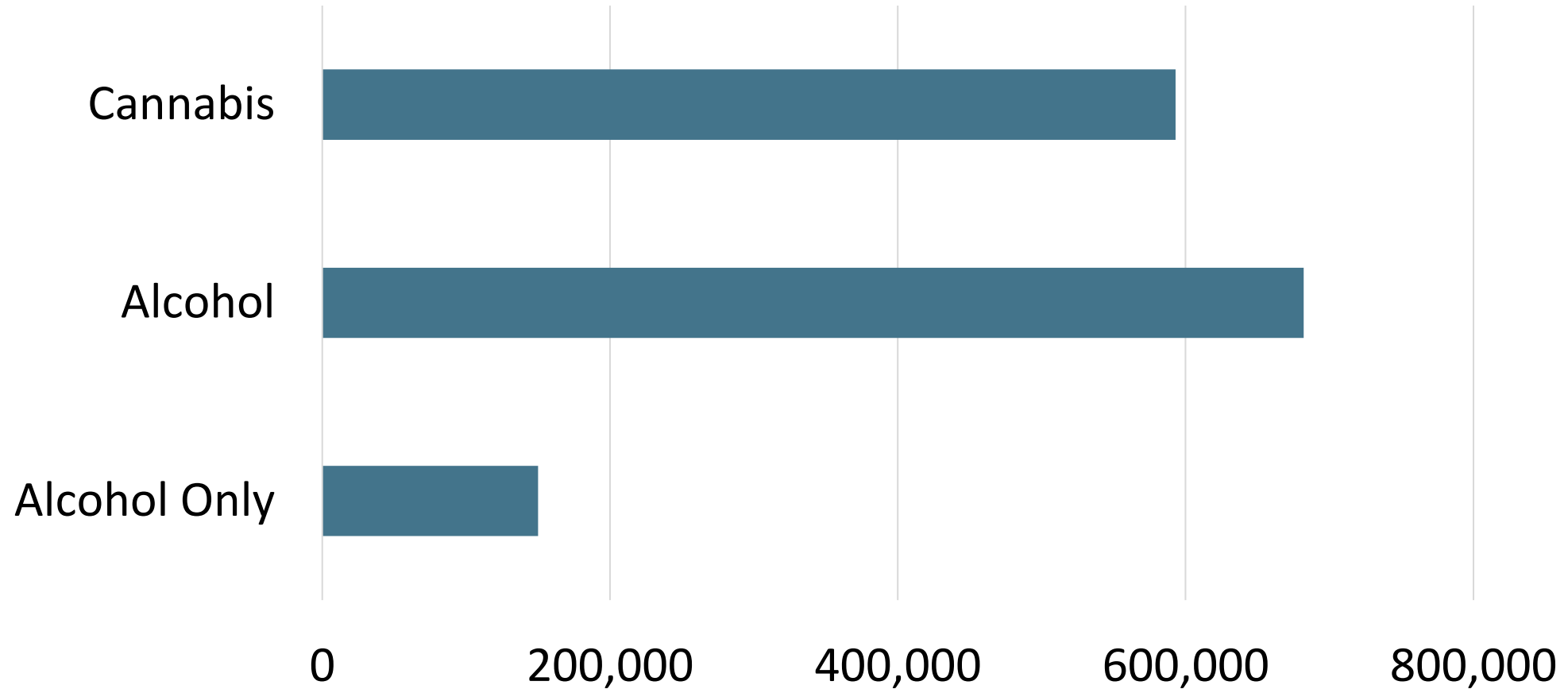# Unveiling the Cannabis-Involved Driving Landscape in New York: Insights from the DRE Data

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New York Impaired Driving Population
Self-Reported 2021-2022

Source: National Survey of Drug Use and Health
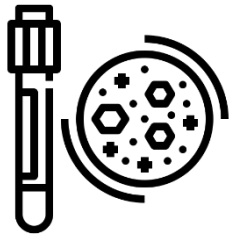
Key Takeaways

- DUI (cannabis) ≈ DUI (alcohol)

- DUI (cannabis) > DUI (alcohol only)

- DUI (alcohol & drugs) > DUI (alcohol only)

Gaps in Impaired Driving Data in New York

Enforcement: alcohol-centered

Toxicology: 11 labs; evidence of drug use—not impairment

Crash: limited and often unreliable drug data

Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Program

- Highest-level training for drug-impaired driving assessment

- Skilled in detecting and identifying persons under the influence of drugs

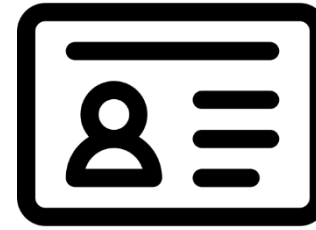- Standardized and systematic 12-step protocol

