

15-96

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



**Narcotics Division  
Government Secretariat  
Government of the Hong Kong  
Special Administrative Region**



1998  
**CONTENTS**

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	Page
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
□ Objectives	1
□ Coverage of study	1
□ The analyses	1
□ Limitations of the drug abuse statistics	2
<b>2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b>	3
<b>3. PERSONAL AND DRUG ABUSE CHARACTERISTICS OF SINGLE DRUG ABUSERS</b>	
□ Sex and age	5
□ Marital status	6
□ Educational attainment	6
□ District of residence	7
□ Type of living quarters	9
□ Employment status	10
□ Previous conviction	11
□ Reason for current drug abuse	11
□ Age of first abuse	11
□ Duration of drug use	12
□ Usual daily expenditure on drug abuse	12
<b>4. REPORTING HISTORY TO THE CRDA</b>	
□ Time since first reported	13
□ Reporting agencies ever contacted	13
□ Reporting agency first contacted	14

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An analysis of the characteristics  
of drug abusers by major types of drug abused



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	Page
5. <b>COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF DRUG ABUSERS</b>	15
6. <b>CHARACTERISTICS OF MULTIPLE DRUG ABUSERS</b>	
□ General characteristics	17
□ Comparison of selected characteristics between drug abusers taking heroin and benzodiazepines and single drug abusers taking heroin/benzodiazepines	17
 <b>APPENDICES</b>	 19



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Objectives

- 1.1 The objectives of the study are as follows :
- a) to identify the demographic, socio-economic and drug abuse characteristics of abusers taking the major types of drug which include heroin, cannabis, benzodiazepines, cough medicine and amphetamines;
  - b) to examine the similarities and differences among these groups of drug abusers, in particular, their geographic distribution in Hong Kong will be highlighted; and
  - c) to understand the drug abuse history of these groups of drug abusers by examining all reports in respect of an individual submitted to the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA).

## Coverage of study

1.2 The study covers drug abusers reported to the CRDA in 1995 and 1996 who had abused the major types of drug as stated in objectives 1.1(a). In this respect, a total of 26 179 drug abusers are selected for inclusion in the study. As for objective 1.1(c), their drug abuse historical reports before 1995 would also be examined.

## The analyses

1.3 The analysis is mainly on the characteristics of these five groups of drug abusers within the period under study. A separate analysis, which is supplementary to the information obtained from the above, is performed on the characteristics of multiple drug abusers as their characteristics may be different from those who had taken a single drug only.



## **Limitations of the drug abuse statistics**

1.4 As reporting to the CRDA is made through the reporting agencies on a voluntary basis, the CRDA can only record those who have come into contact with and been reported by these agencies. The drug abuse statistics presented in this report are hence based on the information available to the CRDA which is inevitably incomplete. Care should be taken when interpreting the findings of the report such that the statistics should be taken as indicators of the characteristics of reported drug abusers in Hong Kong.

## 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.



### 3. PERSONAL AND DRUG ABUSE CHARACTERISTICS OF SINGLE DRUG ABUSERS

3.1 The number of reported drug abusers who had taken the following type of drug only in 1995 and 1996 is given as follows.

<u>Type of drug</u>	<u>Number of reported drug abusers</u>
Heroin	20 601
Cannabis	1 987
Cough medicine	542
Amphetamines	294
Benzodiazepines	212

3.2 A summary of the characteristics of single drug abusers is given in the following paragraphs. Detailed statistics are provided in the tables in Appendix 1.

#### Sex and age

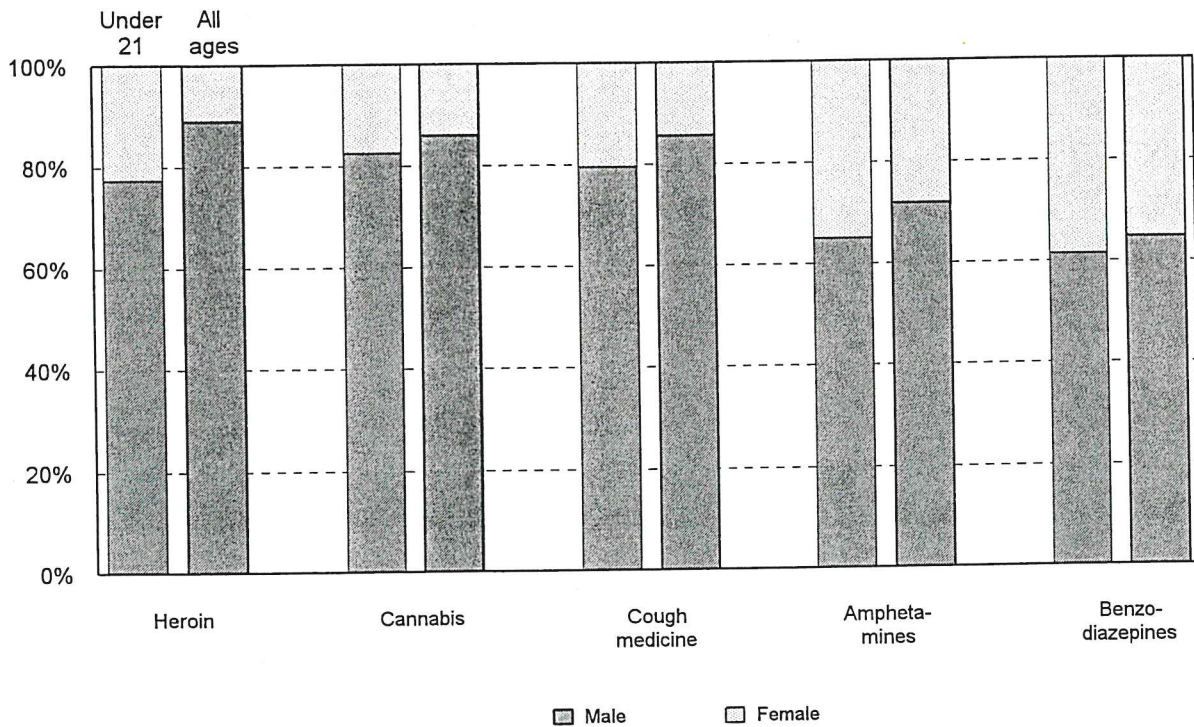
3.3 Drug abuse was more prevalent among males. 88.9% of the heroin abusers were males. The corresponding percentages for the other four groups of drug abusers were in the range of 64.6% to 86.0%.

3.4 Similar to abusers of all ages, the majority of young drug abusers were males. But the proportions of female drug abusers were relatively higher in this under 21 age group.

3.5 Analysed by age group, a greater proportion of the drug abusers (58.5% to 72.7%), except heroin abusers, were in the age bracket 16-25. But the percentage of heroin abusers was more evenly distributed within the age bracket 16-45.

3.6 Compared the mean age of these five groups of drug abusers, cough medicine abusers (21.3) was the youngest and heroin abusers (35.2) the oldest. For the under-21 groups, the mean ages of these abusers were very close within the range from 17.0 to 17.7.

Chart 1 Single drug abusers by age group and sex



### Marital status

3.7 Drug abusers who had taken cannabis, cough medicine or amphetamines exhibited similar percentage distribution in their marital status, with more than 85% never married. As for benzodiazepines and heroin abusers, 73.9% and 58.8% were never married respectively.

