



NATIONAL DRUG OBSERVATORY REPORT 2023



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ii	Table of Figures
iii	Table of Tables
v	Acronyms
1	Acknowledgement
2	Introduction
3	Executive Summary
5-21	1.0 Reducing Supply & Availability of Drugs
5	1.1 <i>Mauritius Police Force</i>
9	1.2 <i>Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit</i>
16	1.3 <i>Forensic Science Laboratory</i>
17	1.4 <i>Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs Anti-Narcotics Section</i>
19	1.5 <i>The Judiciary</i>
21	1.6 <i>Mauritius Prisons Service</i>
22-39	2.0 Drug Related Health Services
22	2.1 <i>Admissions in Public Health Institutions (Regional Hospitals & Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre)</i>
28	2.2 <i>Drug Related Dedicated Health, Care & Support Services</i>
28	2.2.1 <i>Addiction Units-Outpatient Services (MohW)</i>
30	2.2.2 <i>Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme (MohW)</i>
33	2.2.3 <i>Suboxone Detoxification Programme (MohW)</i>
35	2.2.4 <i>Nenuphar Ward (MohW)</i>
36	2.2.5 <i>Rehabilitative, Care & Support Services by NGOs</i>
38	2.2.6 <i>Needle Exchange Programme</i>
39	2.3 <i>Death Related to Drug Use-Police Medical Unit</i>
40-42	3.0 Drug Use Prevention Programme
40	3.1 <i>Harm Reduction Unit - MoHW</i>
41	3.2 <i>Ministry of Education and Human Resource</i>
41	3.3 <i>ADSU Educational Cell</i>
42	3.4 <i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>

TABLE OF FIGURES

5	Figure 1 <i>Number of cases of drug offence and drug offence rate per 1,000 population, 2019 – 2023</i>
6	Figure 2 <i>Percentage of drug offences by type of drug, 2023</i>
7	Figure 3 <i>Trend of crime and misdemeanour-related drug offences, 2019 – 2023</i>
11	Figure 4 <i>Distribution of arrests for drug offences by class of drug, 2023</i>
17	Figure 5 <i>Number of cases of drug seizures, 2019 – 2023</i>
18	Figure 6 <i>Number of drug seizures by class of drug, 2023-MRA CANS</i>
21	Figure 7 <i>Trend of drug-specific convicted offences as a percentage of total convicted drug offences for the last five years, 2019 – 2023</i>
22	Figure 8 <i>Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by sex, 2019 – 2023</i>
23	Figure 9 <i>Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by age group, 2023</i>
24	Figure 10 <i>Number of admissions related to drug use by district of residence, 2023</i>
25	Figure 11 <i>Number of cases of Inpatient treatment in Public Health Institutions by type of illicit drug, 2019 – 2023</i>
28	Figure 12 <i>Monthly number of new cases and follow up cases (Addiction Units), 2023</i>
29	Figure 13 <i>New cases at Addiction Units by age group, 2023</i>
30	Figure 14 <i>New cases of main drug used at Addiction Units, 2023</i>
31	Figure 15 <i>Number of New cases at Methadone Centres by age group, 2023</i>
31	Figure 16 <i>Number of new cases at Methadone Centres by main drug of use, 2023</i>
32	Figure 17 <i>Number of New cases at Methadone Centres of which Polydrug Users by age group, 2023</i>

TABLE OF TABLES

5	Table 1 <i>Number of cases of drug offence and drug offence rate per 1,000 population, 2019 – 2023</i>
6	Table 2 <i>Number of drug offences and all offences (excluding road traffic contraventions), 2019 – 2023</i>
7	Table 3 <i>Number of reported cases related to drug offences, 2019 – 2023</i>
8	Table 4 <i>Number of juvenile drug offenders reported by classification of offence and sex, 2020-2023</i>
8	Table 5 <i>Number of persons prosecuted under drug offences by category of offence, 2020 – 2023</i>
9	Table 6 <i>Number of drug cases and arrests reported by type of drug offence, 2019–2023</i>
10	Table 7 <i>Cases of drug offence reported for known and unknown suspects by type of drug, 2023</i>
10	Table 8 <i>Arrests for drug offences by class of drug, 2023</i>
11	Table 9 <i>Number of arrests by ADSU for other drug related offences, 2023</i>
12	Table 10 <i>Number of drug offence cases by type of offence and type of drugs, 2023</i>
13	Table 11 <i>Number of arrests by type of drug disaggregated by type of offence, 2023</i>
14	Table 12 <i>Number of drug seizures by class, weight of drug and street value, 2023</i>
15	Table 13 <i>Street value of drug seized by class of illicit substance, 2019–2023</i>
16	Table 14 <i>Quarterly number of confirmed cases of illicit substances, 2023 (FSL)</i>
18	Table 15 <i>Number of drug seizure cases by Mauritius Revenue Authority by class of drug, 2019 – 2023</i>
19	Table 16 <i>Drug offences convicted by type of offence, 2019 – 2023</i>
19	Table 17 <i>Drug offences convicted by type of sentence, 2019 – 2023</i>
20	Table 18 <i>Drug offences convicted by class of drug, disaggregated by type of offence, 2019 – 2023</i>
21	Table 19 <i>Number of admissions of convicts to prison by drug offences and non-drug offences, 2019 – 2023</i>
22	Table 20 <i>Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by sex, 2019 – 2023</i>
23	Table 21 <i>Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by age group and sex, 2023</i>
24	Table 22 <i>Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by district of residence and sex, 2023</i>
25	Table 23 <i>Number of cases of Inpatient treatment related to drug use by presumed illicit substance used, and by sex, 2023</i>
27	Table 24 <i>Percentage distribution of illicit drug-use-related admissions by type of presumed substance used, age group and sex, 2023</i>

28	Table 25 <i>Number of new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at Addictions Unit due to drug use by age group, 2023</i>
29	Table 26 <i>New cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at Addiction Units by main drug use, 2021 – 2023</i>
30	Table 27 <i>Number of induction cases on Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) programme, 2023</i>
30	Table 28 <i>Number of new cases attending MST centres by age group, 2023</i>
32	Table 29 <i>Number of Follow Up cases & Reviews at Methadone Centres, 2023</i>
32	Table 30 <i>Number of beneficiaries accessing methadone dispensing daily by health region, as at December 2023</i>
33	Table 31 <i>Admissions for Suboxone Detoxification Programme at Mahebourg Hospital, 2019 – 2023</i>
33	Table 32 <i>Number of admissions for Suboxone Detoxification Programme, at Mahebourg Hospital by age group, 2023</i>
34	Table 33 <i>Number of admissions by gender for Suboxone Detoxification Programme at Centre Frangipane, 2023</i>
34	Table 34 <i>Number of admissions by age group for Suboxone Detoxification Programme, at Centre Frangipane by age group, 2023</i>
35	Table 35 <i>Number of admission (minors / young adults aged < 24 years) at Nenuphar centre by age group, 2023</i>
36	Table 36 <i>Number of new cases by NGOs seeking rehabilitative treatment due to drug use, 2019 – 2023</i>
37	Table 37 <i>Number of new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment due to drug use by age group of patients, 2019 – 2023</i>
37	Table 38 <i>Distribution of new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at NGOs (rehabilitation centres) by type of substance used and gender, 2023</i>
38	Table 39 <i>Number of Syringes and Needles distributed by MOHW & NGOs for Needle Exchange Programme (NEP), 2023</i>
38	Table 40 <i>Number of Syringes distributed, 2020 – 2023</i>
39	Table 41 <i>Number of deaths related to drug use by sex, age group and class of drugs detected, 2023</i>
40	Table 42 <i>Number of sessions and number of persons reached, 2019 – 2023 (HRU-MoHW)</i>
41	Table 43 <i>Number of schools and students reached by zone, 'Get Connected' programme, 2023 (MoEHR)</i>
41	Table 44 <i>Number of sessions and number of persons reached, 2023</i>
42	Table 45 <i>Number of people reached through drug prevention activities by NGOs and target group, 2023</i>

