

**Key Statistics since the Promulgation of  
the First Three-year Plan in 1997**

Over the years, the Government has been providing support and a large amount of resources to anti-drug service units. One of the goals is to promote drug treatment and rehabilitation (T&R) services that respond to the drug situation and best suit the needs of the society. Currently, a variety of T&R services are available to drug abusers with different backgrounds and treatment needs. Details on the multi-modality approach to T&R services in Hong Kong are set out in Chapter 2. In the previous nine Three-year Plans, more than 360 strategic directions were drawn up and have been largely implemented as appropriate.

Based on the statistics compiled by the Central Registry of Drug Abuse and other relevant sources providing reference on the local drug scene, the latest drug situation in Hong Kong at the time of writing this Three-year Plan is set out in Chapter 3. Meanwhile, the ensuing paragraphs outline the major changes in the local drug scene and the addition of facilities focusing on psychotropic substance abusers (PSAs) since the promulgation of the first Three-year Plan in 1997.

- (i) Number of drug users dropped significantly, but the proportion of young drug users remains high
- The total number of reported drug abusers was 17 635 in 1997, and reached a peak at 18 513 in 2001. Since then, the number decreased steadily until 2006. Although there was a rebound between 2006 and 2009, and again in 2021, the overall number of reported drug abusers has generally been on a downward trend in the past decade, which is also reflected by the numbers of new admission of various T&R services.