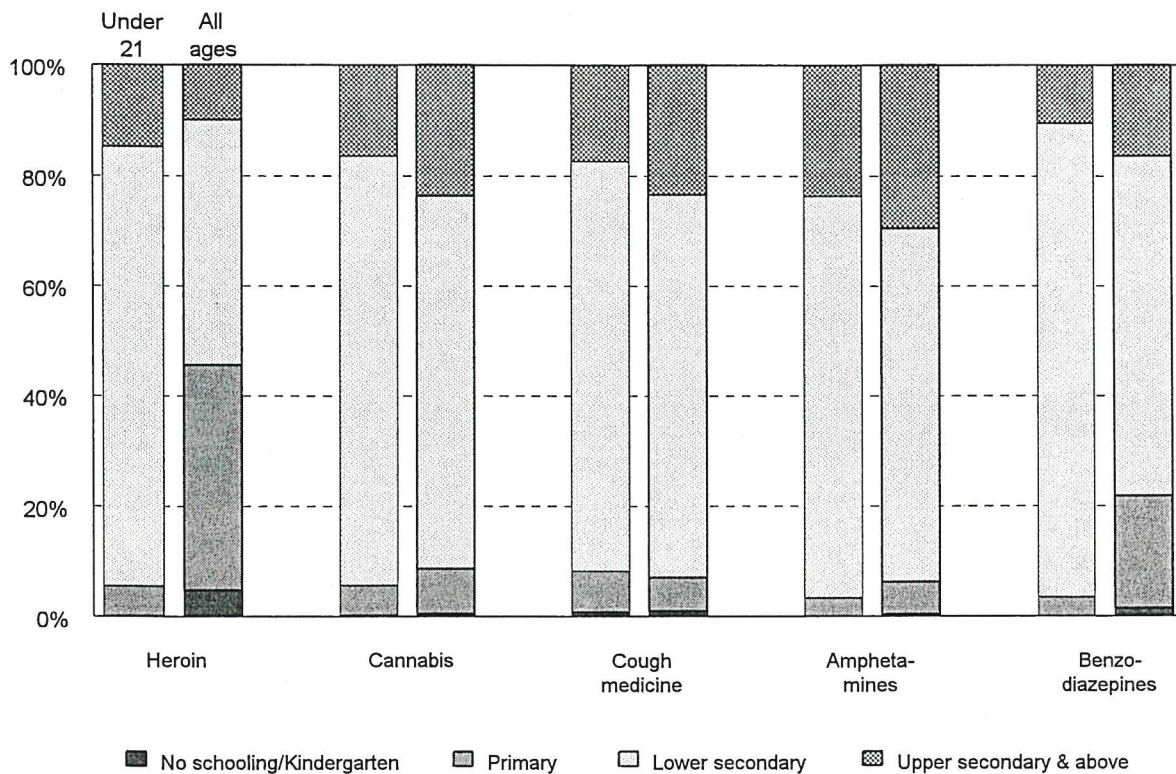
3.8 For the under-21 groups, more than 93% of them were never married.

### Educational attainment

3.9 Except for heroin abusers, more that 78% of the drug abusers had received lower secondary education or above standard. But heroin abusers received comparatively less education, with 54.5% attaining lower secondary or above standard.

3.10 Except for those taking cough medicine, young abusers aged under 21 were noted to have received more education than drug abusers of all ages, with more than 91% of them attaining lower secondary or above standard.

Chart 2 Single drug abusers by age group and educational attainment



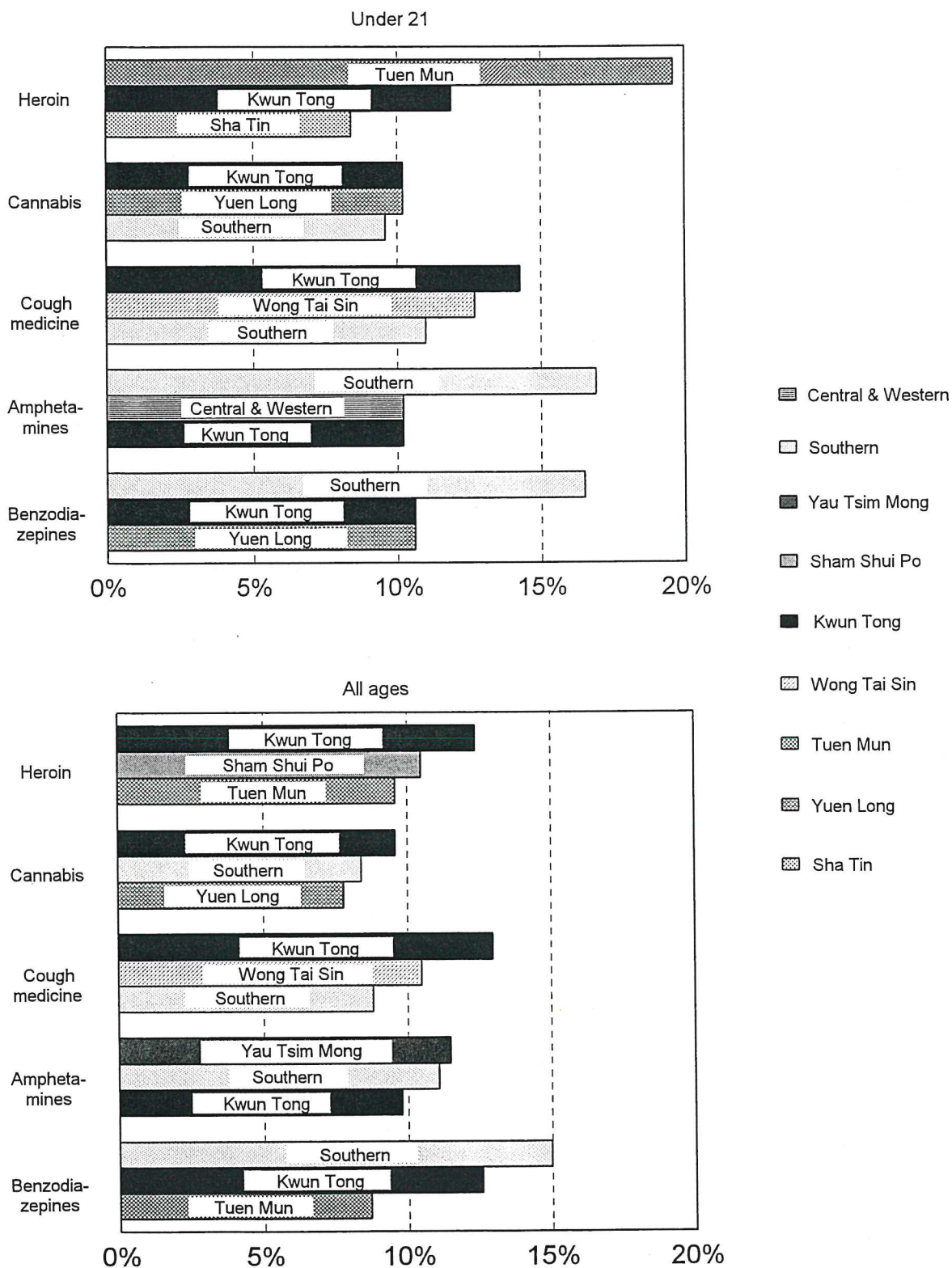
### District of residence

3.11 The greatest percentages of persons taking heroin (12.4%), cannabis (9.6%) or cough medicine (13.0%) were known to live in Kwun Tong. For those taking amphetamines and benzodiazepines, the greatest percentages were in Yau Tsim Mong (11.5%) and Southern (15.0%) respectively.

3.12 For the under-21 groups, the percentage of young heroin abusers resided in Tuen Mun (19.6%) was the greatest. Comparatively, more young cannabis abusers were known to live in Kwun Tong (10.2%) and Yuen Long (10.2%). Kwun Tong was the district of residence where the percentage for young cough medicine abusers (14.3%) was the greatest. On the other hand, greater proportions of young persons abused amphetamines (16.9%) and benzodiazepines (16.5%) were found to live in Southern.



