



Croatian perspective on new trends in psychoactive substances consumption – implication for prevention and harm reduction interventions

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INTRODUCTION

Survey was conducted in cooperation with the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences of the University of Zagreb and the Office for Combating Drugs Abuse of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. Goal of this survey was to get an insight into consumption of the new psychoactive substances, whether or not they are on the List of drugs, psychotropic substances, plants used to produce drugs and substances that can be used in the production of drugs. It is known that there are new psychoactive substances in the drug market that were not so widespread in the past and have not been present long enough to provide information on their types, the extent of the consumption by the youth, expected effects and the modes of purchasing/buying them. The survey was conducted with the aim of providing basic information gathered from the youth/adults that experiment with the psychoactive substances.

RESEARCH METHODS

RESEARCH AIM

The aim of this research is to get the insight in new/less known psychoactive substances available on Croatian drug market, whether or not they are on the List of drugs, psychotropic substances, plants used to produce drugs and substances that can be used in the production of drugs.

ON-LINE SURVEY

The survey was conducted in the year **2011. and 2013.** with a sample of active participants at the web page “forum.hr” with the on-line questionnaire joined by the participants on independent and voluntary basis. It contains 8 questions – 3 demographic (gender, age, education) and 5 about experiences and information about new psychoactive substances on the market.

SAMPLE

year 2011.

15. October – 27. November

1330 participants

year 2013.

24. January – 11. March

1037 participants

ANALYSES

The collected data were descriptively analyzed and interpreted in order to be used as guidelines for future similar surveys and monitoring the trends of new psychoactive substances available on Croatian market.

2011.

Total sample: 1330

Gender

F 46.9%

M 53.1%

Age

5.5% up to 18 years

39.8% 18 – 25 years

24.8% 25 – 30 years

24.2% 30-40 years

5 % 40-50 years

Education

49.5% higher education

42.4% high school

2013.