Figure 11: Total number of reported drug abusers since 1997

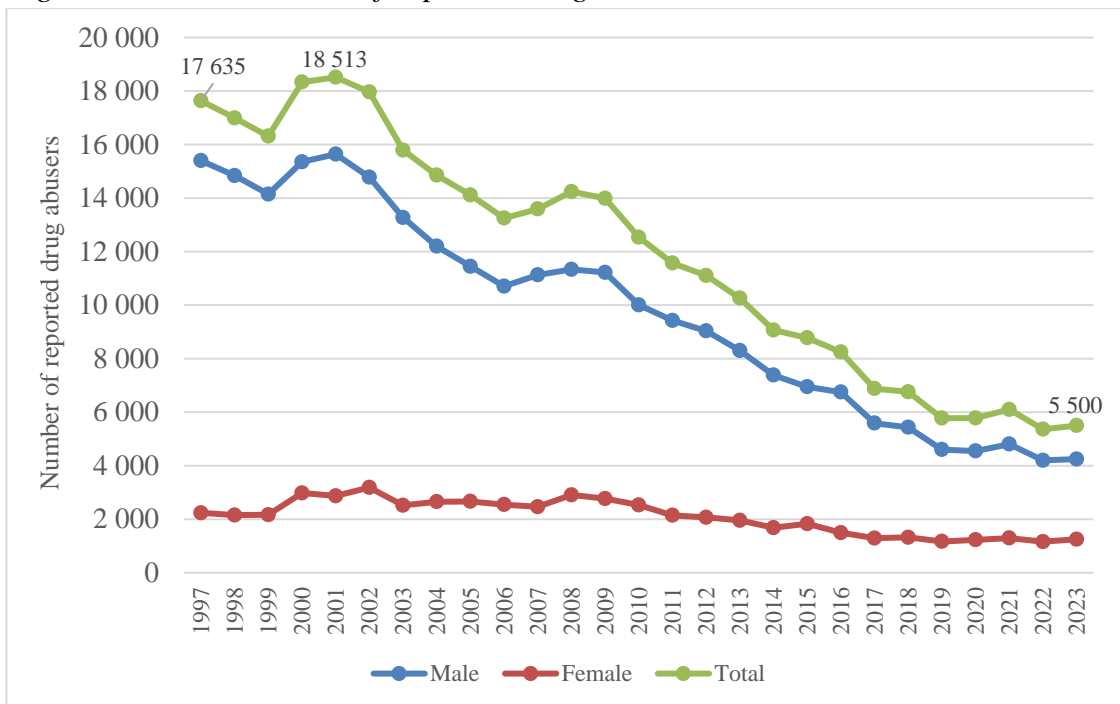
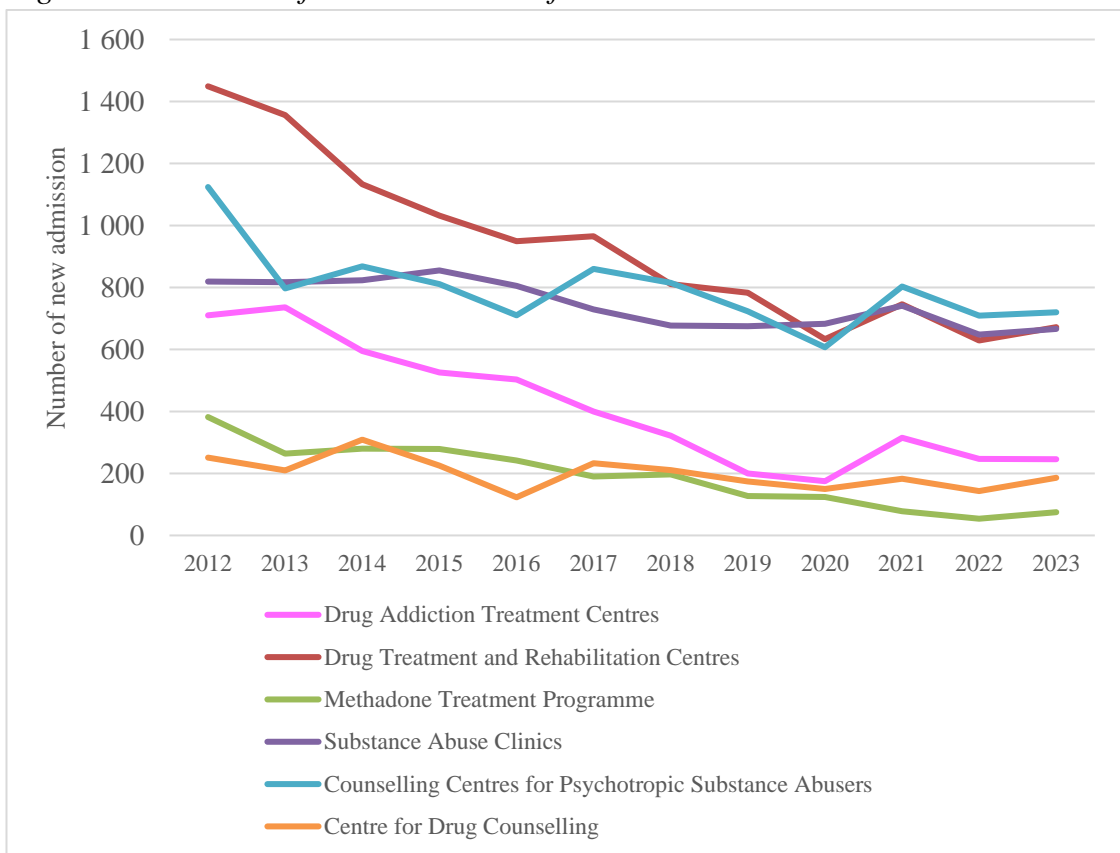
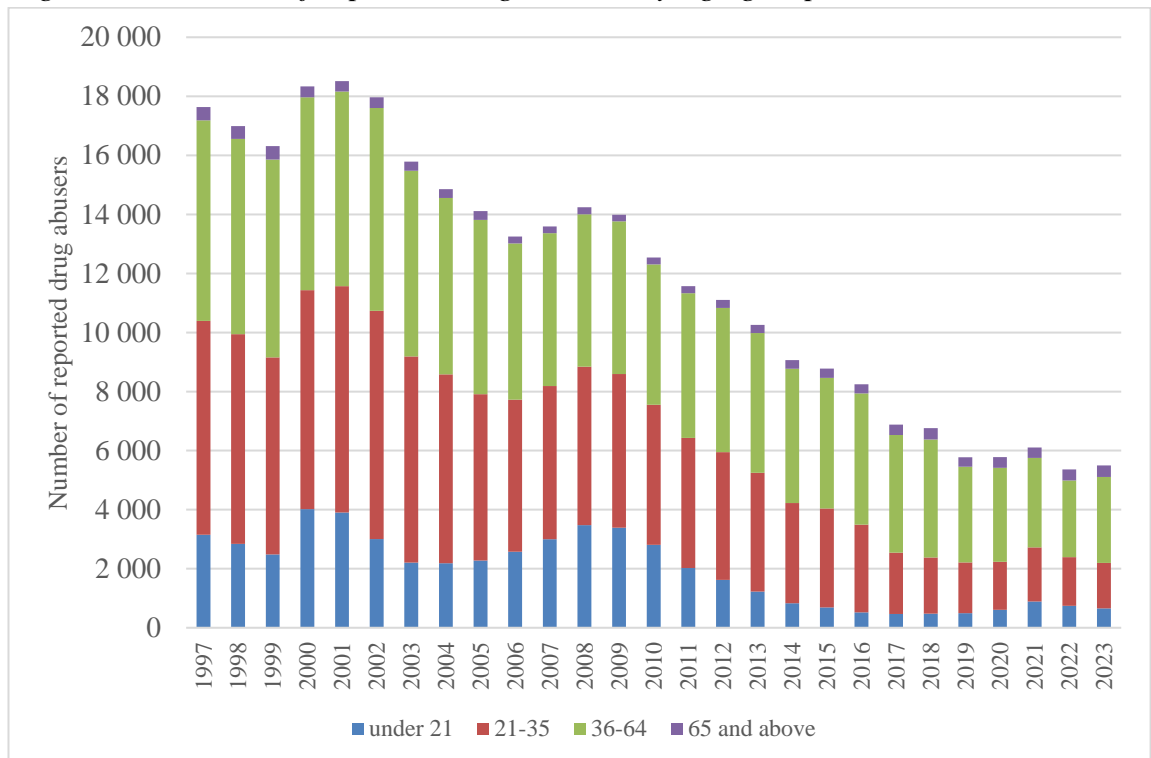


