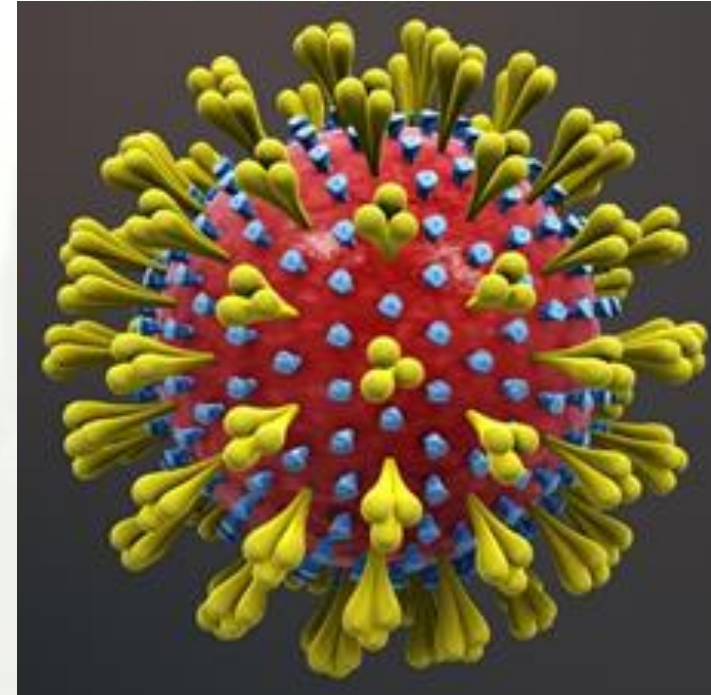


# Cannabis use and coronavirus – results of a short online survey in Germany



ESSD online conference, 24-09-2020, Bernd Werse, Ph.D.

# Corona crisis and cannabis use: some evidence

- The Netherlands decided to shut down coffeeshops in mid-March
- One day after the closure, the government decided to re-open them
- Similarly, dispensaries in most US states were considered „essential business“



# Corona crisis and cannabis use: some evidence

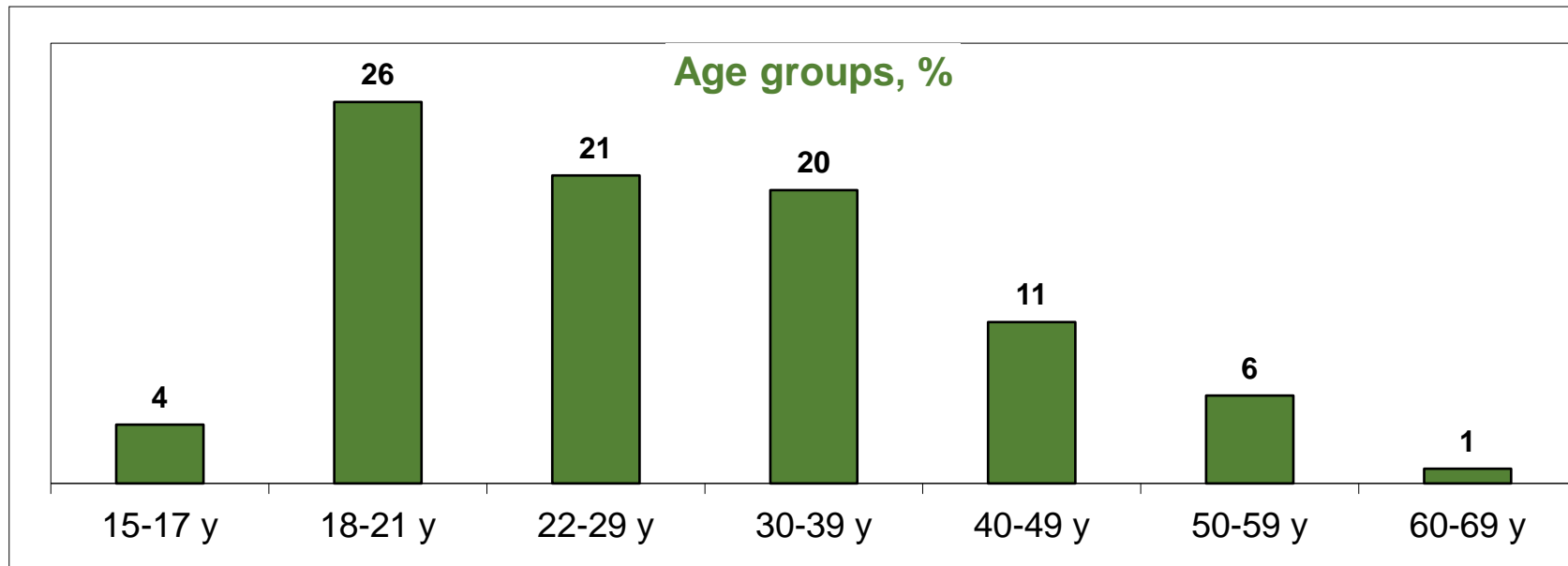
- EMCDDA/ European Web Survey, June:  
*„...some occasional users may have stopped using or reduced their use (...), while those who had more frequent or intensive patterns of use may have increased their consumption. The relief of both boredom and anxiety were cited as reasons for increased use”*
- Global Drug Survey, Special Edition on Covid-19, June:  
40% of cannabis users increased the number of days of use (decrease: 21%)  
main reasons for increase: more time available and boredom
- EMCDDA/Europol, Covid-19 Drug Markets Report, May:
  - ▶ Shortages of cannabis resin and possible stockpiling of herbal cannabis by users have led to inflated retail prices for both cannabis resin and herbal cannabis in some Member States. The domestic production of herbal cannabis appears not to have been significantly disrupted.