Chart 3 Single drug abusers by age group and selected district of residence

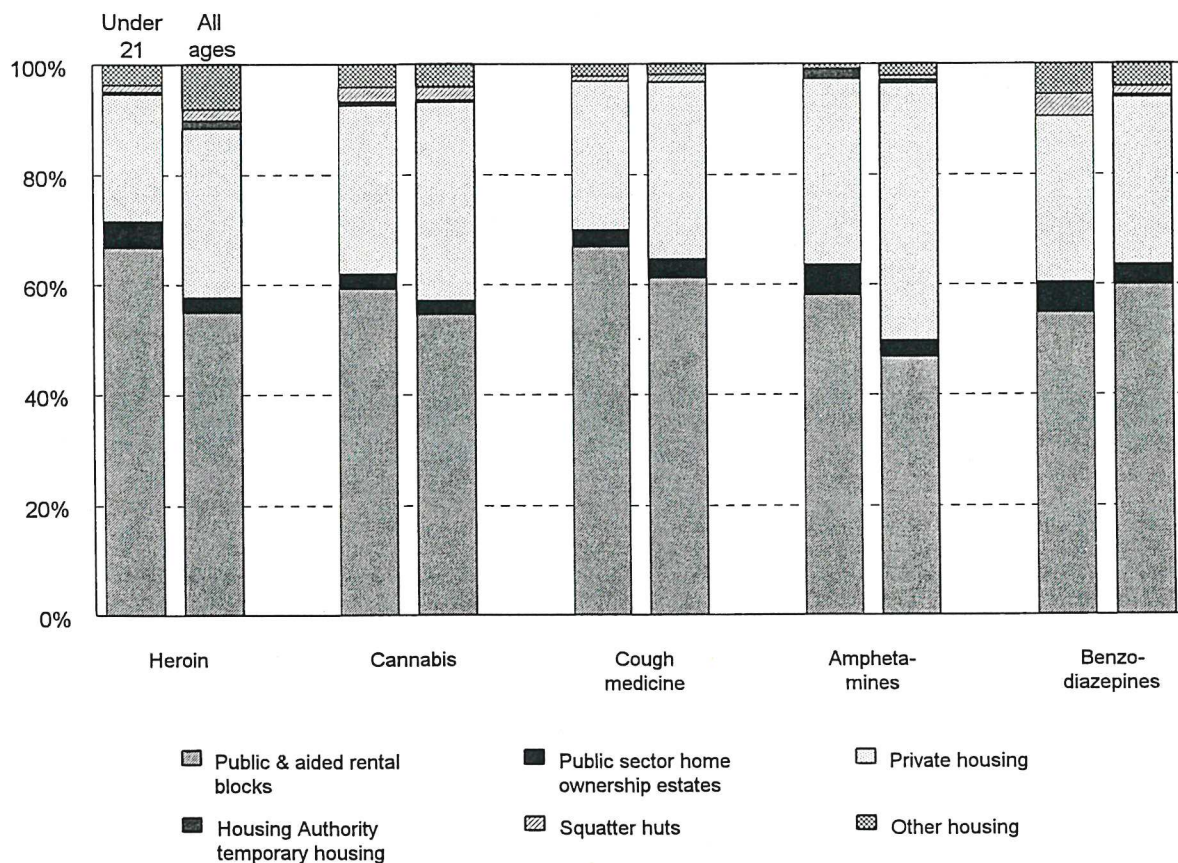


## Type of living quarters

3.13 Except for those persons taking amphetamines, the percentage distributions of drug abusers by types of living quarters were quite similar. Comparatively, a greater proportion of persons taking cough medicine (61.2%) were known to live in public and aided rental blocks. But about the same proportion (46.7%) of abusers taking amphetamines were found to live in public and aided rental blocks as well as in private housing. Such a percentage of amphetamines abusers living in private housing was also the greatest, as compared with 30% to 36% for the other four groups of drug abusers.

3.14 The majority of young drug abusers under 21, ranging from 54.8% to 66.8%, were known to live in public and aided rental blocks. A comparatively smaller percentage of young drug abusers were found to live in private housing, as compared with drug abusers of all ages.

Chart 4 Single drug abusers by age group and type of living quarters



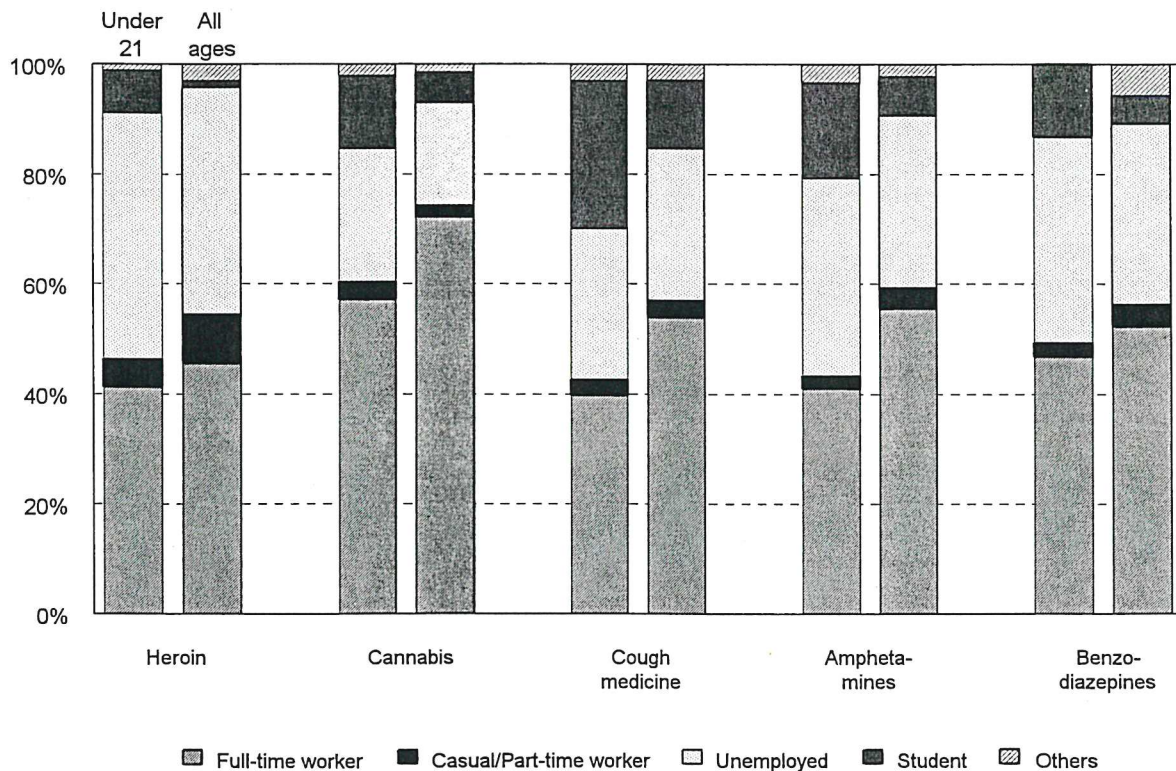


## Employment status

3.15 About 75% of the cannabis abusers were employed, either as full-time worker or casual/part-time worker. As for the other four groups of drug abusers, slightly less than 60% of them were employed. On the other hand, the percentage of unemployed persons was the greatest for heroin abusers (41.4%), as compared with about 20% to 33% for the other four groups of drug abusers.

