

# Considerable therapeutic use of MDMA, ketamine, and psychedelics across NZ

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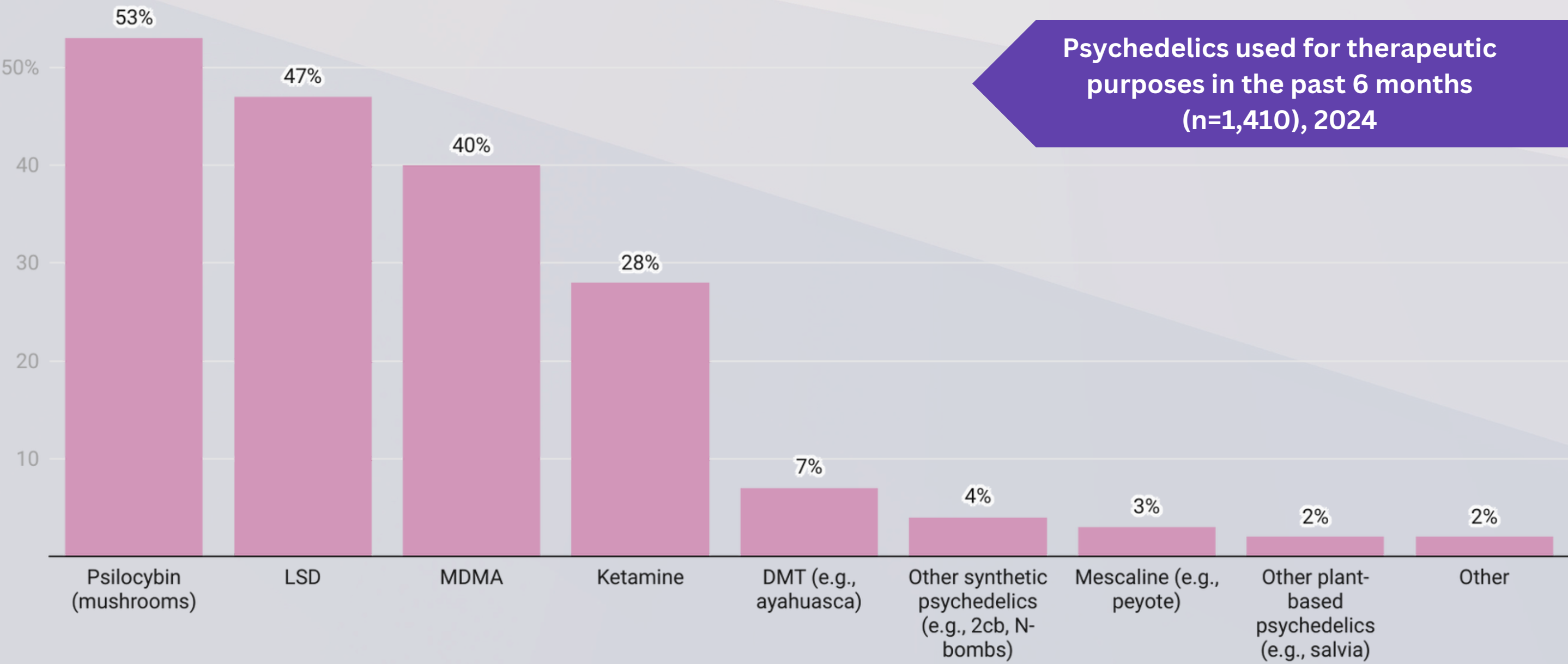
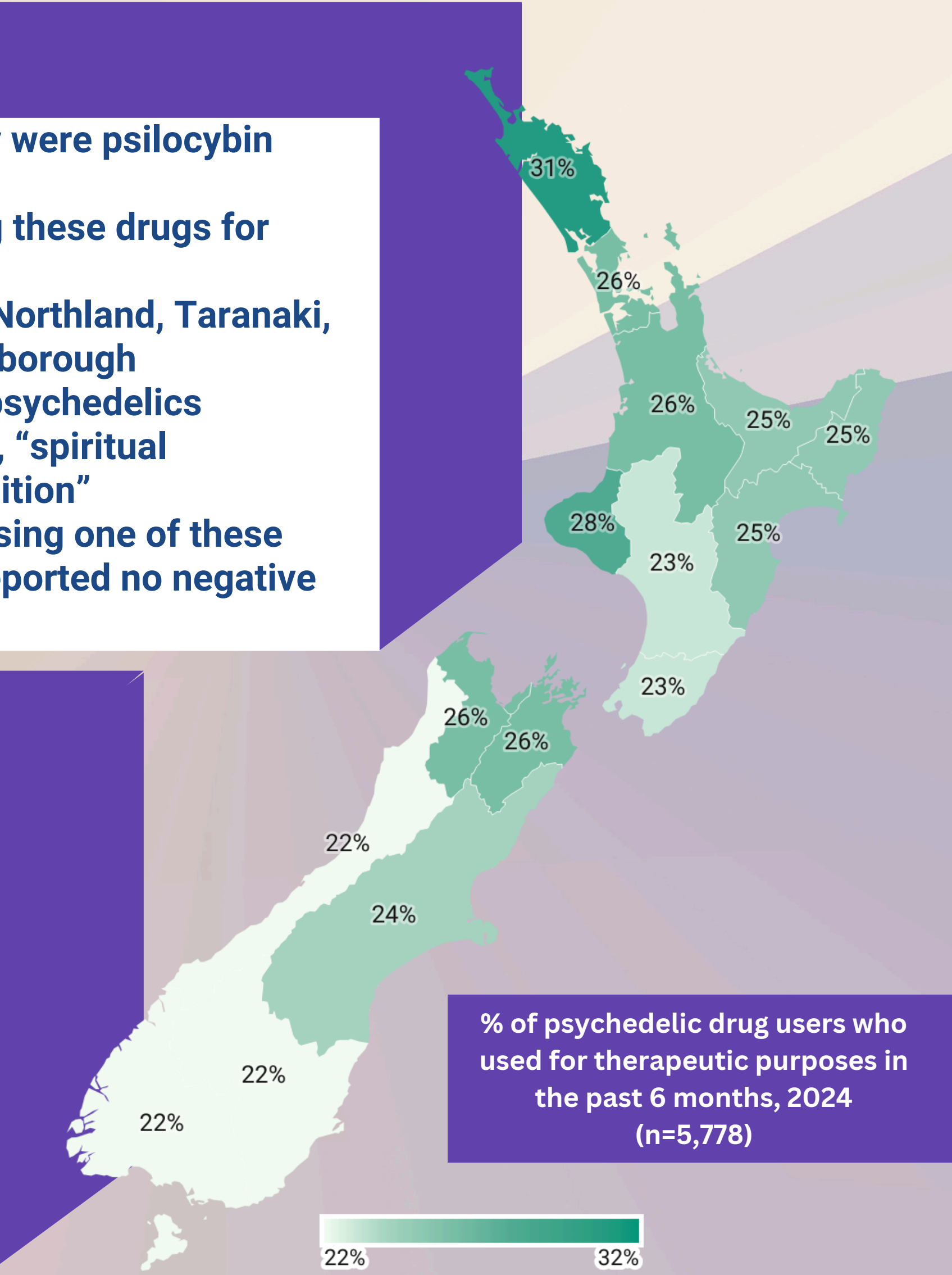
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## Key findings