## Corona and cannabis – German survey

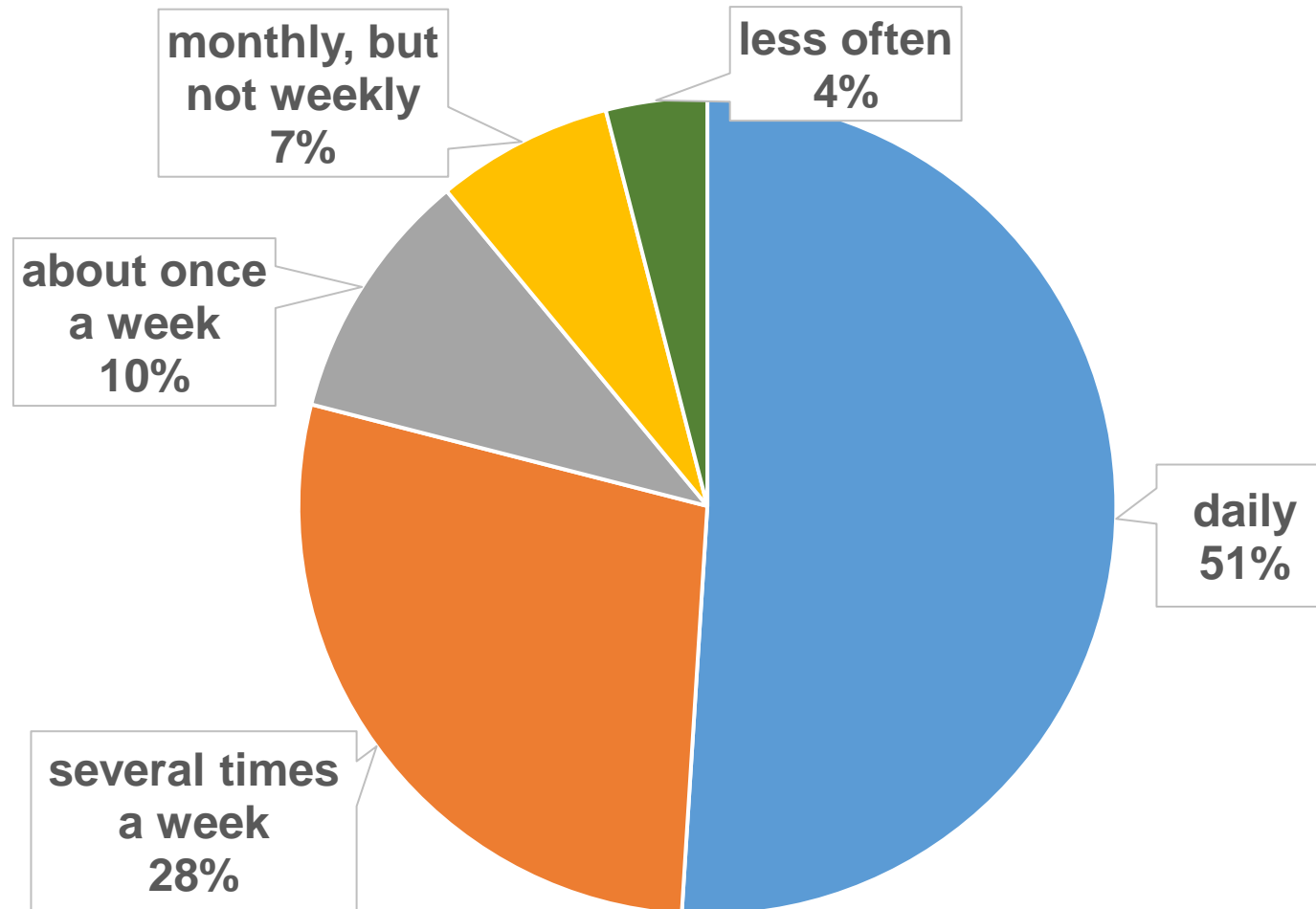
- Designed spontaneously at the peak of lockdown measures (end-March/early April)
- Very short quantitative online questionnaire, in order to get as many respondents as possible
- Main research question: what has changed for people who use cannabis, in terms of use and market?
- Recruitment via social media, cannabis and drug policy activists
- Online from 9th of April until 10th of May
- N = 1,146