ACRONYMS

ACTRESA	Ayurveda Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substances Abusers
ADSU	Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit
ATS	Amphetamine Type Stimulants
BSMHCC	Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre
CANS	Customs Anti-Narcotics Section
CATR	Centre D’Accueil de Terre Rouge
CDS	Centre De Solidarité Pour Une Nouvelle Vie
CFRG	Centre Frère René Guillemin
CNS	Central Nervous System
CUT	Collectif Urgence Toxida
CYC	Correctional Youth Centre
DDR	Dangerous Drug Register
DDA	Dangerous Drug Act
FSL	Forensic Science Laboratory
LSD	Lysergic Acid Diethylamide
HRU	Harm Reduction Unit
MDMA	Methylenedioxymethamphetamine
MoEHR	Ministry of Education and Human Resource
MoHW	Ministry of Health and Wellness
MRA	Mauritius Revenue Authority
MST	Methadone Substitution Therapy
NDS	National Drug Secretariat
NEP	Needle Exchange Programme
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSP	Needle and Syringe Programmes
PSEA	Private Secondary Education Authority
RYC	Rehabilitation Youth Centre

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- Mauritius Police Force;
- Mauritius Revenue Authority (CANS);
- Forensic Science Laboratory;
- Ministry of Health and Wellness;
- Ministry of Education and Human Resource and
- Non-Governmental Organisations:
 - Action for Health Care and Prevention
 - Ailes
 - Ayurveda Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substances Abusers (ACTReSA)
 - Centre de Solidarité Pour Une Nouvelle Vie
 - Chrysalide
 - Collectif Urgence Toxida
 - Dr Idrice Goomany Centre
 - Groupe A de Cassis
 - Groupe Renaissance de Mahebourg
 - HELP De-Addiction
 - Sangram Sewa Sadan

INTRODUCTION

Mauritius continues to grapple with the drugs problem despite efforts by all stakeholders involved on different fronts to counter drug trafficking and drug use in the country.

Generally, the response to the drug issue across the world articulates around three main strategies:

(i) Reducing the supply and availability of drugs,

which encompasses drug seizures, tracking down drug traffickers, dismantling the drug production, cultivation and drug supply networks as well as fighting drug related crimes including financial crimes.

This endeavour involves several key sectors ranging from the Police, the Customs, Financial regulation institutions and the Judiciary amongst others.

(ii) Providing an appropriate health response to People Who Used Drugs,

through a continuum of interventions including harm reduction measures, overdose management, medicated assisted therapy (treatment), detoxification, rehabilitation services, care and support for re-integration.

(iii) Reducing the demand for drugs through drug use prevention programmes, targeting not only those considered as the most vulnerable, particularly the youth but also the community at large.

For prevention programme to be impactful, it needs to be evidence-based.

The National Drug Observatory Report 2023, presents factual data generated by the different institutions, Ministries, departments and Non-Governmental Organisations through their respective activities or services in the field of drugs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE

In 2023, the number of registered drug offences reported by the Mauritius Police Force decreased by 6.6% from 4,502 to 4,205 compared to 2022, resulting in a fall in the drug offence rate per 1,000 population from 3.6 to 3.3 persons.

In 2023, out of the 4,205 drug offences reported, 38.6% were cannabis (commonly known as “gandia”) related offences, 29.1% were heroin related offences, 19.5 % were for synthetic cannabinoids and 2.0% were for sedatives/tranquilizers.

THE ADSU

In 2023, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) of the Mauritius Police Force has reported 3,327 drug offence cases, of which, there were 2,600 arrests. For the period 2019-2023, the average annual number of cases and arrests by the ADSU was respectively 3,571 drug offence cases, against 3,072 drug-related arrests.

FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY (FSL)

In 2023, some 3,750 confirmed cases of illicit substances were reported by the FSL. Cannabis was the main substance confirmed, with 39.7% of cases. Heroin cases constituted 33.3%, followed by new psychoactive substances, 21.8% and the remaining 5.3% of cases were attributed to other drugs.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY CUSTOMS ANTI-NARCOTICS SECTION

For period 2019 up to 2023, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA)-Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS) has made 312 drug seizure cases. During the same period, the least annual number of seizure cases occurred in the year 2020 with 38 cases while the peak annual seizure cases was reported in the year 2019 with 126 cases. In 2023, there were 53 seizure cases.

Cannabis, Opioids and new psychoactive substances constituted nearly 90% of the seizure cases for the period concerned.

THE JUDICIARY

In 2023, the number of convicted drug offences was 1,422 against 2,177 in 2022. In 2023, out of the 1,422 convicted drug offences reported by the Judiciary, 85.7% were associated to possession of drugs, 6.3% to cultivation of cannabis, 3.3% to consumption of drugs, 3.2% to dealing of drugs, and 1.4% to importation of drugs.

77.8% of convicted cases were sentenced with fines while 21.5% were sentenced to imprisonment.

ADMISSIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

In 2023, among the 1,039 admissions in public health institutions 933 (89.8%) were male. Compared to year 2022, admissions increased by 3.3% from 903 to 933 in male and 1.0% from 105 to 106 in female with an overall increase of 3.1% that is 1,008 (2022) to 1,039 (2023).

Nearly 40% of the admissions in 2023 were due to new psychoactive substances followed by Opioids (Heroin) with 34% of cases.

In 2023, most of the inpatient treatment cases in PHI were between the age group of 18-39 years with 72.3% of the total admissions.

ADDICTION UNITS- OUTPATIENT SERVICES

In 2023, the five Addiction Units under the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW) had registered 764 new cases seeking treatment services for drug use. The average monthly number of new cases was 64 while for follow-up cases the monthly average was 345.

93% of the cases attending the Addiction Units, identified Heroin as the main drug of use.

METHADONE SUBSTITUTION THERAPY

In 2023, out of 2,138 new cases registered at the Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) centres, some 1,639 cases were induced on methadone with 1,450 (88.5%) males against 189 (11.5%) females.

Over 95% of cases seeking Methadone Substitution Therapy in 2023 were related to Heroin as main drug of use.

As at December 2023, 7,831 persons were on the Methadone Substitution Therapy.