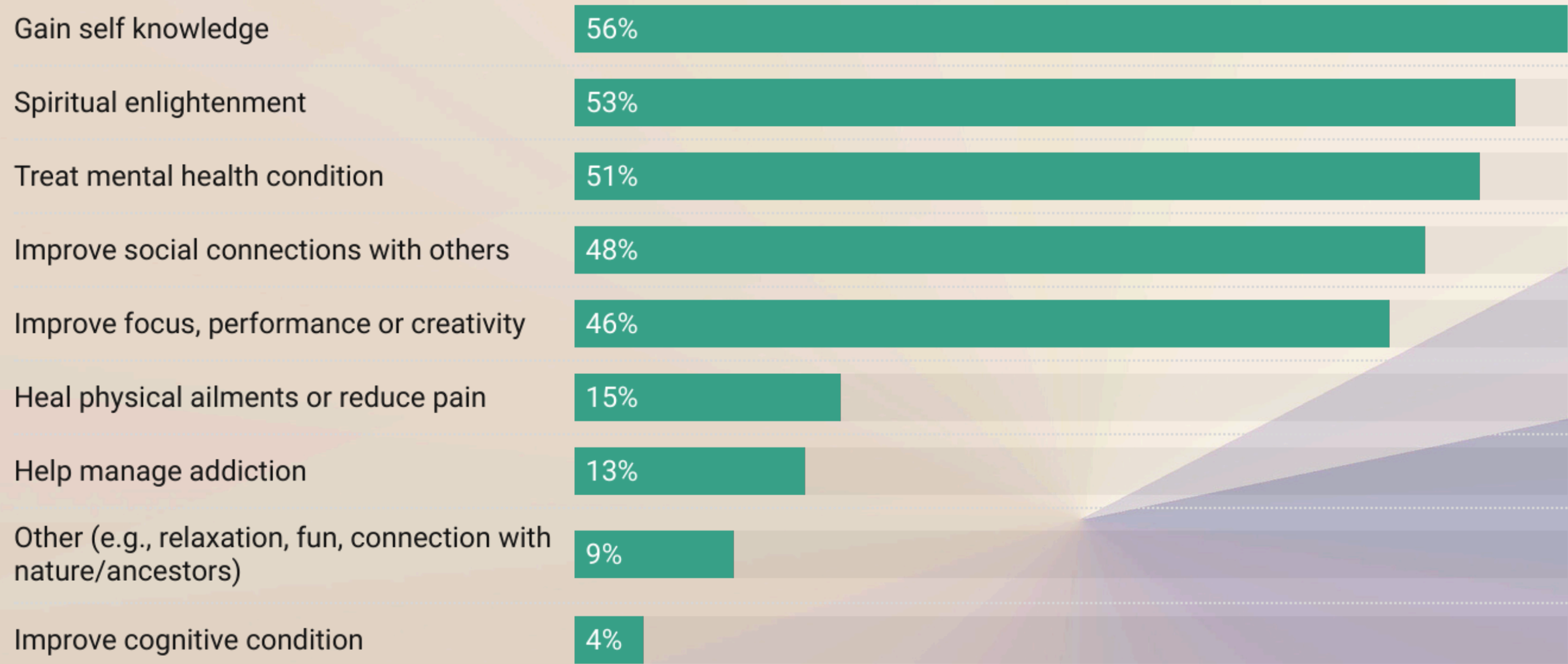
- Psychedelics most often used therapeutically were psilocybin (mushrooms), LSD, MDMA, and ketamine
- A quarter of psychedelic users reported using these drugs for therapeutic purposes
- Therapeutic use of psychedelics was high in Northland, Taranaki, Auckland, Waikato, and Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough
- Reasons most commonly reported for using psychedelics therapeutically were to “gain self knowledge”, “spiritual enlightenment” and “treat mental health condition”
- A third reported a negative side effect from using one of these drug types therapeutically, while two thirds reported no negative side effects