Figure 12: Number of new admission of various T&R services since 2012



- The proportion of young drug abusers under the age of 35 is still at a relatively high level. From 1997 to 2014, more than half of the reported cases were young drug abusers aged 35 or below. In 2008, there was as high as 62% of the reported drug abusers in this age group, 24% were under 21 years old. The situation has improved thereafter, dropping to about 35% in 2018. Nevertheless, the trend has reversed since then. Statistics in 2023 show that 40% of the reported drug abusers are younger than 36 years old and 12% are below 21 years old.

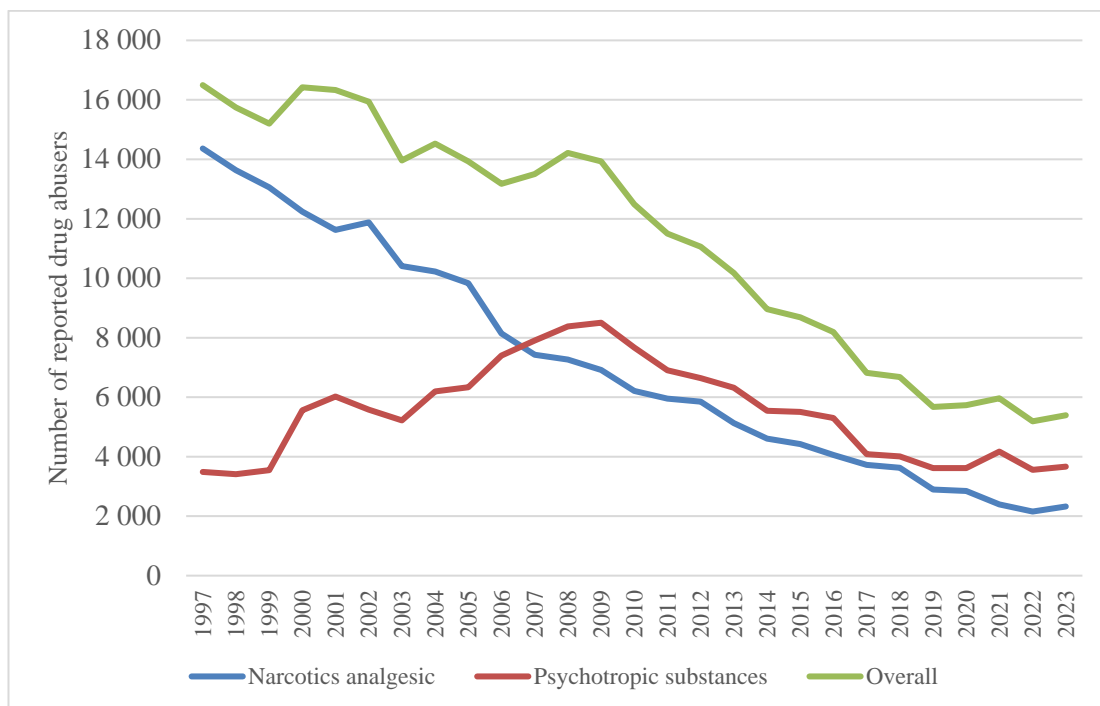
*Figure 13: Number of reported drug abusers by age groups*



(ii) Number of narcotic analgesics abusers continued to decline while number of psychotropic substance abusers is on the rise

- In the 1990s, around 90% of the reported drug abusers took narcotic analgesics (in particular heroin). While the number of narcotic analgesics abusers has continued to decline, the number of PSAs has increased drastically, with the number soaring from 3 488 in 1997 to 8 505 in 2009. The number of PSAs has exceeded the number of those taking narcotic analgesics since 2007. In 2023, the number of reported PSAs accounted for 68% of the total number of reported drug abusers.