3.16 Except for cough medicine abusers, a greater proportion of young drug abusers under-21 were found to be unemployed when compared with the corresponding percentages of drug abusers of all ages. A more significant proportion of these young drug abusers were found to be students, with the highest percentage of 27% for cough medicine abusers.

Chart 5 Single drug abusers by age group and employment status





## **Previous conviction**

3.17 A greater percentage (83.7%) of heroin abusers had previous conviction history, as compared with 66.2% for those who had taken benzodiazepines and less than 50% for the other three groups of drug abusers.

3.18 For young abusers aged under 21, the majority, or about 60%, of those persons taking heroin or benzodiazepines were previously convicted, as compared with less than 40% for the remaining three groups of drug abusers.

## **Reason for current drug abuse**

3.19 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.

3.20 For the under-21 groups, peer influence was the main reason of young drug abusers for taking heroin, cannabis or benzodiazepines. Besides, the main reason for cough medicine and amphetamines abusers was to relief boredom and curiosity respectively.

## **Age of first abuse**

3.21 The mean age of first abuse was in the range of 19.1 to 21.9. Analysed by age group, about two fifths of them started drug abuse at the age between 15 and 19 and three tenths at the age between 20 and 24.

3.22 Young abusers under 21 tended to start abusing cough medicine or heroin at a younger age. While the mean age of first abuse for those young persons taking cough medicine or heroin were 15.6 and 15.8 respectively, the mean ages for those abusing the other three types of drug ranged from 16.4 to 16.7.

## **Duration of drug use**

3.23 Except for heroin abusers, about 50% to 64% of the abusers had taken the drug for less than 2 years. The corresponding figure for heroin abusers was only 8.8%. A large proportion (58.9%) of the heroin abusers had abused the drug for 10 years or more, as compared with 16.7% for benzodiazepines abusers and less than 5% for abusers taking the other three types of drug.

3.24 For the under 21 groups, about 50% of those abusing cannabis, amphetamines or benzodiazepines had taken the drug for less than 1 year, as compared with 28.9% and 12.1% for those taking cough medicine and heroin respectively. Proportionally more young heroin abusers (60.7%) had taken the drug for 1 to 3 years. The corresponding percentages for the other four groups of drug abusers were in the range of 37.0% to 53.3%.

## **Usual daily expenditure on drug abuse**

3.25 Heroin abusers each day spent more money on drugs than the other four groups of drug abusers. The average daily expenditure for heroin abusers was \$278.6. Other drug abusers in average spent no more than \$162.6 on drugs each day.

3.26 Young abusers aged under 21 spent less money on drugs than drug abusers of all ages, except those taking amphetamines. The average daily expenditure for young persons spent on drugs varied from \$33.5 to \$215.5.

## **4. REPORTING HISTORY TO THE CRDA**

### **Time since first reported**

4.1 About 90% of the heroin abusers had been reported to the CRDA more than once. Among them, 55.6% had their first report submitted more than 10 years ago, 32.5% had been reported for less than 5 years and 11.8% for 5 - 9 years. For the other four groups of drug abusers, it was worth noting that only about 15% to 27% had been reported more than once to the CRDA, and among them, a large proportion, 64.3% to 86.3% had their first report submitted less than 2 years ago.

4.2 For the under 21 groups, more than 70% of the young heroin abusers had been reported to the CRDA more than once. Among them, 35.6% had their first report submitted less than 1 year ago, 54.1% had been reported for 1 to 2 years, and about 10% for 3 years or more. Similar to drug abusers of all ages, only a small proportion of young drug abusers, about 15% to 33%, taking the other types of drug had been reported more than once to the CRDA. Among these drug abusers, a large proportion of those taking amphetamines (84.2%), benzodiazepines (65.2%) or cannabis (60.5%) had their first report submitted less than 1 year ago. For cough medicine abusers, 30.6% had been reported for less than 1 year and another 38.8% for 1 to less than 2 years.

### **Reporting agencies ever contacted**

4.3 Except cough medicine abusers (47.0%), the majority of these drug abusers were reported by the Police. For heroin abusers, it is interesting to note that besides the Police, about 75% of them were also reported by the CSD and an even greater percentage (84.7%) had contacted the methadone clinics. Other treatment agencies that heroin abusers also commonly contacted were SARDA (42.6%), Wu Oi (12.2%), St. Stephen's Society (9.7%) and SRO (9.2%). For cough medicine abusers, a large proportion had contacted the outreaching and youth services teams (34.7%), as compared with about 3% to 17% for the other four groups of drug abusers.

4.4 Except for cough medicine abusers, the reporting agency that young abusers aged under 21 most commonly contacted was the Police. But their corresponding percentages, ranging from 55.7% to 68.6%, were slightly lower than those of all ages. For cough medicine abusers, the most commonly contacted agency was the outreaching and youth services teams (65.4%).



## Reporting agency first contacted

4.5 More proportions of the drug abusers (about 44.6% to 83.6%), except those taking heroin, were first identified by the Police. The next agency that these drug abusers first commonly contacted was the outreaching and youth services teams. Specifically, 34.3% of those taking cough medicine had contact with them. For heroin abusers, methadone clinics was the agency that they first contacted most (45.7%), followed by the Police (24.8%), CSD (15.3%) and SARDA (7.4%).

4.6 Other than those taking cough medicine, a larger proportion, 44.5% to 66.8%, of the young drug abusers under 21 were first reported by the Police. But young abusers taking cough medicine tended to first contact the outreaching and youth services teams most (65.0%).



## 5. COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF DRUG ABUSERS

5.1 Similar characteristics for these five groups of drug abusers are given as follows.

- a) Drug abuse was more prevalent among males, with the proportions ranging from 65% to 89%. Similar to drug abusers of all ages, males were also predominant among young drug abusers aged under 21, but the proportions of females were higher in this age group.
- b) More than a half of the drug abusers (over 58%) were never married. The corresponding percentages for the under 21 groups were even higher (over 93%).
- c) The majority of drug abusers (over 54%) had received lower secondary or above education. Except for young cough medicine abusers, the corresponding percentages for the under 21 groups were higher (over 91%).
- d) More than a half of the drug abusers, ranging from 54% to 74%, were employed.
- e) Higher percentages of these persons (35% to 44%) started to abuse drugs in the age bracket of 15-19.

5.2 Some of the characteristics of heroin abusers were found to be different from that of the other four groups of drug abusers, and they were given as below.

- a) For heroin abusers, slightly higher percentages (about 27% each) were observed in the age brackets 16-25 and 36-45 respectively. The majority of the other four groups of drug abusers (about 60% to 73%) were aged between 16 and 25.
- b) A large proportion of heroin abusers had received primary (41%) or lower secondary education (45%). For the other four groups of drug abusers, more than 60% of them had attained lower secondary.

- c) Proportionally more heroin abusers (41%) were found to be unemployed when compared with the other four groups of drug abusers (ranging from about 20% to 33%).
- d) Heroin abusers were found to have a longer drug use history, with about 60% had used the drug for ten years or more, in comparison with 17% for benzodiazepines abusers and 3% to 5% for the remaining three groups of drug abusers.

5.3 The following characteristics were also found to be different among these five groups of drug abusers.

- a) Larger proportions of heroin abusers (84%) or benzodiazepines (66%) were previously convicted than among those in the other three groups of drug abusers (less than 50% each).
- b) The main reason for heroin abusers to use the drug was to avoid discomfort of its absence, while that for those taking cannabis was because of peer influence. For abusers in cough medicine or benzodiazepines their main reason was to relief boredom. On the other hand, amphetamines abusers claimed curiosity as theirs.
- c) A greater proportion of persons taking heroin, cannabis or cough medicine were found to live in Kwun Tong; while that for those taking amphetamines or benzodiazepines, more percentages were reported to live in Yau Tsim Mong and Southern respectively.
- d) Except for those taking amphetamines, proportionally more (ranging from about 55% to 61%) drug abusers were found to live in public and aided rental blocks than in private housing (about 30% to 36%). For amphetamines abusers, equal proportions (about 47% each) of them resided in these two types of living quarters as mentioned above.