THE NENUPHAR WARD FOR MINORS AND YOUNG ADULTS

In 2023, nearly 50% of the admissions at the Nenuphar ward for minors and young adults were in the age group 15-17 years with almost an equal proportion among the age group 18-23 years.

REHABILITATIVE, CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES BY NGOS

In 2023, a total of 1,891 new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment, care and support at the ten different NGOs offering services to PWUDs.

The average annual number of people seeking rehabilitative treatment at the different NGOs for the period 2019-2023 around 2007.

The number of people seeking rehabilitative treatment was the lowest (1,833) in 2022 and the highest in 2021 with 2,345 cases.

Among the 1,891 new cases attending NGOs in 2023, 83% were related to Heroin as main drug of use.

THE NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The Needle Exchange Programme (NEP) is implemented by the Harm Reduction Unit (HRU) of the MoHW and Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Collectif Urgence Toxida (CUT).

In 2023, some 975,112 needles and 943,729 syringes were distributed to people who inject drugs. Out of the 975,112 needles, MoHW accounted for 55.9% of the distribution, against 44.1% for the NGO Collectif Urgence Toxida.

DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAMME

The HRU of the MoHW reached out to some 11,485 students in educational institutions, 2,020 workers at their workplace and 954 individuals in the community with sensitisation programmes against drugs in 2023.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource (MoEHR) implemented the evidence-based drug prevention programme for students of Grade 8 known as the 'Get Connected' Programme in 112 State Secondary Schools of all the 4 educational zones and 49 schools under the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA). A total of 10,327 students were reached

In 2023, drug prevention programme of the education cell of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) targeted students of educational institutions, the population in general at community level and employees at the workplace. The total number of persons reached, was 8,448.

The ten (10) NGOs which reported implementation of drug prevention activities in 2023 reached out to a total of 18,417 people of which 2,446 students at educational institutions.

1.0 REDUCING SUPPLY AND AVAILABILITY OF DRUGS

The first chapter provides data related to drug supply reduction interventions namely arrests, seizures, prosecutions as well as convictions.

Drug supply reduction through drug seizures and arrests are ensured by the Mauritius Police Force, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU), as well as by the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA)-Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS).

In view of providing an overall picture of the trend and pattern, of the different aspects of drug offences, over the recent years, namely the drug offence rate, the type of illicit substances involved as well as the category of offence amongst others, data from the ESI report of Statistics Mauritius 2023 and previous years have been referred to.

With regards to convictions, the annual report of the Judiciary (2023) has been referred to.

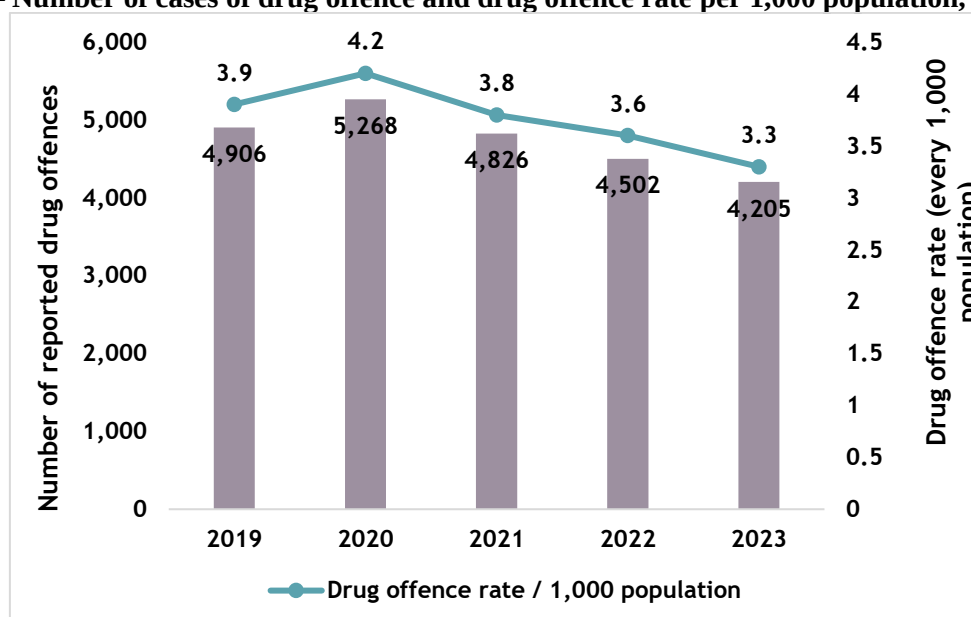
1.1 Mauritius Police Force

The number of registered drug offences in 2023 was 4,205 against 4,502 in 2022, resulting in a decrease in the drug offence rate per 1,000 population from 3.6 to 3.3 persons for the same period (Table 1).

Table 1 – Number of cases of drug offence and drug offence rate per 1,000 population, 2019 – 2023

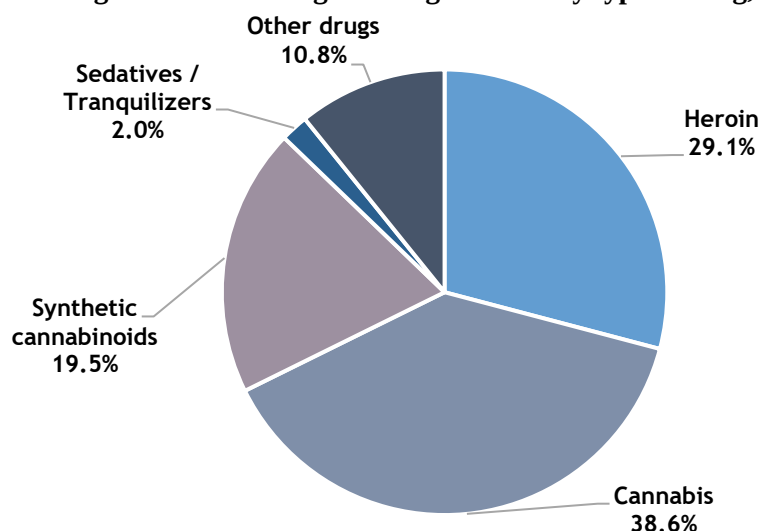
Year	Drug offences		Percentage change (%)	
	Number of drug cases	Rate / 1,000 population	Drug cases	Rate / 1,000 population
2019	4,906	3.9	-	-
2020	5,268	4.2	7.4	7.7
2021	4,826	3.8	-8.4	-9.5
2022	4,502	3.6	-6.7	-5.3
2023	4,205	3.3	-6.6	-8.3

Figure 1 – Number of cases of drug offence and drug offence rate per 1,000 population, 2019 – 2023



In 2023, of the 4,205 drug offences registered, 38.6% were cannabis (commonly known as “gandia”) related offences, 29.1% were heroin related offences, 19.5 % were for synthetic cannabinoids and 2.0% were for sedatives/tranquilizers. Other type of drugs, comprising mainly methadone and hashish, represented 10.8% of drug offences (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Percentage of drug offences by type of drug, 2023



Source: ESI 2023- Statistics Mauritius

The percentage of drug offence on total offences excluding road traffic contraventions was 7.2% in 2023, slightly higher than 2022, whereby it was 7.8%.