# Results: socio-demographic data

- N = 1,146
- 91% male, 8% female, 0.7% non-binary/gender neutral
- Average age: 29.6, median: 26, range: 15-69 years



# Results: cannabis use (before the crisis)



# Results: status of work, studies etc. during lockdown

- 37% worked/studied ***as much*** as usual
- 12% ***more*** than usual
- 20% ***less*** than usual
- 18% ***not at all***
- 9% are not doing wage labour or studies anyway  
(housewives/-husbands, pensioners, unemployed etc.)

Those who ***did*** work/study:

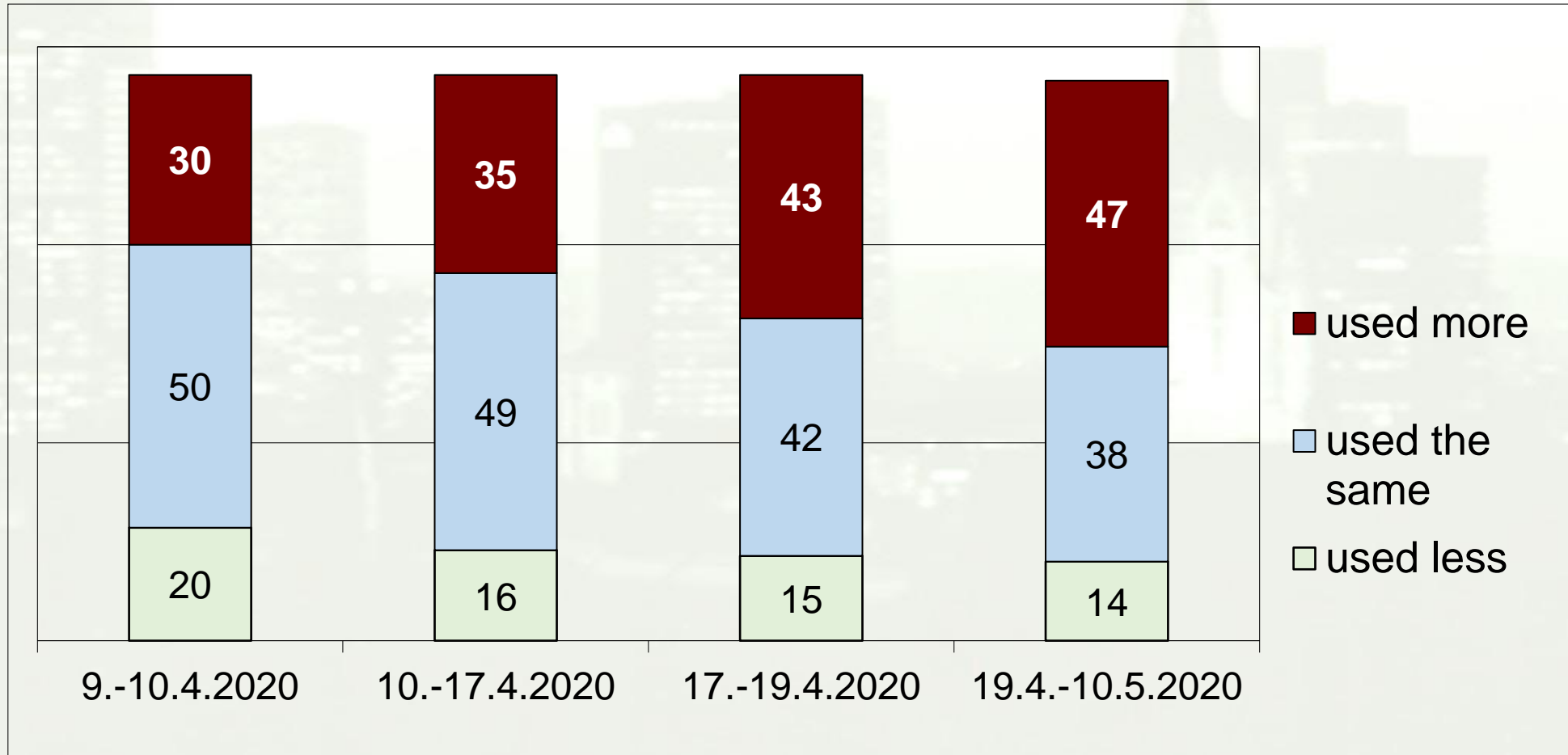
- 37% at their usual place
- 46% (almost) exclusively in home office
- 2% mobile work (e.g., delivery)
- 9% partly at home, partly somewhere else