## 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF MULTIPLE DRUG ABUSERS

### General characteristics

6.1 Of the 26 179 reported drug abusers under study, 2 543, or about 9.7%, were multiple drug abusers. Among them, 2 166 (or 85.2%) took two types of drug together. A relatively small proportion of the multiple drug abusers had taken a combination of three or more types of drug. About 12% of them had abused three types of drug, and less than 3% for four or more.

6.2 As regards those abusers taking two types of drug, the more common groups of drugs taken together were heroin and benzodiazepines, and heroin and cannabis. In fact, heroin was the most predominant drug abused, and about 80% of them had taken heroin as one of the drugs. Details regarding the distribution of multiple drug abusers by different combinations of drugs taken are given in Appendix 2.

6.3 In order to have a better portrait of the characteristics between single and multiple drug abusers, those single drug abusers taking heroin/benzodiazepines and the multiple drug abusers taking both heroin and benzodiazepines are selected for further analysis. The results are given in the following paragraphs. Detailed statistics of the characteristics of these three groups of drug abusers are presented in Appendix 3.

### Comparison of selected characteristics between drug abusers taking heroin and benzodiazepines and single drug abusers taking heroin/benzodiazepines

6.4 Some characteristics for the heroin/benzodiazepines abusers and those multiple abusers taking both drugs together were similar. The majority of them were males (over 64%), employed (over 50%) and previously convicted (over 66%). Most of these drug abusers (over 54%) were also found to live in public and aided rental blocks.

6.5 Among these three groups of drug abusers, more similar characteristics were found between heroin abusers and those multiple abusers taking both heroin and benzodiazepines. About 40% of them each received either primary or lower secondary education. A greater proportion of them lived in Kwun Tong, and had abused the drugs for more than 10 years. The main reason for current drug abused was to avoid discomfort of its absence.

6.6            However, when analysed by other variables, there were also characteristics which were different among these three groups of drug abusers. The majority (about 60%) of drug abusers taking both drugs were aged between 26 and 40. Larger proportions (about 27% each) were observed in the age brackets 16-25 and 36-45 for the heroin abusers and majority (58.5%) were aged between 16 and 25 for benzodiazepines abusers. Besides, those abusers taking both drugs tended to start drug abuse earlier, with their average age of first drug abuse at 17.5 as compared with 20.7 for heroin abusers and 21.1 for benzodiazepines abusers.

**Statistics on Drug Abusers Reported in 1995 and 1996 by Major Types of Drug**

Variables under study	<u>Heroin</u>		<u>Cannabis</u>		<u>Cough Medicine</u>		<u>Amphetamines</u>		<u>Benzodiazepines</u>	
	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>I. Personal and Drug Abuse Characteristics</b>										
<b>(a) Sex</b>										
Male	77.4	88.9	82.6	86.0	79.5	85.6	65.0	71.8	61.4	64.6
Female	22.6	11.1	17.4	14.0	20.5	14.4	35.0	28.2	38.6	35.4
N	3302	20601	846	1987	254	542	123	294	88	212
<b>(b1) Age group (under 21)</b>										
Under 15	4.0		7.0		10.2		4.9		5.7	
15	7.4		11.5		17.7		9.8		12.5	
16	12.1		14.2		14.2		16.3		17.0	
17	17.6		14.9		14.6		18.7		23.9	
18	21.3		18.8		16.1		19.5		14.8	
19	19.4		16.7		15.0		13.0		15.9	
20	18.3		17.0		12.2		17.9		10.2	
Mean age	17.7		17.4		17.0		17.5		17.1	
N	3302		846		254		123		88	
<b>(b2) Age group (all ages)</b>										
Under 16		1.8		7.9		13.1		6.1		7.5
16 - 20		14.2		34.7		33.8		35.7		34.0
21 - 25		12.5		34.4		38.9		27.9		24.5
26 - 30		11.8		16.0		9.0		15.3		12.3
31 - 35		12.4		4.5		3.5		9.2		9.4
36 - 40		13.7		1.8		0.6		2.7		3.8
41 - 45		13.3		0.5		0.4		2.0		4.2
46 - 50		8.0		0.1		-		0.7		1.9
51 & over		12.2		0.1		0.7		0.3		2.4
Mean age		35.2		22.1		21.3		23.3		25.1
N		20601		1987		542		294		212



Variables under study	<u>Heroin</u>		<u>Cannabis</u>		<u>Cough Medicine</u>		<u>Amphetamines</u>		<u>Benzodiazepines</u>	
	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>(c) Marital status</b>										
Never married	96.1	58.8	98.1	89.8	99.2	92.2	98.3	85.2	93.0	73.9
Married/Cohabiting	3.4	32.7	1.9	8.9	0.8	7.2	1.7	12.1	7.0	20.8
Widowed	-	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	0.7	-	-
Divorced/Separated	0.4	7.7	-	1.3	-	0.6	-	2.1	-	5.3
N	3216	20279	824	1928	252	538	120	290	86	207
<b>(d) Educational attainment</b>										
No schooling/Kindergarten	0.1	4.7	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.9	-	0.3	-	1.4
Primary	5.5	40.8	5.5	8.2	7.5	6.2	3.4	5.9	3.5	20.3
Lower secondary	79.7	44.6	77.9	67.6	74.3	69.4	72.9	64.1	86.0	61.8
Upper secondary	14.6	9.4	15.8	21.5	17.0	23.1	22.9	27.2	10.5	14.0
Tertiary	0.2	0.5	0.6	2.2	0.4	0.4	0.8	2.4	-	2.4
N	3266	20197	824	1941	253	536	118	287	86	207
<b>(e) District of residence</b>										
<i>Hong Kong</i>										
Central & Western	1.1	2.0	3.6	4.0	3.7	3.2	10.2	9.1	2.4	1.9
Wan Chai	1.1	2.8	0.9	1.9	2.4	3.0	1.7	4.5	2.4	1.9
Eastern	5.6	5.4	6.1	6.1	9.8	8.0	8.5	5.2	3.5	5.3
Southern	3.5	2.8	9.6	8.4	11.0	8.8	16.9	11.1	16.5	15.0
<i>Kowloon</i>										
Yau Tsim Mong	4.1	9.1	4.1	6.3	2.0	5.1	6.8	11.5	7.1	4.9
Sham Shui Po	4.7	10.5	3.6	5.6	2.0	3.0	5.9	5.6	7.1	8.7
Kowloon City	3.2	4.5	4.6	6.5	2.9	6.1	6.8	7.7	4.7	6.3
Wong Tai Sin	5.3	9.3	7.5	7.0	12.7	10.5	1.7	3.1	2.4	6.8
Kwun Tong	11.9	12.4	10.2	9.6	14.3	13.0	10.2	9.8	10.6	12.6
<i>New Territories and Islands</i>										
Kwai Tsing	4.7	5.0	4.7	5.7	2.9	3.8	4.2	5.9	3.5	2.4
Tsuen Wan	4.4	5.9	4.3	4.5	2.0	2.9	1.7	2.8	3.5	2.9
Tuen Mun	19.6	9.6	6.6	5.5	8.6	8.6	2.5	2.1	9.4	8.7
Yuen Long	8.3	6.0	10.2	7.8	5.7	4.8	2.5	3.1	10.6	7.3
North	5.2	3.8	4.0	3.6	5.3	3.6	1.7	2.1	5.9	2.9
Tai Po	6.2	3.6	4.3	3.9	8.6	6.7	5.1	3.1	2.4	4.4
Sha Tin	8.4	5.2	7.5	7.7	4.5	6.7	8.5	9.1	3.5	4.4
Sai Kung	1.7	1.3	6.1	3.4	1.2	1.5	3.4	2.8	2.4	1.9
Islands	1.0	0.8	1.9	2.7	0.4	0.8	1.7	1.4	2.4	1.5
N	3232	19950	822	1928	245	525	118	287	85	206