During the five-year period 2019 -2023 the highest proportion of drug offences over all offences was observed in 2019 with 4,906 drug offences representing 10.9% of the total offences (Table 2).

Table 2 – Number of drug offences and all offences (excluding road traffic contraventions), 2019 – 2023

Year	Offences reported (excluding road traffic contraventions)		% drug offences on total offences (excluding road traffic contraventions)
	Drug offences	All offences (Including drug)	
2019	4,906	45,004	10.9
2020	5,268	55,402	9.5
2021	4,826	72,935	6.6
2022	4,502	57,846	7.8
2023	4,205	58,794	7.2

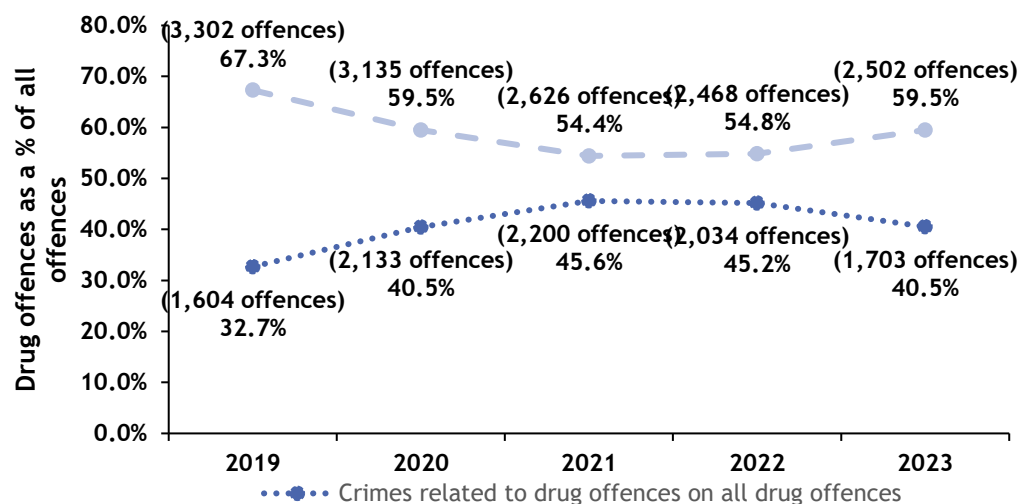
With regard to the category of drug offence, it has been observed that the annual average percentage of drug offence for the past five-year period 2019-2023, related to crimes was 40% while for the misdemeanour category of drug offence, it was 60%.

In 2023, the number of crime related drug offence was 1,703 (40.5%), while for misdemeanour, it was 2,502 representing 59.5% of drug offences (Table 3).

Number and Proportion of Drug Related Offences by Category of Offence
Table 3 – Number of reported cases related to drug offences, 2019 – 2023

Reported cases related to drug offences	2019	% on total drug offence	% on all offences (excl. contraventions)	2020	% on total drug offence	% on all offences (excl. contraventions)	2021	% on total drug offence	% on all offences (excl. contraventions)	2022	% on total drug offence	% on all offences (excl. contraventions)	2023	% on total drug offence	% on all offences (excl. contraventions)
Crimes	1,604	32.7	3.6	2,133	40.5	3.9	2,200	45.6	3.0	2,034	45.2	3.5	1,703	40.5	2.9
Misdemeanours	3,302	67.3	7.3	3,135	59.5	5.7	2,626	54.4	3.6	2,468	54.8	4.3	2,502	59.5	4.3
Total drug offences	4,906	100.0	10.9	5,268	100.0	9.5	4,826	100.0	6.6	4,502	100.0	7.8	4,205	100.0	7.2
Number of offences (excluding contraventions)	45,004	-	100	55,402	-	100	72,935	-	100	57,846	-	100	58,749	-	100

Figure 3 – Trend of crime and misdemeanour-related drug offences, 2019 – 2023



Source: ESI 2019-2023-Statistics Mauritius

It is noted that in 2023, there were 28 juveniles' drug offenders of which 1 was female.

For the years 2020-2023, the average annual number of juvenile offenders was 477 with the highest number in 2020 with 521 cases. The average annual juvenile drug offenders for the same period was 36 of which only one female juvenile reported in 2023.

The percentage of drug offence on total offence among juveniles which was 9.4% in 2020, decreased to 5.7% in 2023 (Table 4).

Table 4 – Number of juvenile drug offenders reported by classification of offence and sex, 2020-2023

Drug offences	2020			2021			2022			2023		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
Crimes	25	-	25	23	-	23	23	-	23	8	-	8
Misdemeanours ¹	24	-	24	13	-	13	9	-	9	19	1	20
Total crime and misdemeanours related to drug offences among juveniles	49	-	49	36	-	36	32	-	32	27	1	28
Total crime and misdemeanours offences among juveniles	457	64	521	391	45	436	418	44	462	438	54	492
% Drug offences on Total offences among juveniles	10.7	-	9.4	9.2	-	8.3	7.7	-	6.9	6.2	1.9	5.7

In 2023, the number of persons prosecuted for drug offences was 1,761, representing 6.8% of the total prosecutions.

Of the 1,761 prosecutions, 639 were prosecuted as crimes, while the remaining 1,122 were prosecuted as misdemeanours.

In 2023, the total number of prosecutions was 25,862 compared to 15,903 for the year 2022.

Similarly, prosecutions for drug related offences, which was 2,360 in 2022 decreased to 1,761 in 2023 (Table 5).

Table 5 – Number of persons prosecuted under drug offences by category of offence, 2020 – 2023

Drug offences	2020			2021			2022			2023		
	Adults	Juveniles	Total	Adults	Juveniles	Total	Adults	Juveniles	Total	Adults	Juveniles	Total
Crimes	616	9	625	1,222	4	1,226	780	4	784	639	0	639
Misdemeanours	1,029	8	1,037	1,726	12	1,738	1,575	1	1,576	1,120	2	1,122
Total drug offences	1,645	17	1,662	2,948	16	2,964	2,355	5	2,360	1,759	2	1,761
Total offences (excluding contraventions)	12,806	420	13,226	14,359	197	14,556	15,740	163	15,903	25,850	12	25,862
% Drug offences on total offences	12.8	4.0	12.6	20.5	8.1	20.4	15.0	3.1	14.8	6.8	16.7	6.8

Source: ESI 2020-2023-Statistics Mauritius

¹ Category: Crime-severe drug offences
Misdemeanour-less severe drug offences

1.2 Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit

In 2023, the ADSU of the Mauritius Police Force has reported 3,327 drug offence cases, with 2,600 arrests. For the period 2019-2023, the average annual number of cases and arrests effected by the ADSU was respectively 3,571 drug for drug offences, against 3,072 drug-related arrests. In 2023, it can be observed that the nature of drug offences reported is mainly characterised by possession of drugs, 54.8%, followed by dealing of drugs, 41.8%. Cultivation of cannabis plant represented 2.1% of cases while importation of drugs, money laundering and obstruction to police were at 0.9%, 0.2% and 0.1% respectively. Drug related arrests for possession decreased from 1,826 in 2019 to 1,424 in 2023. As for dealing related arrests, which was 1,521 in 2020, decreased to reach 1,088 in 2023 (Table 6).