## Methods

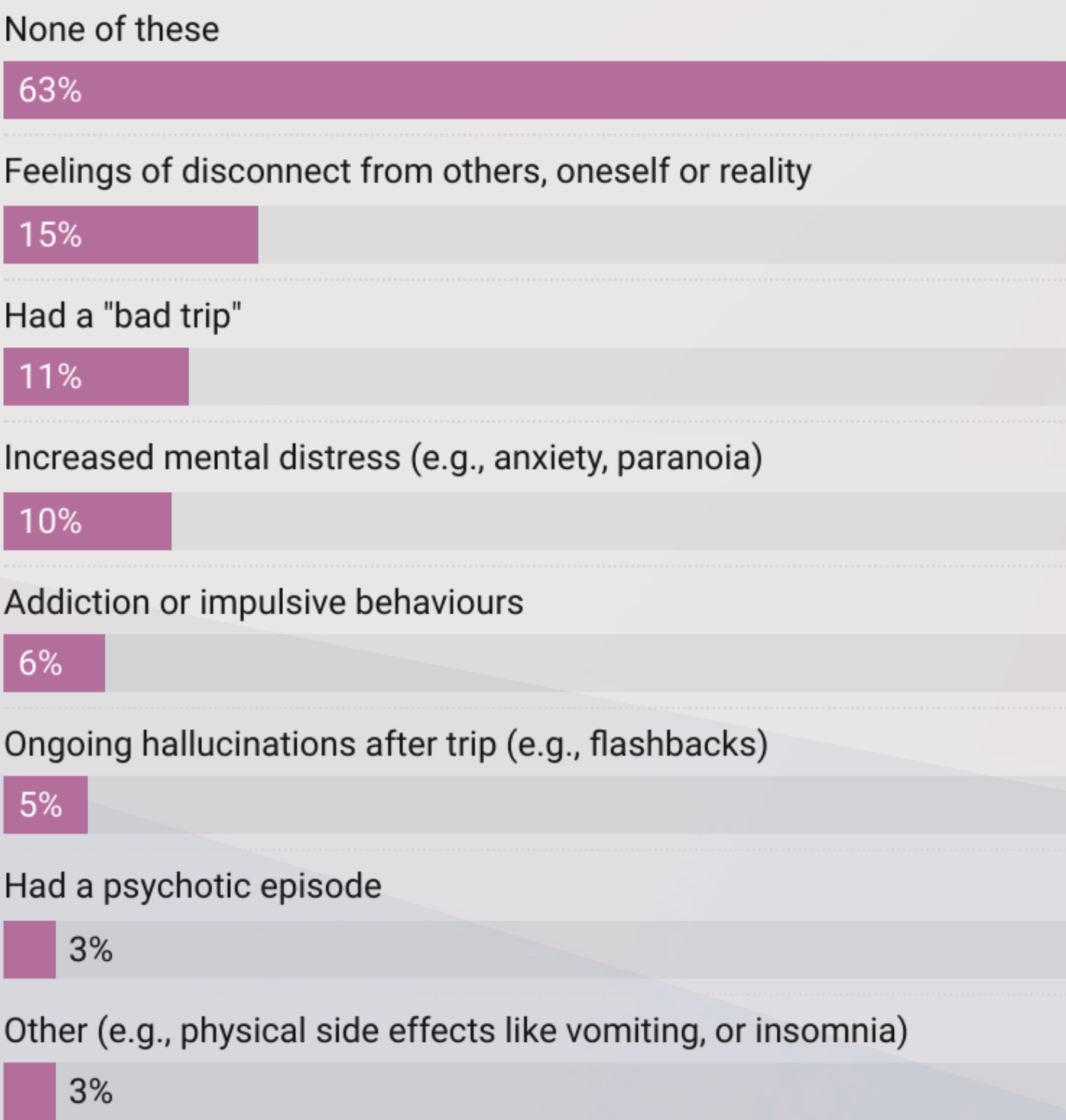
Participants in the 2024 New Zealand Drug Trends who reported past-6-month use of MDMA, LSD/psychedelics, or ketamine were asked whether they had used these drugs or other psychedelics for therapeutic purposes in the past 6 months (n=5,778). Of these respondents, 1,410 (24%) had done so, and findings for this group are included in this bulletin. The New Zealand Drug Trends Survey (NZDTS) is an anonymous online convenience survey designed to provide an annual snapshot of drug market trends in Aotearoa New Zealand. It surveys a very large number of people with recent experience and knowledge of drug use and drug markets across the country (i.e., key experts). The NZDTS is promoted via a targeted Meta advertising campaign over a period of several months. The 2024 survey ran from 20 February to 3 July and achieved a final sample of 10,781. **While the NZDTS is not a representative sample, it broadly represents the demographic profile and regional population distribution of NZ.** For more information on the survey visit our [website](#).