Variables under study	<u>Heroin</u>		<u>Cannabis</u>		<u>Cough Medicine</u>		<u>Amphetamines</u>		<u>Benzodiazepines</u>	
	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>(f) Type of living quarters</b>										
Public & aided rental blocks	66.7	54.9	59.2	54.5	66.8	61.2	57.9	46.7	54.8	59.8
Public sector home ownership estates	4.9	2.6	2.8	2.5	3.1	3.4	5.6	2.9	5.5	3.6
Private housing	23.1	30.8	30.5	36.1	27.0	32.1	33.6	46.7	30.1	30.4
Housing Authority temporary housing	0.5	1.5	0.6	0.4	-	0.2	1.9	0.7	-	0.5
Squatter huts	1.2	2.0	2.8	2.4	0.9	1.2	-	0.7	4.1	1.5
Other housing	3.7	8.2	4.1	4.1	2.2	2.0	0.9	2.2	5.5	4.1
N	3236	19919	789	1886	226	505	107	276	73	194
<b>(g) Employment status</b>										
Full-time worker	41.1	45.4	57.0	72.1	39.7	53.8	40.8	55.4	46.7	52.1
Casual/Part-time worker	5.2	8.9	3.4	2.1	3.0	3.1	2.5	3.8	2.7	4.1
Worker in illicit trade	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1	-	0.4	-	-	-	-
Unemployed	44.7	41.4	24.2	18.8	27.4	27.8	35.8	31.4	37.3	33.0
Home-maker	0.5	1.1	-	0.3	-	0.4	-	0.7	-	4.1
Student	7.8	1.3	13.2	5.6	27.0	12.5	17.5	7.3	13.3	5.2
Retired	-	1.3	-	-	-	0.6	-	-	-	1.5
Others	0.4	0.2	2.1	1.0	3.0	1.5	3.3	1.4	-	-
N	3247	20197	795	1919	237	522	120	287	75	194
<b>(h) Previous conviction</b>										
Yes, drug-related offences	15.3	29.1	3.9	6.7	5.8	7.9	7.8	11.6	11.0	11.8
Yes, other offences	28.2	13.4	26.2	31.4	24.0	27.7	28.4	29.1	42.5	31.8
Yes, both drug-related and other offences	14.9	40.7	4.5	9.4	2.7	4.4	1.7	8.4	6.8	21.5
Yes, offences unknown	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.4	1.3	2.6	0.9	0.4	1.4	1.0
No	40.9	16.3	64.8	52.2	66.2	57.4	61.2	50.5	38.4	33.8
N	3221	20326	776	1907	225	505	116	285	73	195

Variables under study	<u>Heroin</u>		<u>Cannabis</u>		<u>Cough Medicine</u>		<u>Amphetamines</u>		<u>Benzodiazepines</u>	
	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Reported reason for current drug use										
Curiosity	53.6	40.3	26.0	27.2	16.2	15.7	41.7	38.1	30.8	26.8
Peer influence/To identify with peers	59.3	39.7	60.4	59.1	48.0	44.3	37.5	34.5	41.0	29.3
Relief of boredom/depression/anxiety	18.6	19.7	38.4	35.6	54.9	50.4	18.8	19.0	38.5	32.9
For self-medication	0.9	3.7	0.4	0.7	4.0	6.4	-	2.4	-	13.4
Avoid discomfort of its absence	44.5	61.2	1.2	2.0	21.4	28.6	6.3	11.9	7.7	24.4
To seek euphoria or sensory satisfaction	8.3	15.9	34.8	32.9	27.2	25.0	14.6	14.3	33.3	19.5
Under influence of the partner	2.0	1.3	0.4	0.3	2.3	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.6	1.2
Other reason	4.3	2.9	5.2	4.7	2.3	2.9	6.3	6.0	2.6	4.9
N	2759	18319	250	298	173	280	48	84	39	82
(j1) Age of first abuse (under 21)										
Under 13	3.1		2.6		6.9		3.0		-	
13	6.7		4.2		12.7		3.0		10.8	
14	15.4		9.4		18.5		11.0		6.2	
15	19.2		11.4		14.5		9.0		20.0	
16	21.9		16.4		14.5		21.0		20.0	
17	16.7		18.6		9.8		16.0		15.4	
18	10.3		16.7		9.2		15.0		12.3	
19	5.0		13.0		8.1		13.0		6.2	
20	1.5		7.6		5.8		9.0		9.2	
Mean age of first abuse	15.8		16.7		15.6		16.7		16.4	
N	3218		683		173		100		65	
(j2) Age of first abuse (all ages)										
Under 15		9.6		7.6		17.7		7.6		7.8
15 - 19		43.6		41.4		39.1		34.5		39.4
20 - 24		25.6		32.6		32.0		29.5		29.4
25 - 29		10.9		13.8		7.4		17.0		13.9
30 - 34		5.9		3.3		3.4		6.8		6.7
35 - 39		2.3		0.9		0.2		2.3		0.6
40 & over		2.1		0.3		0.2		2.3		2.2
Mean age of first abuse		20.7		20.3		19.1		21.9		21.1
N		20366		1735		447		264		180



Variables under study	<u>Heroin</u>		<u>Cannabis</u>		<u>Cough Medicine</u>		<u>Amphetamines</u>		<u>Benzodiazepines</u>	
	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>(k) Duration of drug use</b>										
Less than 1 year	12.1	3.6	45.8	38.8	28.9	26.2	52.0	43.2	44.6	32.2
1 year	17.3	5.2	26.0	23.3	22.0	21.0	19.0	20.8	24.6	17.8
2 years	23.0	6.7	13.2	11.5	19.7	12.5	14.0	11.4	12.3	5.0
3 years	20.4	6.3	7.8	6.8	11.6	8.9	4.0	7.2	13.8	10.0
4 years	14.1	5.8	4.3	4.7	7.5	7.2	5.0	4.9	1.5	4.4
5 - 9 years	13.0	13.5	2.9	10.7	10.4	19.2	6.0	9.8	3.1	13.9
10 - 19 years	0.1	23.4	-	3.9	-	4.0	-	1.5	-	10.6
20 - 29 years	-	22.2	-	0.3	-	0.2	-	1.1	-	3.9
30 years or more	-	13.3	-	0.1	-	0.7	-	-	-	2.2
Mean duration (years)	2.5	15.1	1.1	2.1	1.9	3.1	1.1	2.0	1.1	4.9
N	3213	20358	681	1733	173	447	100	264	65	180
<b>(l) Usual daily expenditure on drug abuse (\$)</b>										
Under 50	1.2	0.4	53.1	50.0	83.0	68.5	18.2	11.3	50.0	29.5
50 - 99	7.6	2.8	32.7	27.6	12.3	21.0	13.6	15.1	50.0	36.4
100 - 199	41.1	24.8	14.3	18.4	4.7	10.5	27.3	32.1	-	25.0
200 - 299	26.3	31.2	-	-	-	-	18.2	22.6	-	4.5
300 - 399	12.8	21.0	-	1.3	-	-	9.1	11.3	-	2.3
400 - 499	5.9	9.6	-	-	-	-	4.5	1.9	-	2.3
500 and over	5.2	10.1	-	2.6	-	-	9.1	5.7	-	-
Average expenditure (\$)	215.5	278.6	45.9	63.9	33.5	43.0	174.4	162.6	42.1	82.8
N	2605	18096	49	76	106	200	22	53	8	44