Table 6 – Number of drug cases and arrests reported by type of drug offence, 2019–2023

Type of drug offence	Number of cases						Number of arrests					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Percentage (%) Year 2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Percentage (%) Year 2023
Possession / Consumption	1,813	1,671	1,572	1,684	1,604	48.2	1,826	1,678	1,571	1,434	1,424	54.8
Dealing	934	1,479	1,437	1,507	1,177	35.4	993	1,521	1,496	1,403	1,088	41.8
Cultivating	454	518	536	460	404	12.1	118	148	182	129	54	2.1
Importation / Conspiracy for Importation	102	41	37	54	38	1.1	108	23	23	43	24	0.9
Obstruction to Police	2	7	10	3	4	0.1	14	9	10	5	2	0.1
Money Laundering	2	4	3	24	17	0.5	5	8	2	5	6	0.2
Pick Up / In Transit	-	17	28	23	20	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	0.0
Failing to keep DDR¹	-	-	-	56	6	0.2	-	-	-	3	1	0.0
Non-Compliance with DDA-Prescription	-	-	-	-	6	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	0.0
Possession of Utensils / Apparatus / Other Articles	-	-	-	44	49	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	0.0
Prohibited Goods	-	-	-	5	2	0.1	-	-	-	5	1	0.0
All drug offences	3,307	3,737	3,623	3,860	3,327	100.0	3,064	3,387	3,284	3,027	2,600	100.0

¹ refers to *Dangerous Drug Register*

Out of the 3,327 reported drug offence cases in 2023, 342 (10.3%) cases related to importation, pickup and cultivation, were cases involving unknown suspects. Among the cases of unknown suspects, the majority was related to cultivation of cannabis plants with 89.5%. 5.5% of unknown suspects cases were related to heroin, cocaine and synthetic cannabinoids combined (Table 7).

Table 7 – Cases of drug offence reported for known and unknown suspects by type of drug, 2023

Drug offence for known / unknown suspects	Number of cases	Percentage (%)
Total of known suspects	2,985	89.7
Total of unknown suspects	342	10.3
Total drug offence cases	3,327	100.0
Drug offence (Importation, Cultivation & Pick Up) for unknown suspects by type of drugs		
<i>Gandia</i> ¹	315	92.1
<i>Heroin</i>	8	2.3
<i>Cocaine</i>	2	0.6
<i>Synthetic Cannabinoids</i>	9	2.6
<i>Methamphetamine</i>	3	0.9
<i>Amphetamine</i>	1	0.3
<i>Ecstasy</i>	1	0.3
<i>Sedative / Tranquilizers</i>	1	0.3
<i>Hashish</i>	2	0.6
Total	342	100.0

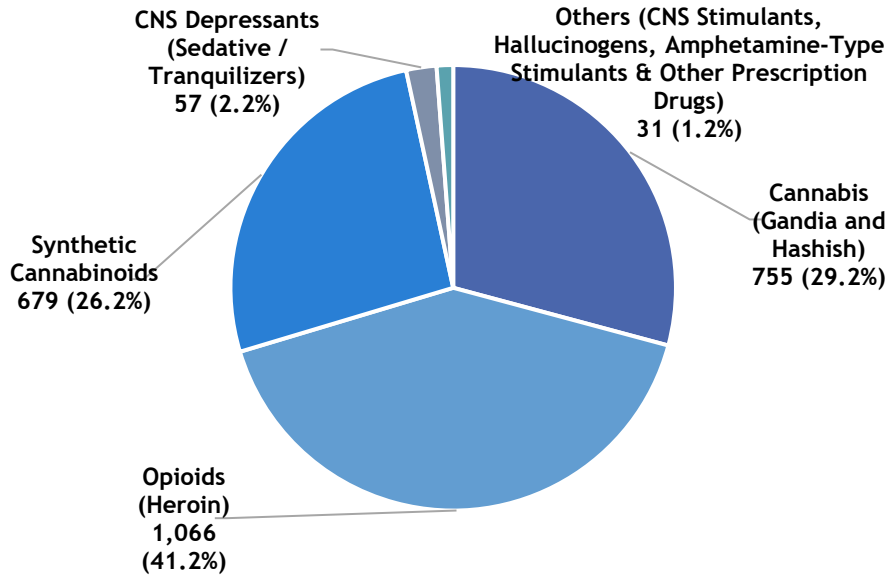
¹ includes 306 cases of cultivation

The distribution of drug-related arrests by ADSU in 2023, examined by class of drugs, showed that arrest for opioids namely heroin, accounted for 41.2% of arrests. The second most important class of drugs, namely, cannabis products, (*Gandia* and *Hashish*) accounted for 29.2% of arrests. Synthetic Cannabinoids accounted for 26.2% of ADSU arrests, while CNS depressants was at 2.2% and the remaining 1.2% of arrests included CNS stimulants namely cocaine and Khat, Hallucinogens, Amphetamine -Type stimulants and other prescription drugs (Table 8).

Table 8 – Arrests for drug offences by class of drug, 2023

Class of Illicit Substances	Number of arrests	Percentage (%)
Cannabis (<i>Gandia</i> and <i>Hashish</i>)	755	29.2
Opioids (<i>Heroin</i>)	1,066	41.2
Synthetic Cannabinoids	679	26.2
CNS Stimulants (<i>Cocaine</i> & <i>Khat</i>)	9	0.3
CNS Depressants (<i>Sedative</i> / <i>Tranquilizers</i>)	57	2.2
Hallucinogens (<i>LSD</i>)	4	0.2
Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (<i>ATS</i>)	6	0.2
Other Prescription Drugs	12	0.5
All illicit substances	2,588	100.0

Excluding 12 cases of Money Laundering, Obstruction to Police, etc. at Table 9

Figure 4 – Distribution of arrests for drug offences by class of drug, 2023

In 2023, among the 12 arrests under the category of “other drug related offences”, 50% was due to money laundering while conspiracy for importation, obstruction to police and failing to keep dangerous drug register stood at 25.0%, 16.7% and 8.3% respectively (Table 9).

Table 9 – Number of arrests by ADSU for other drug related offences, 2023

Other drug related offences	Number of arrests	Percentage (%)
Money Laundering	6	50.0
Obstruction to Police	2	16.7
Failing to keep Dangerous Drug Register	1	8.3
Conspiracy for Importation	3	25.0
All drug related offences	12	100.0

In 2023, of the 1,604 drug offences for possession, 43.0% were related to Heroin followed by cannabis/hashish with 28.6% and synthetic cannabinoids, 25.3%. For Dealing, 34.5% were due to Heroin, 32.3% were due to cannabis/hashish, Synthetic cannabinoids represented 27.7%. With regard to importation cases, 34.2% was related to cannabis followed by 15.8% for Synthetic cannabinoids while 35.0% of the pickup cases were related to Synthetic cannabinoids and 30.0% were for Heroin (Table 10).