*Figure 14: Number of reported narcotics analgesics abusers and psychotropic substance abusers*

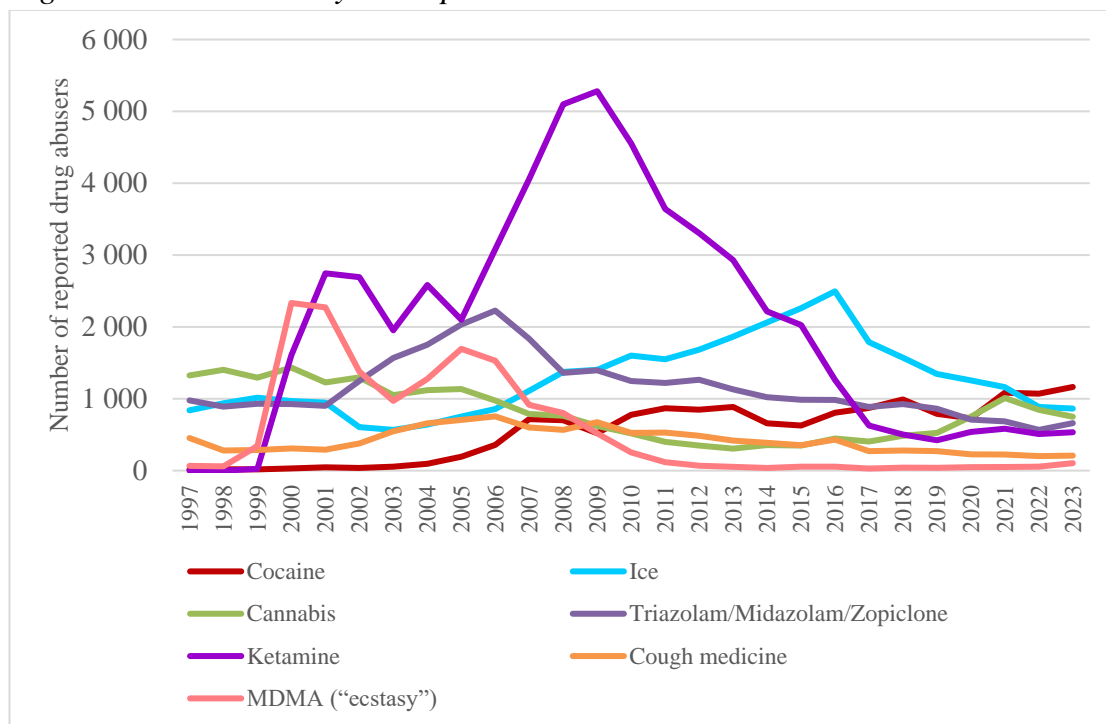


*Remark: More than one type of drugs abused may be reported for an individual drug abuser in a given year; and drug abusers without information on the type of drug abused are excluded.*

(iii) Prevalence of psychotropic substances in different periods of time

- The number of PSAs rose sharply in the late 1990s. Ketamine (commonly known as “K”) was the most common psychotropic substance abused during the period from 2001 to 2014. MDMA (commonly known as “ecstasy”) and triazolam/midazolam/zopiclone also emerged at different times during the same period, and became the second most common psychotropic substance abused other than “K” at the time. Later, prevalence of methamphetamine (commonly known as “Ice”) continued to grow and surpassed “K” in 2015 to become the most common psychotropic substance abused. Since 2022, cocaine has overtaken “Ice” and become the most common psychotropic substance abused.

Figure 15: Common Psychotropic Substances Abused since 1997



- In view of the sharp rise in the number of PSAs in the late 1990s and 2000s, the Government had put in more resources to provide counselling and rehabilitative services for PSAs. As a result, Counselling Centre for Psychotropic Substance Abusers (CCPSAs) and Substance Abuse Clinics (SACs) were established strategically to meet the increasing demand for services.
- The first CCPSA, PS33 - Tsimshatsui Centre operated by Hong Kong Christian Service, was set up in 1988. Subsequently, in view of the surging number of PSAs, two more centres were set up before 1999 and eight more established between 2002 and 2010. Since 2010, 11 cluster-based centres have been maintained to serve all districts in Hong Kong.
- To fill the service gap in medical and psychiatric treatment for substance abusers, the Hospital Authority (HA) established a pilot SAC in Kowloon Hospital in 1994. Following the success of the pilot scheme, a total of six SACs were established in 1995. The number of SACs was further increased to seven in 2008 and gradually to nine in 2010 in order to meet the service demand. The nine SACs under the seven hospital clusters of HA have been maintained since then.