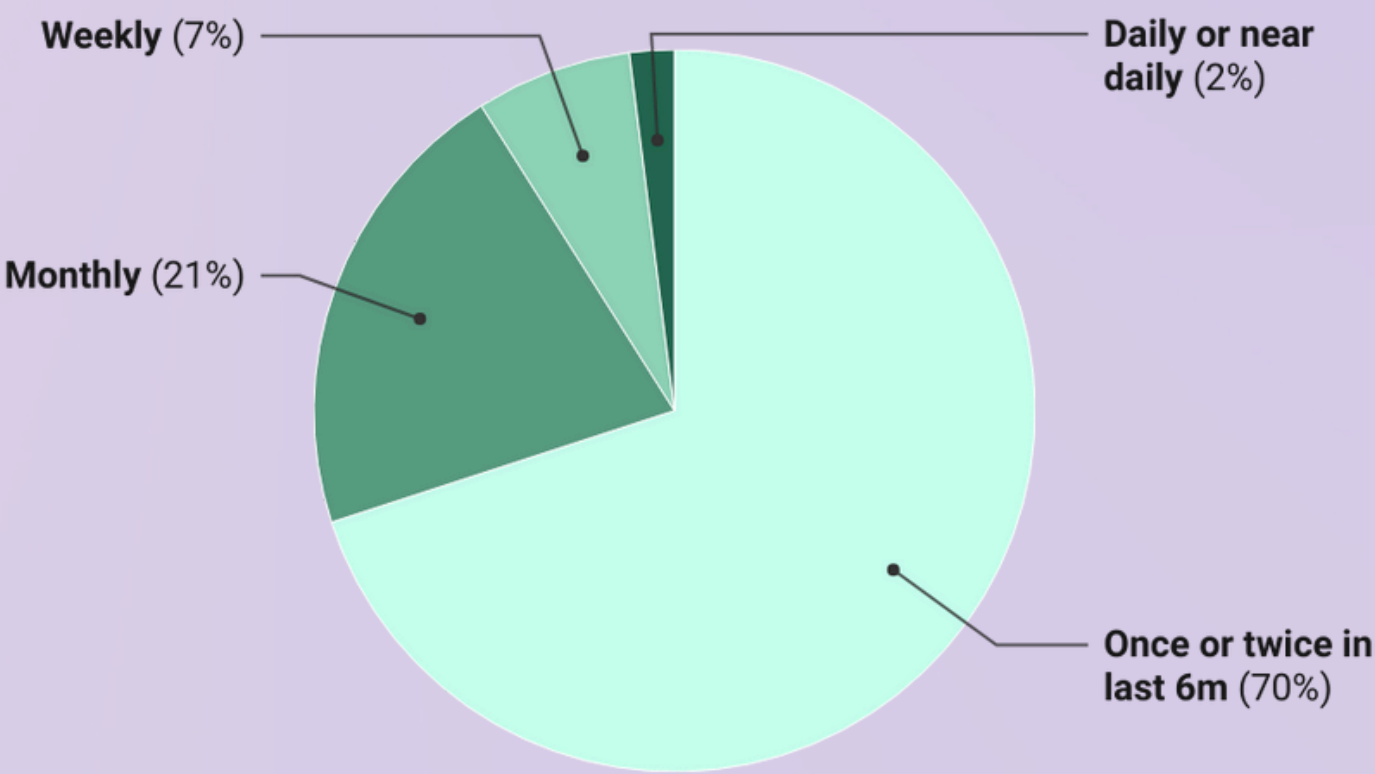
Reasons for using MDMA, ketamine, and psychedelics therapeutically reported by therapeutic psychedelic users, 2024