Table 10 – Number of drug offence cases by type of offence and type of drugs, 2023

Type of drug offence	Gandia	Hashish	Synthetic Cannabinoids	Heroin	LSD	Cocaine / Khat	Sedatives / Tranquilizers	Amphetamine-Type Stimulants	Other Prescription Drugs	Other	All drug types
Possession / Consumption	438	22	406	689	3	-	37	1	8	-	1,604
Dealing	351	29	326	406	1	6	43	6	9	-	1,177
Cultivating	404	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	404
Importation / Conspiracy for Importation	13	3	6	5	-	3	1	4	3	-	38
Obstruction to Police	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Money Laundering	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	17
Pickup / In Transit	4	1	7	6	-	-	1	1	-	-	20
Possession of Utensils / Apparatus / Other Articles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49	49
Prohibited Goods	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Failing to keep register up to date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
Failing to take reasonable steps to ascertain a prescription is genuine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
All drug offences	1,210	55	745	1,106	4	9	82	12	20	84	3,327

In 2023, among those who were arrested by ADSU for possession of drugs, it was observed that 46.6% was for heroin followed by synthetic cannabinoids with 25.5%, while arrests related to cannabis/hashish were 25.7%.

With regard to dealing related arrests, 36.8% were due to Heroin, 28.7% were due Synthetic cannabinoids, 29.5% were due to cannabis/hashish. 54.1% of the importation related arrests was due to cannabis/hashish followed by 16.7% for Synthetic cannabinoids and Heroin represented 12.5% of the arrests (Table 11).

Table 11 – Number of arrests by type of drug disaggregated by type of offence, 2023

Type of drug offence	Gandia	Hashish	Synthetic Cannabinoids	Heroin	LSD	Cocaine / Khat	Sedatives / Tranquilizers	Amphetamine-Type Stimulants	Other Prescription Drugs	Other	All drug types
Possession / Consumption	350	16	363	663	3	-	23	1	5	-	1,424
Dealing	295	27	312	400	1	8	34	5	6	-	1,088
Cultivating	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54
Importation / Conspiracy for Importation	11	2	4	3	-	1	-	-	3	-	24
Obstruction to Police	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Money Laundering	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
Prohibited Goods	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Failing to keep register up to date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
All drug offences	710	45	679	1,066	4	9	57	6	14	10	2,600

In 2023, the reported total street value of drugs seized by the ADSU, amounted to 1.2 billion Mauritian Rupees, out of which, 555 million rupees (46.3%) were associated to seizures of opioids (essentially heroin). Street value of cannabis products involving cannabis herbs and hashish, represented 22.3% (Rs267M) of the total street value seized, while New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) stood at 28.5% (Rs339M), CNS stimulants, such as cocaine and Khat were at 2.8% (Table 12).

Table 12 – Number of drug seizures by class, weight of drug and street value, 2023

Drug class	Illicit substance	Units	Weight (Kilograms)	Street value (Million Rupees)
Opioids	Heroin	-	37.00	554.93
	Buprenorphine (<i>Tablet</i>)	37	-	0.09
Cannabis Products	Cannabis	-	211.96	254.35
	Hashish	-	2.58	12.90
New Psychoactive Substances	Synthetic Cannabinoids	-	7.51	37.56
	Synthetic Cannabinoids - Import	-	17.06	255.96
	Synthetic Cannabinoids - Import - Liquid form (<i>ml</i>)	3,011	-	45.17
	Synthetic Cannabinoids - Papers imbedded in Drug Solution	31 A4 size paper + 508 Paper strips	-	2.65
CNS Stimulants	Cocaine	-	2.10	31.54
	Khat		0.07	0.09
	Methamphetamine	-	0.11	1.59
CNS Depressants	Sedatives / Tranquilizers (<i>Tablet</i>)	9,639	-	0.96
Hallucinogens	LSD (<i>Patch</i>)	7	-	0.01
Others	Xylazine + Synthetic Cathinone	-	0.01	0.15
All drug classes				1,197.95

For the five-year period 2019-2023, the reported street value of drugs seized by the ADSU amounted to 10.0 billion rupees, out of which, an estimated street value of roughly 6.9 billion rupees (68.8%) were associated to seizures of heroin.

For the same five-year period, street value of cocaine was the second most important drug value seized, that is, 1.5 billion rupees (14.5%), Synthetic cannabinoids accounted for 0.6 billion rupees (5.8%) hashish 0.5 billion rupees (5.4%), Cannabis herbs seized amounted to nearly 0.5 billion rupees (5.1%) of the total street value seized between 2019 and 2023 (Table 13).

Table 13 – Street value of drug seized by class of illicit substance, 2019–2023

Drug class	Illicit substance	Street value (Million Rupees)					
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total (2019 - 2023)
Opioids	Heroin	699.47	342.23	4,463.45	821.65	554.93	6,881.73
	Buprenorphine (Tablet)	5.57	0.33	-	1.62	0.09	7.61
Cannabis Products	Cannabis	14.21	43.58	113.60	85.89	254.35	511.63
	Hashish	132.27	9.26	124.97	257.20	12.90	536.60
New Psychoactive Substances	Synthetic Cannabinoids	11.12	12.72	12.84	21.06	37.56	95.29
	Synthetic Cannabinoids - Import	26.02	53.68	61.98	1.61	255.96	399.25
	Synthetic Cannabinoids - Import - Liquid form (ml)	-	-	-	37.50	45.17	82.67
	Synthetic Cannabinoids - Papers imbedded in Drug Solution	-	-	-	-	2.65	2.65
CNS Stimulants	Cocaine	1,406.41	7.09	0.01	0.96	31.54	1,446.002
	Khat	-	-	-	-	0.09	0.09
	Methamphetamine	0.49	0.84	0.02	4.63	1.59	7.57
CNS Depressants	Sedatives / Tranquilizers (Tablet)	0.85	1.05	0.38	23.07	0.96	26.31
Hallucinogens	LSD (Patch)	0.02	0.03	0.09	0.14	0.01	0.29
	Ecstasy (Tablet)	0.17	0.05	0.003	0.004	-	0.23
Others	Xylazine + Synthetic Cathinone	-	-	-	-	0.15	0.15
All drug classes		2,296.60	470.86	4,777.34	1,255.33	1,197.95	9,998.08

1.3 Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)

In 2023, some 3,750 confirmed cases of illicit substances were reported by the FSL. Cannabis was the main substance confirmed, with 39.7% of cases. Heroin cases constituted 33.3%, followed by NPS, 21.8% and the remaining 5.3% of cases were attributed to other drugs (Table 14).