## Results: change of cannabis use during lockdown

- 45% used as much as before the crisis
- 16% used less
- **39% used more**
- No significant differences with regard to general frequency of use
- Those who worked **less or not at all** were **more likely** to use more (53%/44%)
- Those who **do not work anyway** were the **least likely** to use more (25%)
- Those who worked in **home office** were **more likely** to use more (47%)
- Reasons for using more: boredom, more time available, fear/uncertainty, ...



# Change of cannabis use during lockdown – by date of questionnaire (quartiles)



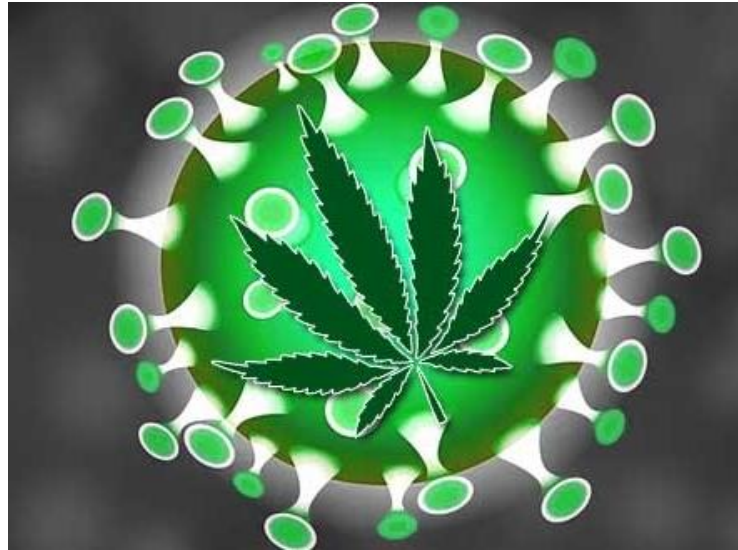
## Results: development of cannabis market

- 48% stated that their personal supply was not affected
- 47% stated that availability got worse
  
- 57% stated that there was no change in the price of herbal cannabis
- According to the others, the weed price increased by 2.50 € per gram (average)
  
- Respondents from rural areas reported more problems regarding availability than people from urban areas
- Significant numbers of home growers and people who stockpiled cannabis at the beginning of the crisis – who (obviously) had no problems with availability and prices

# Discussion

- These results mainly apply to people who frequently use cannabis
- Clear tendency towards an increase in use during the crisis - for different reasons (calm down fear, relief from stress, boredom, pleasure during unusual free time...)
- Ambiguous results with regard to market situation/ cannabis procurement: around half were not affected at all, while in some (rural) regions, there was virtually nothing available anymore
  - Probably more due to cautiousness of dealers (because of increased risk in empty streets) than to supply difficulties
- Cannabis as an „essential“ commodity during times of crisis?

Thank you very much for your attention!



[www.uni-frankfurt.de/cdr](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/cdr)

[werse@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:werse@em.uni-frankfurt.de)