Variables under study	<u>Heroin</u>		<u>Cannabis</u>		<u>Cough Medicine</u>		<u>Amphetamines</u>		<u>Benzodiazepines</u>	
	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
II. Reporting History to the CRDA										
(m) Time since first reported										
Less than 1 year	35.6	8.8	60.5	48.8	30.6	34.9	84.2	72.7	65.2	52.4
1 - less than 2 years	30.8	7.8	21.1	17.4	38.8	30.9	5.3	13.6	13.0	11.9
2 - less than 3 years	23.3	7.4	12.2	12.9	16.5	14.1	5.3	2.3	21.7	26.2
3 - less than 4 years	7.5	4.7	2.7	6.3	9.4	12.1	5.3	6.8	-	-
4 - less than 5 years	2.3	3.8	2.0	3.5	3.5	4.7	-	2.3	-	2.4
5 - less than 10 years	0.3	11.8	1.4	11.1	1.2	3.4	-	2.3	-	7.1
10 - less than 20 years	*	54.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20 years or more	-	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mean time lag (years)	1.5	10.6	1.1	1.8	1.6	1.8	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.7
N	2373	18286	147	287	85	149	19	44	23	42
(n) Agency ever contacted										
Police	67.0	79.0	68.6	85.1	26.4	47.0	63.4	76.5	55.7	62.3
CSD	45.3	73.3	2.1	2.4	2.8	7.2	16.3	17.7	8.0	13.7
Methadone clinics	57.8	84.7	-	0.1	-	1.1	-	-	-	0.9
SARDA	13.5	42.6	0.2	0.2	2.8	3.7	1.6	1.0	1.1	4.2
SRO	0.6	9.2	-	0.1	-	0.2	-	-	-	0.5
Operation Dawn	2.8	2.6	-	-	-	0.2	0.8	0.3	-	-
St. Stephen's Society	3.7	9.7	-	0.1	-	0.6	0.8	0.3	-	0.5
Wu Oi Christian Centre	9.4	12.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7	-	0.7	-	0.9
DACARS	1.0	1.4	0.1	0.1	-	0.6	-	-	-	-
Ling Oi	2.1	0.9	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
PS 33	0.1	*	1.2	0.9	4.7	10.5	2.4	1.4	-	5.2
Other treatment agencies	3.8	5.4	0.4	0.2	1.6	1.8	0.8	0.7	-	1.4
SWD	11.1	14.2	4.3	2.4	2.4	1.5	3.3	1.7	5.7	3.3
Outreaching and youth services	16.5	3.1	29.3	13.5	65.4	34.7	33.3	15.6	38.6	16.5
Hospitals and clinics	0.6	3.1	0.1	0.4	2.4	4.8	2.4	1.7	1.1	3.3
N	3302	20601	846	1987	254	542	123	294	88	212

Variables under study	<u>Heroin</u>		<u>Cannabis</u>		<u>Cough Medicine</u>		<u>Amphetamines</u>		<u>Benzodiazepines</u>	
	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages	Under 21	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(o) Agency first contacted										
Police	44.5	24.8	66.8	83.6	25.2	44.6	61.0	74.8	53.4	58.5
CSD	7.3	15.3	0.2	0.5	1.2	2.6	1.6	6.8	3.4	8.5
Methadone clinics	25.3	45.7	-	0.1	-	1.1	-	-	-	0.9
SARDA	3.0	7.4	-	0.1	1.2	2.2	-	-	1.1	4.2
SRO	0.1	0.5	-	0.1	-	0.2	-	-	-	0.5
Operation Dawn	0.4	0.2	-	-	-	-	0.8	0.3	-	-
St. Stephen's Society	0.7	0.2	-	0.1	-	-	0.8	0.3	-	0.5
Wu Oi Christian Centre	2.0	0.9	0.1	0.1	-	0.4	-	0.3	-	0.5
DACARS	0.1	*	0.1	0.1	-	0.4	-	-	-	-
Ling Oi	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
PS 33	0.1	*	0.5	0.4	3.9	8.7	-	-	-	3.8
Other treatment agencies	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.2	-	0.9	-	-	-	0.9
SWD	2.1	1.4	2.6	1.4	1.6	0.9	1.6	0.7	4.5	2.8
Outreaching and youth services	13.2	2.4	29.2	13.4	65.0	34.3	33.3	15.6	36.4	15.6
Hospitals and clinics	0.2	0.2	-	0.2	2.0	3.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	3.3
N	3302	20601	846	1987	254	542	123	294	88	212



**Distribution of Multiple Drug Abusers By Different Combinations of Drugs Taken**

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>1. No. of abusers taking two types of drug</b>	<b>2166</b>	<b>85.2</b>
<b>Major combination of two types of drug</b>		
a. Heroin and benzodiazepines	872	40.3
b. Heroin and cannabis	276	12.7
c. Cannabis and benzodiazepines	116	5.4
d. Heroin and amphetamines	110	5.1
e. Heroin and cough medicine	110	5.1
f. Cannabis and cough medicine	94	4.3
g. Cannabis and amphetamines	79	3.6
<b>2. No. of abusers taking three types of drug</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Major combination of three types of drug</b>		
a. Heroin, amphetamines and cannabis	34	11.1
b. Heroin, benzodiazepines and cannabis	34	11.1
c. Heroin, cannabis and cough medicine	26	8.5
d. Heroin, amphetamines and benzodiazepines	18	5.9
e. Cannabis, benzodiazepines and cough medicine	17	5.6
f. Heroin, benzodiazepines and cough medicine	16	5.2
g. Cannabis, amphetamines and benzodiazepines	15	4.9
h. Cannabis, amphetamines and cough medicine	15	4.9
<b>3. No. of abusers taking four types of drug</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>4. No. of abusers taking five or more types of drug</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2543</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Statistics on Drug Abusers Reported in 1995 and 1996**  
**Taking Selected Types of Single or Multiple Drug**

Variables under study	Combination of Heroin and Benzodiazepines	Heroin only	Benzodiazepines only
	%	%	%
<b>I. Personal and Drug Abuse Characteristics</b>			
<b>(a) Sex</b>			
Male	90.6	88.9	64.6
Female	9.4	11.1	35.4
N	872	20601	212
<b>(b) Age group</b>			
Under 16	0.7	1.8	7.5
16 - 20	9.7	14.2	34.0
21 - 25	12.3	12.5	24.5
26 - 30	18.7	11.8	12.3
31 - 35	20.1	12.4	9.4
36 - 40	19.3	13.7	3.8
41 - 45	12.6	13.3	4.2
46 - 50	4.8	8.0	1.9
51 & over	1.8	12.2	2.4
Mean age	32.5	35.2	25.1
N	872	20601	212
<b>(c) Marital status</b>			
Never married	70.8	58.8	73.9
Married/Cohabiting	21.0	32.7	20.8
Widowed	0.5	0.8	-
Divorced/Separated	7.7	7.7	5.3
N	860	20279	207