DRE Data Entry & Management System
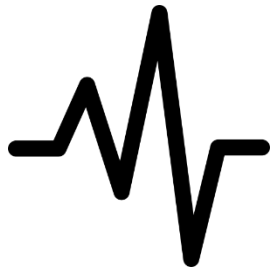

Interview

Incident
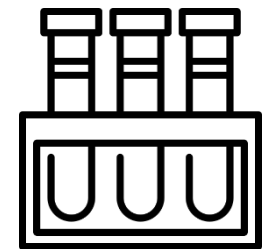
License

Breath Test

Clinical Indicators of Impairment

Psychophysical Indicators of Impairment

Evaluator Opinion & Narrative
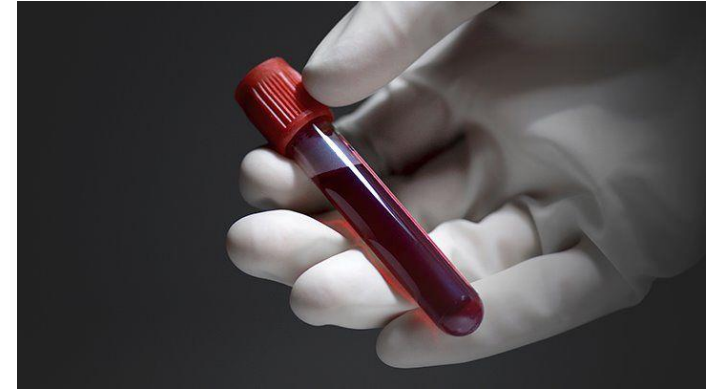
Chemical Test & Tox Results

Limitations

- A small subset of all impaired driving arrests

- Suspected impairment by drugs rather than alcohol

Study on Cannabis-Involved Driving in New York

- 2018 – 2022
  - Pre-legalization (Jan 1, 2018 - Mar 30, 2021)
  - Post-legalization (Mar 31, 2021 - Dec 31, 2022)
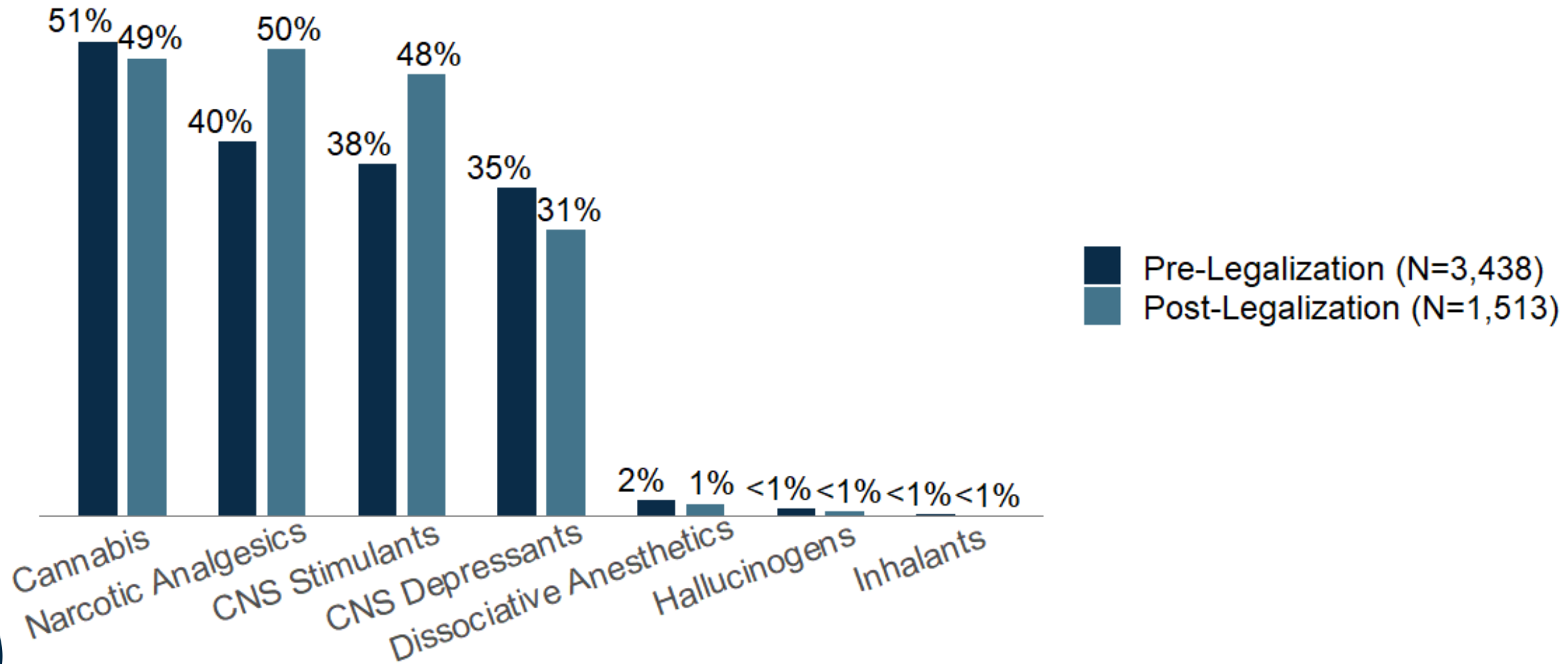
- **Research questions:**
  1. What drugs were found in drug-positive drivers?
  2. What were the characteristics of cannabis-positive drivers & driving events?
  3. Were there any meaningful changes before vs. after the legalization?

