexual/other MSM, from September to November 2013.

\*The data in the graphs was created based entirely on the results of Survey A, unless otherwise stated.

Thank you to all who participated in or cooperated with the surveys.

Editing: The research group that supports the mental health of PLHIV in regional communities Design: Takeshi Shindo Illustrations: Shiro Shirai Date of issue: March 2015