Total sample: 1035

Gender

F 45.2%

M 54.8%

Age

5.8% up to 18 years

41.8% 18 – 25 years

24.5% 25 – 30 years

22.4% 30-40 years

4.6% 40-50 years

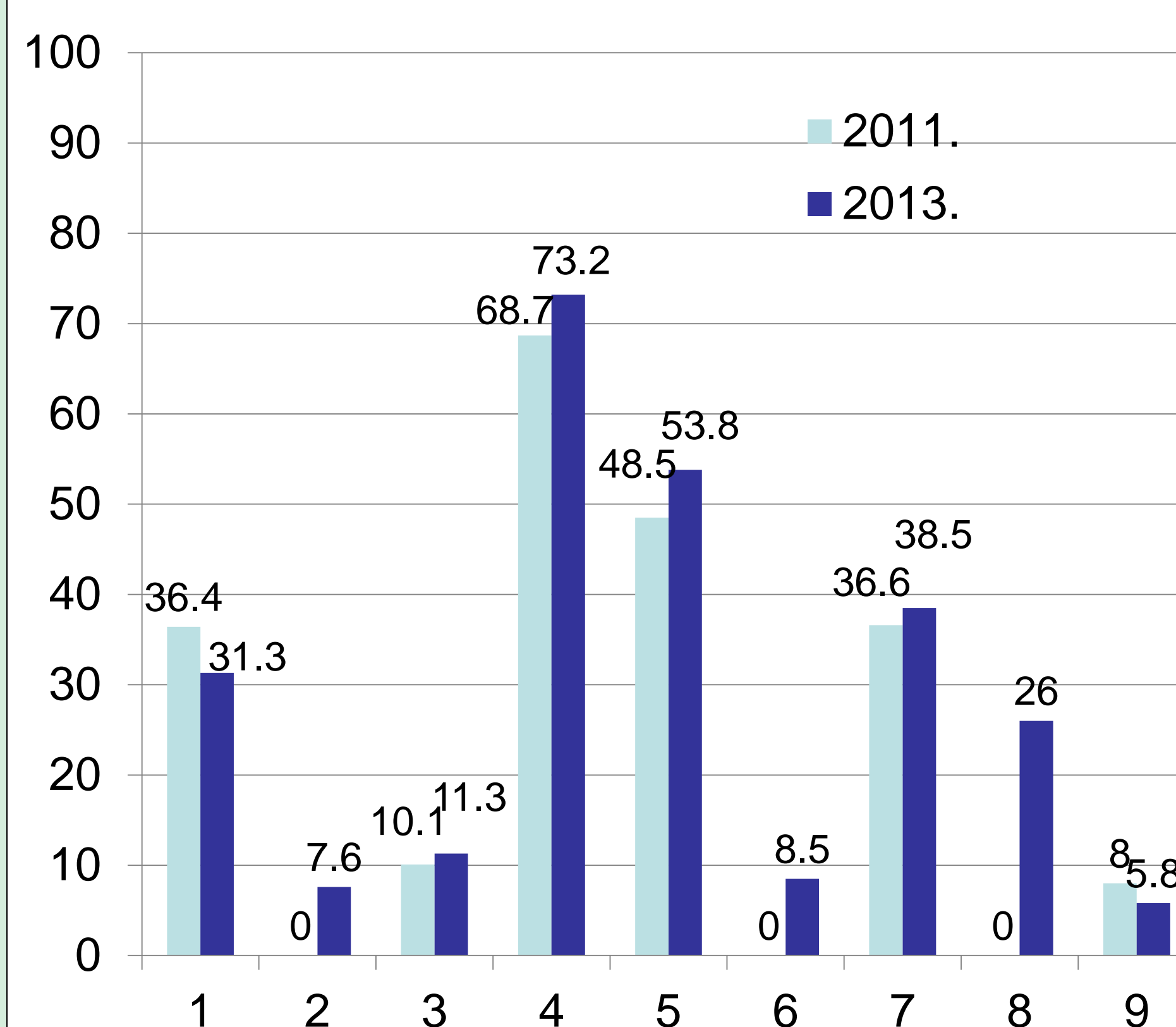
Education

46.1% higher education

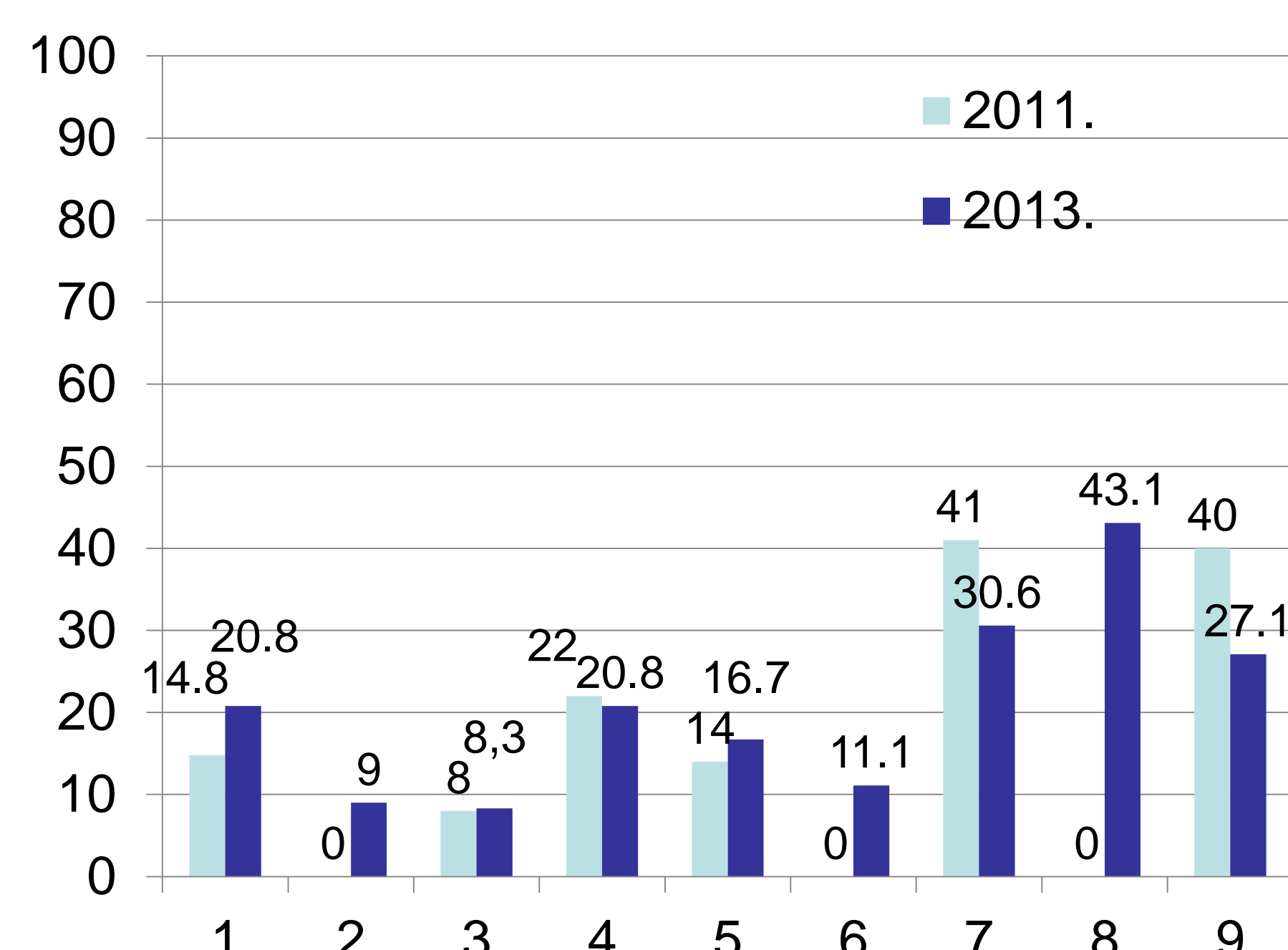
45.8% high school

RESULTS

Knowledge of new psychoactive substances



Use of new psychoactive substances



1. mephedrone (M-Cat, Meow Meow...)
2. other synthetic cathinones (e.g. butilone, flephedrone, 4-MEC)
3. khat
4. ketamine
5. PCP
6. other piperazines (npr.BZP, mCPP)
7. Spice
8. other synthetic cannabinoids (e.g. Galaxy, Atomix...);
9. some other similar „new drug“ (please, write...)

Written answers on knowledge:

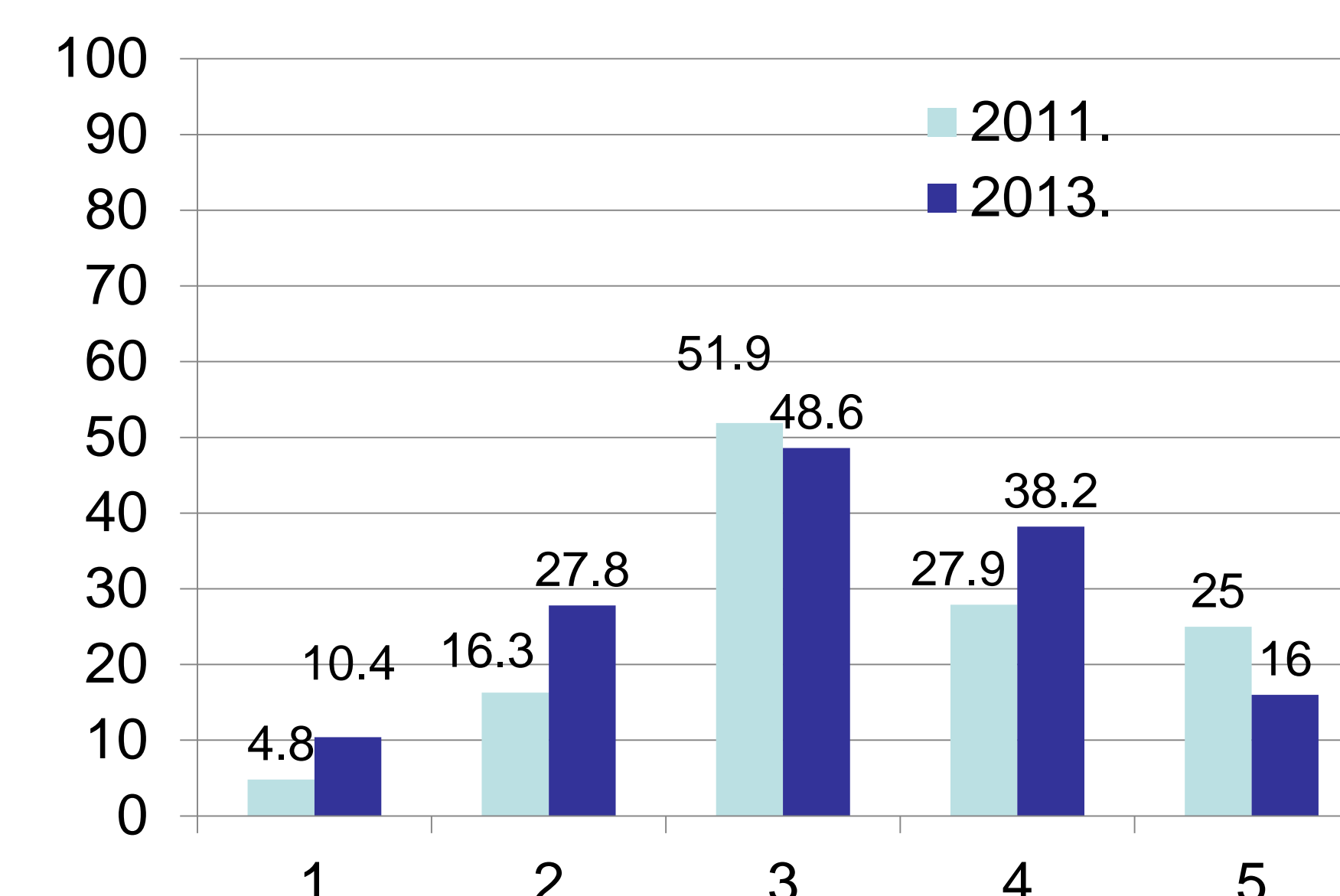
Ice, ice-crystal, pdo, kill, cct, poppers, galaxy, afghan, codein...

Written answers on use:

Magic dragon, Dragonfly, Salvia divinorum, Desomorphine, cox A-B types, poppers, 2C-B

RESULTS

Buying new psychoactive substances



1. on the Internet
2. dealer
3. friend
4. specialized store (spice shop, smart shop...)
5. somewhere else (please, write...)

Written answers:

Homemade, in my house (ingredients from pharmacy, hospitals and veterinary), party, clubs (security staff, guests...), Sex-shop, video shops, high schools...

Ways of using new psychoactive substances

Written answers:

Inhalation, chewing, smoking...

As a food/drink (orally as a medication, drops in the drink, cookies, cakes...)

Air freshener, vaporization...

“Legal highs” mixed with tobacco

Purple Drank ili Sizzurp (syrup mixed with soft drinks)

CONCLUSION

- Contemporary methods in marketing and distribution of the new psychoactive substances require adequately **planned and cautious approaches** in prevention interventions;
- **Characteristics** of effective prevention interventions **are unknown**;
- **Providing information** and educating groups at risk seems promising, but it can also enhance the knowledge and curiosity on new trends and therefore produce a significant harm;
- There is a **lack of evaluation research** in this field;
- There is a **need for development, implementation and evaluation** of prevention and harm reduction interventions, in order to ensure quality and duly expert responses;
- **Surveys** on new trends in drugs consumption are recognized as an invaluable contribution in monitoring this rapidly changing phenomenon.