Variables under study	Combination of Heroin and Benzodiazepines	Heroin only	Benzodiazepines only
	%	%	%
<b>(d) Educational attainment</b>			
No schooling/Kindergarten	2.6	4.7	1.4
Primary	44.8	40.8	20.3
Lower secondary	45.6	44.6	61.8
Upper secondary	6.9	9.4	14.0
Tertiary	0.1	0.5	2.4
N	854	20197	207
<b>(e) District of residence</b>			
<i>Hong Kong</i>			
Central & Western	0.6	2.0	1.9
Wan Chai	0.7	2.8	1.9
Eastern	18.8	5.4	5.3
Southern	13.8	2.8	15.0
<i>Kowloon</i>			
Yau Tsim Mong	3.4	9.1	4.9
Sham Shui Po	9.2	10.5	8.7
Kowloon City	2.7	4.5	6.3
Wong Tai Sin	7.9	9.3	6.8
Kwun Tong	22.1	12.4	12.6
<i>New Territories and Islands</i>			
Kwai Tsing	3.7	5.0	2.4
Tsuen Wan	2.4	5.9	2.9
Tuen Mun	4.8	9.6	8.7
Yuen Long	1.5	6.0	7.3
North	0.9	3.8	2.9
Tai Po	1.9	3.6	4.4
Sha Tin	4.1	5.2	4.4
Sai Kung	1.3	1.3	1.9
Islands	0.2	0.8	1.5
N	848	19950	206



Variables under study	Combination of Heroin and Benzodiazepines	Heroin only	Benzodiazepines only
	%	%	%
<b>(f) Type of living quarters</b>			
Public & aided rental blocks	76.4	54.9	59.8
Public sector home ownership estates	2.7	2.6	3.6
Private housing	14.9	30.8	30.4
Housing Authority temporary housing	0.9	1.5	0.5
Squatter huts	0.6	2.0	1.5
Other housing	4.4	8.2	4.1
N	844	19919	194
<b>(g) Employment status</b>			
Full-time worker	38.9	45.4	52.1
Casual/Part-time worker	10.2	8.9	4.1
Worker in illicit trade	0.2	0.4	-
Unemployed	49.1	41.4	33.0
Home-maker	1.2	1.1	4.1
Student	-	1.3	5.2
Retired	-	1.3	1.5
Others	0.4	0.2	-
N	843	20197	194
<b>(h) Previous conviction</b>			
Yes, drug-related offences	29.6	29.1	11.8
Yes, other offences	9.9	13.4	31.8
Yes, both drug-related and other offences	52.4	40.7	21.5
Yes, offences unknown	1.2	0.5	1.0
No	7.0	16.3	33.8
N	861	20326	195

Variables under study	Combination of Heroin and Benzodiazepines	Heroin only	Benzodiazepines only
	%	%	%
(i) Reported reason for current drug use			
Curiosity	54.8	40.3	26.8
Peer influence/To identify with peers	46.2	39.7	29.3
Relief of boredom/ depression/anxiety	32.7	19.7	32.9
For self-medication	4.4	3.7	13.4
Avoid discomfort of its absence	71.5	61.2	24.4
To seek euphoria or sensory satisfaction	32.9	15.9	19.5
Under influence of the partner	3.8	1.3	1.2
Other reasons	3.9	2.9	4.9
N	845	18319	82
(j) Age of first abuse			
Under 15	18.2	9.6	7.8
15 - 19	55.9	43.6	39.4
20 - 24	21.1	25.6	29.4
25 - 29	3.7	10.9	13.9
30 - 34	0.9	5.9	6.7
35 - 39	0.2	2.3	0.6
40 & over	-	2.1	2.2
Mean age of first abuse	17.5	20.7	21.1
N	869	20366	180
(k) Duration of drug use			
Less than 1 year	0.3	3.6	32.2
1 year	1.4	5.2	17.8
2 years	2.3	6.7	5.0
3 years	3.2	6.3	10.0
4 years	4.3	5.8	4.4
5 - 9 years	13.5	13.5	13.9
10 - 19 years	40.2	23.4	10.6
20 - 29 years	27.3	22.2	3.9
30 years and over	7.6	13.3	2.2
Mean duration (years)	16.1	15.1	4.9
N	869	20358	180

Variables under study	Combination of Heroin and Benzodiazepines	Heroin only	Benzodiazepines only
	%	%	%
(l) Usual daily expenditure on drug abuse (\$)			
Under 50	0.7	0.4	29.5
50 - 99	3.1	2.8	36.4
100 - 199	35.0	24.8	25.0
200 - 299	34.8	31.2	4.5
300 - 399	16.7	21.0	2.3
400 - 499	5.8	9.6	2.3
500 and over	3.9	10.1	-
Average expenditure (\$)	242.9	278.6	82.8
N	844	18096	44
II. Reporting History to the CRDA			
(m) Time since first reported			
Less than 1 year	5.7	8.8	52.4
1 - less than 2 years	5.0	7.8	11.9
2 - less than 3 years	7.1	7.4	26.2
3 - less than 4 years	4.3	4.7	-
4 - less than 5 years	2.9	3.8	2.4
5 - less than 10 years	12.1	11.8	7.1
10 - less than 20 years	59.9	54.0	-
20 years and over	3.0	1.6	-
Mean time lag (years)	11.4	10.6	1.7
N	860	18286	42



Variables under study	Combination of Heroin and Benzodiazepines	Heroin only	Benzodiazepines only
	%	%	%
<b>(n) Agency ever contacted</b>			
Police	93.9	79.0	62.3
CSD	88.9	73.3	13.7
Methadone clinics	93.0	84.7	0.9
SARDA	65.4	42.6	4.2
SRO	22.0	9.2	0.5
Operation Dawn	5.0	2.6	-
St. Stephen's Society	21.7	9.7	0.5
Wu Oi Christian Centre	21.6	12.2	0.9
DACARS	2.3	1.4	-
Ling Oi	1.6	0.9	-
PS 33	0.9	*	5.2
Other treatment agencies	8.9	5.4	1.4
SWD	18.3	14.2	3.3
Outreaching and youth services	3.6	3.1	16.5
Hospitals and clinics	7.2	3.1	3.3
N	872	20601	212
<b>(o) Agency first contacted</b>			
Police	18.2	24.8	58.5
CSD	14.6	15.3	8.5
Methadone clinics	49.8	45.7	0.9
SARDA	10.7	7.4	4.2
SRO	0.5	0.5	0.5
Operation Dawn	-	0.2	-
St. Stephen's Society	0.6	0.2	0.5
Wu Oi Christian Centre	0.5	0.9	0.5
DACARS	-	*	-
Ling Oi	-	0.1	-
PS 33	0.1	*	3.8
Other treatment agencies	0.5	0.7	0.9
SWD	2.1	1.4	2.8
Outreaching and youth services	2.5	2.4	15.6
Hospitals and clinics	-	0.2	3.3
N	872	20601	212



**Notes to the report**

(1) Full descriptions of the reporting agencies quoted in this report are as follows :

CSD	-	Correctional Services Department
SARDA	-	The Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers
SRO	-	The Society for the Rehabilitation of Offenders, Hong Kong
Operation Dawn	-	Operation Dawn Limited
Wu Oi	-	Wu Oi Christian Centre
DACARS	-	Drug Addict Counselling and Rehabilitation Service Limited
Ling Oi	-	Ling Oi Youth Centre, Finnish Missionary Society
PS33	-	Hong Kong Christian Service PS33
SWD	-	Social Welfare Department

(2) Unless otherwise specified, figures in appendices 1 and 3 are percentages. The number based on which the percentages of each characteristic are derived are shown as N, which refers to the number of drug abusers with the specified characteristic.

(3) The conventions adopted in appendices 1 and 3 are as follows :

\* - less than 0.05

- - nil