Table 14 – Quarterly number of confirmed cases of illicit substances, 2023 (FSL)

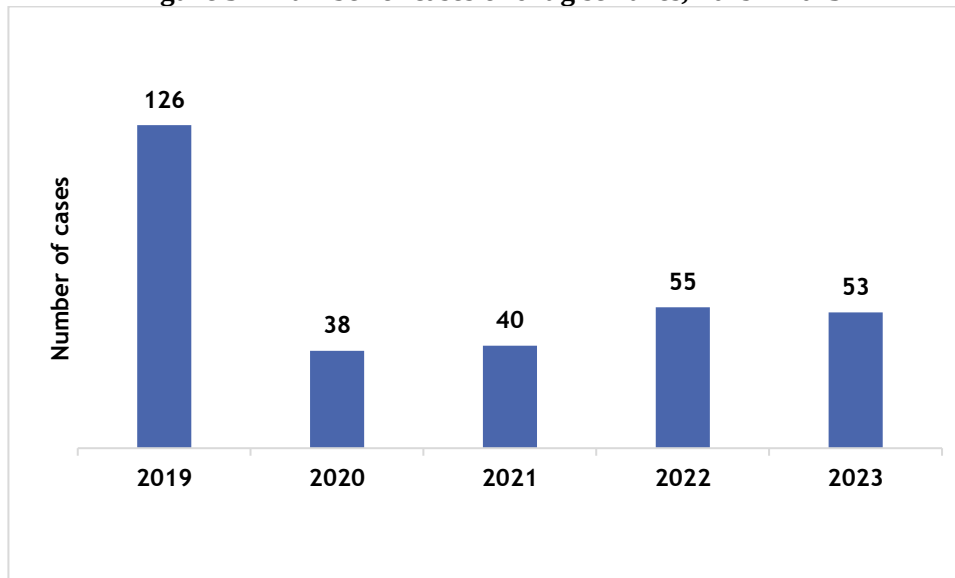
Illicit substance	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Year 2023	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Cannabis	412	42.5	387	40.4	333	34.9	356	41.0	1,488	39.7
Heroin	332	34.3	325	33.9	341	35.7	251	28.9	1,249	33.3
New Psychoactive Substances	184	19.0	201	21.0	224	23.5	207	23.8	816	21.8
Other drugs¹	41	4.2	46	4.8	56	5.9	54	6.2	197	5.3
All illicit substances	969	100.0	959	100.0	954	100.0	868	100.0	3,750	100.0

¹ Includes psychotropic drugs, methadone and precursor chemicals

1.4 Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs Anti-Narcotics Section

For period 2019 up to 2023, the MRA-CANS has made 312 drug seizure cases. During the same period, the least annual number of seizure cases occurred in the year 2020 with 38 cases while the peak annual seizure cases was reported in the year 2019 with 126 cases. In 2023, there were 53 seizure cases (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Number of cases of drug seizures, 2019 – 2023



Of the 312 seizure cases by MRA-CANS for period 2019-2023, 45.8% (143 seizure cases) were associated with cannabis products (Seeds, herbs and hashish) seizures. There were on average 29 seizure cases of cannabis products per year between 2019 and 2023.

For the same period, seizures of opioids amounted to a cumulative total of 85 cases, that is, 27.2% of the 312 seizure cases (all drugs) reported by MRA Customs, amounting to an average of 17 opioids related seizure cases per year. Between 2019 and 2023, MRA Customs has made 47 seizure cases of NPS, with an average of 9 seizure cases per year. NPS seizure cases represented 15.1% of the total 312 seizure cases (all drugs) for years 2019 to 2023.

For the period 2019-2023, there were 17 seizure cases of hallucinogens, representing 5.4% of the total 312 seizure cases (all drugs), with an average 3 of seizure cases per year over that period. CNS stimulants, psychotropic substances and other unspecified drug seizure cases occurring between 2019 and 2023 totalled up to 16 (5.1%), 3 (1.0%) and 1 (0.3%) case respectively (Table 15).

Table 15 – Number of drug seizure cases by Mauritius Revenue Authority by class of drug, 2019 – 2023

Drug Class	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2019 – 2023	
	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%
Cannabis products (seeds, herbs & resins)	52	41.3	18	47.4	20	50.0	26	47.3	27	50.9	143	45.8
Opioids (narcotic analgesics)	48	38.1	5	13.2	9	22.5	17	30.9	6	11.3	85	27.2
New Psychoactive Substances	20	15.9	10	26.3	6	15.0	2	3.6	9	17.0	47	15.1
Hallucinogens	4	3.2	3	7.9	5	12.5	2	3.6	3	5.7	17	5.4
CNS stimulants	1	0.8	2	5.3	-	-	6	10.9	7	13.2	16	5.1
Psychotropic substances	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.6	1	1.9	3	1.0
Other unspecified	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.3
Total	126	100.0	38	100.0	40	100.0	55	100.0	53	100.0	312	100.0

Note Cannabis products (seeds, herbs & resins) includes 'Hashish' also.

: Opioids were 'Heroin (powder)'.

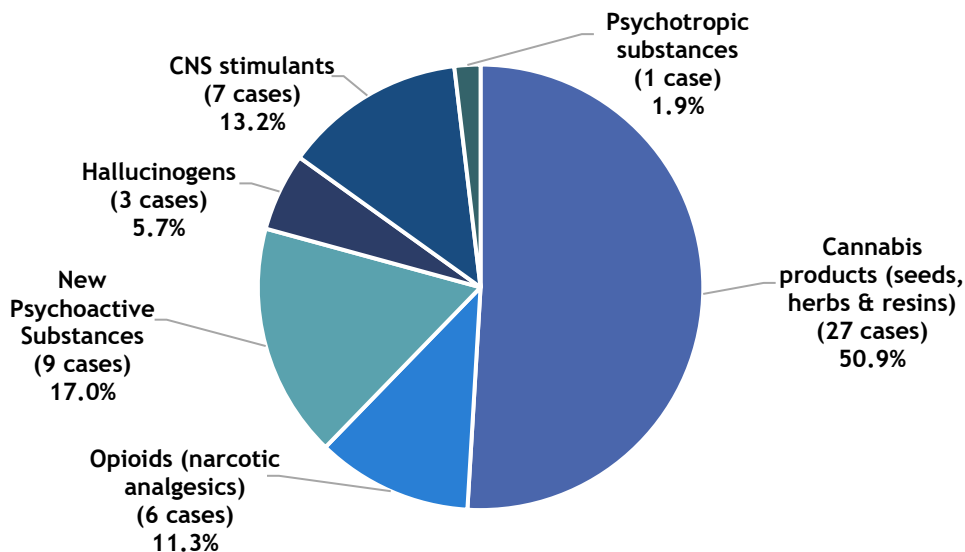
New Psychoactive Substances were 'Synthetic drugs'.

Hallucinogens were essentially 'Ecstasy'.

CNS stimulants were 'Cocaine', 'Khat' and 'Other (Crystal Meth and D-Amphetamine)'

In 2023, of the 53 seizures of MRA-CANS, 50.9% were cannabis related products, followed by NPS with 17%. CNS stimulants and Opioids represented 13.2% and 11.3% of seizure cases respectively (Figure 6).

Figure 6 – Number of drug seizures by class of drug, 2023-MRA CANS



1.5 The Judiciary

In 2023, the number of convicted drug offences was 1,422 against 2,177 in 2022. Out of the 1,422 convicted drug offences reported by the Judiciary, 85.7% were associated to possession of drugs, 6.3% to cultivation of cannabis, 3.3% to consumption of drugs, 3.2% to dealing of drugs, and 1.4% to importation of drugs (Table 16).

