

15-96

**An Analysis of
the Characteristics of Drug Abusers
by Major Types of Drug Abused**



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2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 The characteristics of drug abusers who had taken the major types of drug can be summarised as follows.

- a) The majority of drug abusers under study were males. But the proportions of young female drug abusers were greater than that of female abusers of all ages.
- b) The mean age of heroin abusers (35.2) was significantly higher than that of the other four groups of drug abusers (21.3 to 25.1).
- c) The educational attainment of heroin abusers was comparatively lower than that of the other four groups of drug abusers. While 54.5% of the heroin abusers received lower secondary or above education, the corresponding percentages for the other four groups of drug abusers were at least more than 78%.
- d) Kwun Tong was the district of residence where the percentages of reported persons taking heroin, cannabis or cough medicine were the greatest. As for those taking amphetamines and benzodiazepines, the greatest percentages of reported drug abusers were found in Yau Tsim Mong and Southern respectively.
- e) The main reason for current drug abuse varied among different groups of drug abusers. While heroin abusers claimed to avoid discomfort of its absence as their main reason, those who had taken cannabis said it was because of peer influence. For those persons abused cough medicine or benzodiazepines, their main reason was to relief boredom. On the other hand, amphetamines abusers claimed curiosity as theirs.
- f) Compared the mean age of first abuse among the five groups of drug abusers, it was noted that abusers taking cough medicine (19.1) tended to start abusing the drug earlier, followed by those taking cannabis (20.3), heroin (20.7), benzodiazepines (21.1) and amphetamines (21.9).

- g) The majority (85.2%) of multiple drug abusers took a combination of two types of drug. Among them, about 80% took heroin as one of the drugs. The more common groups of drugs taken together were heroin and benzodiazepines, and heroin and cannabis.
- h) Similar characteristics were found between heroin/benzodiazepines abusers and those abusers taking these two drugs together in respect of their sex distribution, employment status, previous conviction and type of living quarters.
- i) About 90% of the heroin abusers had been reported to the CRDA more than once. Besides, heroin abusers had a longer drug use history, with about 60% had abused the drug for ten years or more, in comparison with 17% for abusers of benzodiazepines and 3% to 5% for the remaining three groups of drug abusers.
- j) The majority of heroin abusers (over 73%) had contacted the law enforcement agencies and methadone clinics. As for the other four groups of drug abusers, it was noted that besides the Police, a large proportion of them had contacted the outreaching and youth agencies, especially those taking cough medicine or aged under 21.