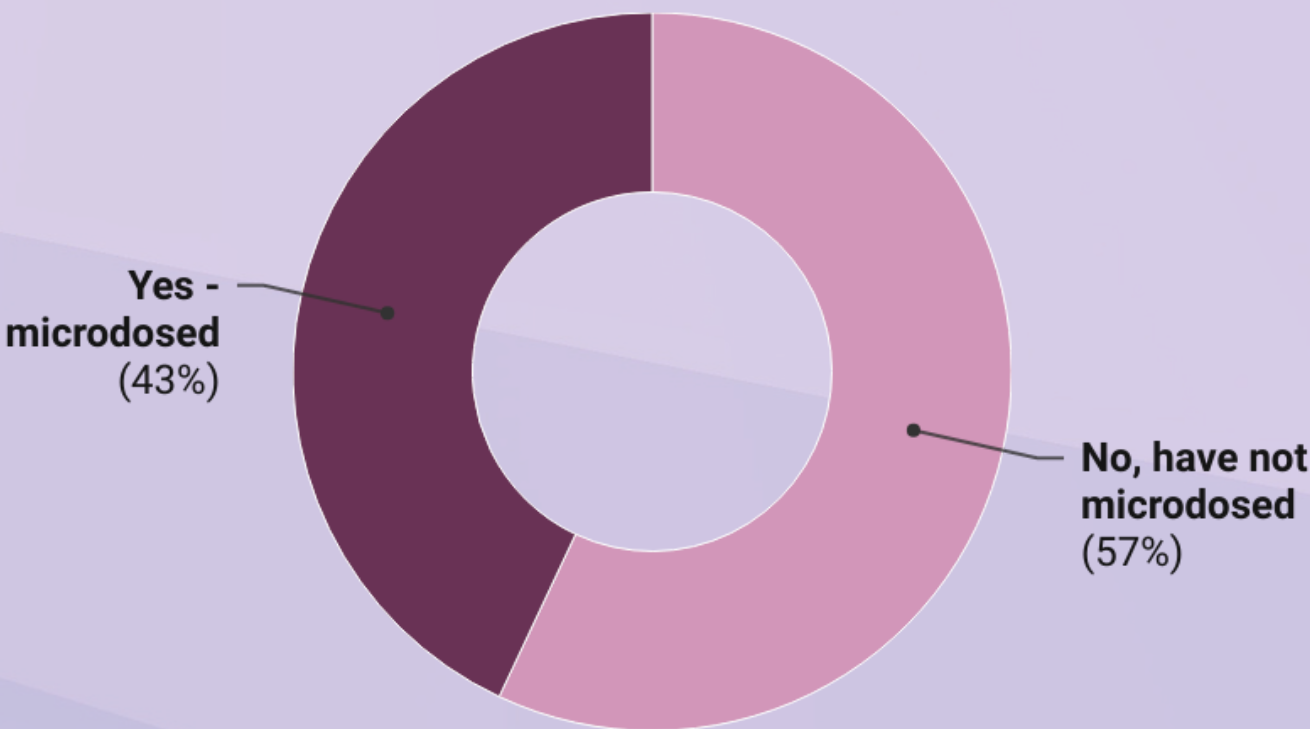
Negative effects of therapeutic use of MDMA, ketamine or psychedelics experienced by therapeutic psychedelic users, 2024



Frequency of therapeutic use in past 6 months, 2024 (n=1,410)



Microdosing among therapeutic psychedelic users in past 6 months, 2024 (n=1,410)



Discussion

Psychedelic-assisted interventions for mental health conditions are not available in Aotearoa New Zealand, except as part of several ongoing clinical trials. Currently, there is one clinic prescribing ketamine, and its' derivative esketamine, off-label for depression and anxiety disorders. Growing research evidence of the benefits of psychedelics in treating a range of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety and PTSD, among other therapeutic benefits has led to increasing public awareness and self-directed therapeutic use of psychedelics. While people may start experimenting with psychedelics for one particular purpose, such as improved mental health, evidence suggests they often report positive impacts across several aspects of their lives, ranging from increased self-acceptance and understanding to more positive mood. While the majority of NZDTS respondents who had used psychedelics therapeutically in the past 6 months reported no negative side effects, a substantial minority reported one or more. Though recreational or therapeutic use of psychedelics remains low risk overall, emerging research suggests it is not uncommon to experience unpleasant side effects during or after using psychedelics, such as having what is colloquially called a "bad trip", experiencing feelings of disconnect or dissociation, and increased mental distress. Further research is needed to establish the effectiveness and safety profile of psychedelics for specific mental illnesses.