What Drugs were found?

Drug Categories Found in Drug-Positive Drivers

Legend:
- Pre-Legalization (N=3,438)
- Post-Legalization (N=1,513)

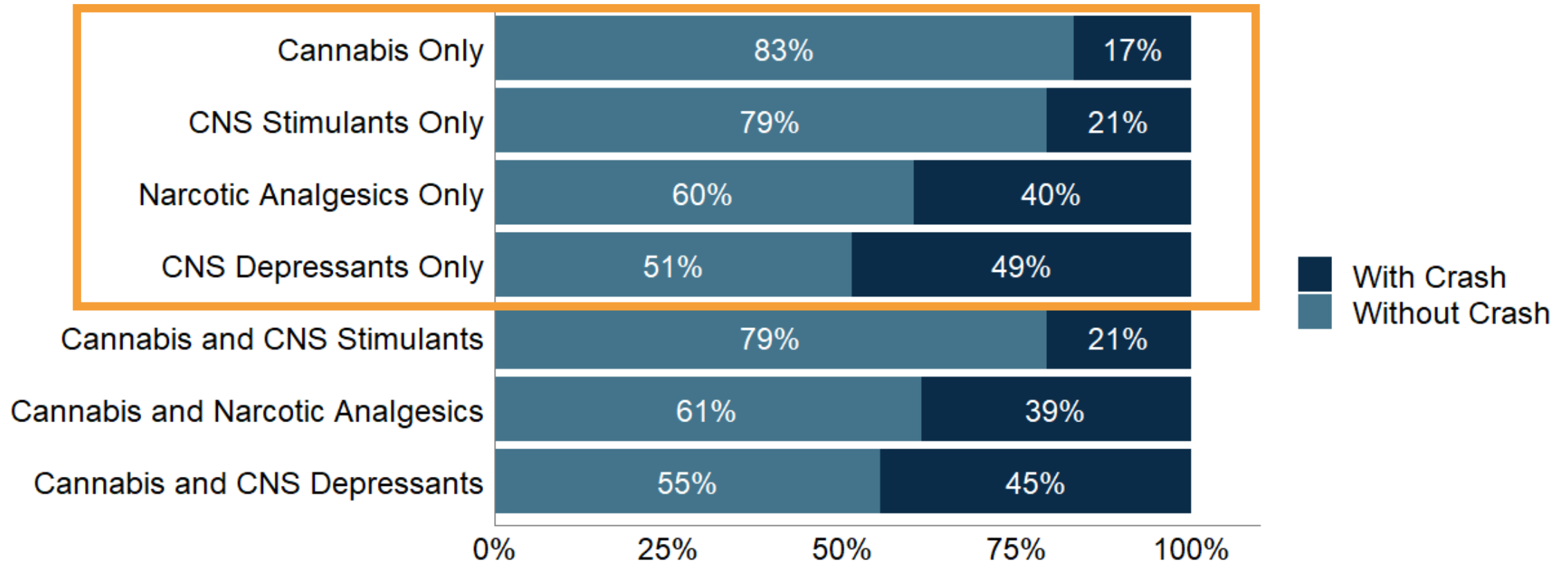| Category	Pre-Legalization	Post-Legalization
Cannabis	51%	49%
Narcotic Analgesics	40%	50%
CNS Stimulants	38%	48%
CNS Depressants	35%	31%
Dissociative Anesthetics	2%	1%
Hallucinogens	<1%	<1%
Inhalants	<1%	<1%

Characteristics of Cannabis-Positive Driving Events

Crash Involvement

Drivers positive for dissociative analgesics/hallucinogens/inhalants were not presented due to low counts. Drivers with unknown BAC or a positive BAC from the evidential breath test were excluded from the analysis.

TABLE 5a
Drivers Positive for a Single Drug Category* in Blood 2018 - 2022
Select Traffic Violations

Violation Category	Cannabis Only (N = 759)		CNS Stimulants Only (N = 314)		Narcotic Analgesics Only (N = 256)		CNS Depressants Only (N = 222)	
Lane-Related Violations	228	30%	108	34%	138	54%	119	54%
Speeding	157	20%	50	16%	26	10%	13	6%
Turn Signal	84	12%	35	12%	24	10%	21	10%
Traffic Device and Stops	64	8%	27	8%	16	6%	14	6%
Following Too Closely	17	2%	9	2%	12	4%	19	8%

Drivers positive for dissociative analgesics/hallucinogens/inhalants were not presented due to low counts. Drivers with unknown BAC or a positive BAC from the evidential breath test were excluded from the analysis.

Summary and Conclusion

- DUID is a complicated topic with limited data

- Cannabis prevalence remained the same

- Crash involvement and dangerous traffic violations were common among cannabis-only drivers

Thank you!

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ITSMR website: https://www.itsmr.org

Cannabis Research Note: https://www.itsmr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Cannabis-and-Driving-2018-2022.pdf