



## Students' perceptions of substance use amongst their peers

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- Academic year 2008/09
- Online survey (available for 4 weeks)
- 3 Universities in Leeds ( $\approx$ population 67,000)
- Recruitment strategy targeted consumers and non-consumers of alcohol and other drugs





## Recruitment strategy



- Initial invitation distributed via student union email mailings, on visual screen, posters.
- During 4 week recruitment 2 reminder emails sent.
- Prize draw incentive (including: 1<sup>st</sup> Nintendo wii, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> iPod Nano)



## Survey content (included)

- Demographics
- Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)
- Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE-10)
- Knowledge about common facts on use
- Student rating of current level of risk from use
- Student perception of use by friends and other university students

## Analysis

- Descriptives
  - Latent Class Analysis
    - Investigates nature of clusterings of patterns
    - Emerging classes contain types of students (rather than individuals)
- Multivariate logistic regression on cluster probabilities
  - To determine which covariates are associated with cluster membership





## Sample

- 4309 participants
- 63% 21 years or younger  
(mean age 22 years, SD 5.5)
- 67% female
- 81% White British
- 93% Full-time students
- 87% Undergraduate
- 91% UK students



### Reported use of substances (last 3 months)

- 82% alcohol
- 31% tobacco
- 17% cannabis
- 7% amphetamines
- 7% cocaine
- 4% hallucinogens
- 2% sedatives
- 1% inhalants
- 0.3% opioids



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## Conclusion

- Students overestimate the proportion of other students who are using
- Perceived prevalence do follow trends of actual use within clusters
- Students who are high users provide higher estimates of current use of other students at university



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Thanks for listening



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