Table 16 – Drug offences convicted by type of offence, 2019 – 2023

Type of convicted drug offence	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Possession	1,810	81.1	1,217	77.3	1,509	83.0	1,843	84.7	1,219	85.7
Dealing	71	3.2	70	4.4	118	6.5	90	4.1	46	3.2
Consumption	249	11.2	187	11.9	102	5.6	125	5.7	47	3.3
Cultivation of cannabis	81	3.6	89	5.7	80	4.4	100	4.6	90	6.3
Importation	20	0.9	11	0.7	8	0.4	19	0.9	20	1.4
All types of drug offences	2,231	100.0	1,574	100.0	1,817	100.0	2,177	100.0	1,422	100.0

In 2023, 77.8% of convicted drug offences were sentenced with fines, against 21.5% to imprisonment and 0.6% was attributed conditional and absolute discharges.

It is to be noted that for the period 2019-2022, convictions for imprisonment was around 13% every year. (Table 17)

Table 17 – Drug offences convicted by type of sentence 2019 – 2023

Type of sentence	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Imprisonment	282	12.6	204	13.0	238¹	13.1	280	12.9	306	21.5
Fine	1,900	85.2	1,330	84.5	1,575	86.7	1,884	86.5	1,107	77.8
Probation	20	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community service	25	1.1	38	2.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional and absolute discharges	4	0.2	2	0.1	4	0.2	13	0.6	9	0.6
All sentences	2,231	100.0	1,574	100.0	1,817	100.0	2,177	100.0	1,422	100.0

¹ include 1 to CYC

(i) Convicted drug offences related to heroin

Drug convicted offences with respect to the type of drugs involved, showed that the percentage of convicted heroin related offences has remained around 23% across the period 2019-2023, with a slight increase (26%) in 2023.

(ii) Convicted drug offences related to cannabis

The trend of drug convicted offences related to cannabis, showed that the percentage of convicted cannabis related offences, which was 46.3% in 2019, increased to 50.8% in 2020. However, for the past three years (2021-2023), the percentage of cannabis related convictions was constantly around 42%.

(iii) Convicted drug offences related to other illicit substances

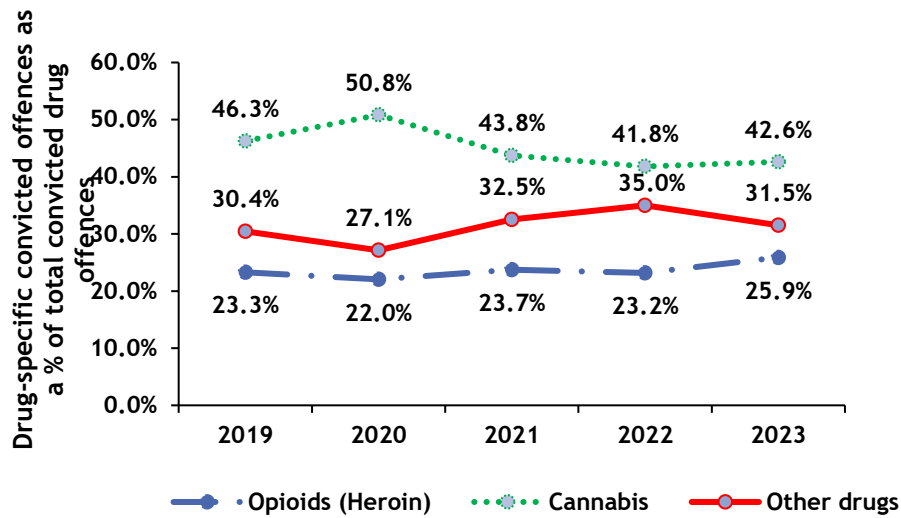
In 2019, drug convicted offences due to other drugs, excluding heroin and cannabis, stood at 30.4% against 31.5% in 2023 (Table 18).

Table 18 – Drug offences convicted by class of drug, disaggregated by type of offence 2019 – 2023

Class of drug	Type of offence	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
		Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Opioids (Heroin)	Importation	9		1		6		10		15	
	Dealing	9		7		20		13		9	
	Possession (heroin & articles)	469		316		385		470		340	
	Consumption	33		23		20		12		4	
	Other	0		0		0		0		0	
	Sub Total	520	23.3	347	22.0	431	23.7	505	23.2	368	25.9
Cannabis	Importation	10		5		2		8		4	
	Cultivation	81		89		80		100		90	
	Dealing	45		40		60		55		15	
	Possession (cannabis & articles)	701		513		577		646		457	
	Consumption	195		153		76		101		40	
	Other	0		0		0		0		0	
	Sub Total	1,032	46.3	800	50.8	795	43.8	910	41.8	606	42.6
Other drugs	Importation	1		5		0		1		1	
	Dealing	17		23		38		22		22	
	Possession (drug & articles)	640		388		547		727		422	
	Consumption	21		11		6		12		3	
	Other	0		0		0		0		0	
	Sub Total	679	30.4	427	27.1	591	32.5	762	35.0	448	31.5
All drug offences		2,231	100.0	1,574	100.0	1,817	100.0	2,177	100.0	1,422	100.0

Source: The Judiciary Annual Report 2023

Figure 7 - Trend of drug-specific convicted offences as a percentage of total convicted drug offences for the last five years, 2019 – 2023



1.6 Mauritius Prisons Service

The overall number of admissions of convicts in prison was 3,913 in 2019 compared to 4,937 in 2023. Admissions due to drug offences was 8.3% in 2019 with 326 cases. In 2023, there were 385 admissions in prisons representing 7.8% of the total admissions. (Table 19)

Table 19 – Number of admissions of convicts to prison by drug offences and non-drug offences, 2019 – 2023

Offence	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Drug	326	8.3	249	7.4	312	9.4	340	6.8	385	7.8
Other	3,587	91.7	3,096	92.6	3,007	90.6	4,679	93.2	4,552	92.2
All offences	3,913	100.0	3,345	100.0	3,319	100.0	5,019	100.0	4,937	100.0

Source: ESI 2019-2023

2.0 DRUG RELATED HEALTH SERVICES

This section presents data generated by the different health, care and support services related to drug use, which are provided by the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW), as well as NGOs in 2023.

There are two categories of drug related health data reported by the MoHW, namely:

- i. Admissions in Public Health Institutions related to illicit drug use; and
- ii. Data on drug related dedicated services under the Harm Reduction Unit (HRU).

Admissions in Public Health Institutions in an acute phase due to health complications, following drug use, are reported by the Health Records Division of the MoHW, and data regarding drug related dedicated health services of the MoHW are reported by the HRU.

2.1 Admissions in Public Health Institutions (Regional Hospitals and Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre)

In 2023, among the 1,039 admissions in public health institutions 933 (89.8%) were male. Compared to year 2022, admissions increased by 3.3% from 903 to 933 in male and 1.0% from 105 to 106 in female.

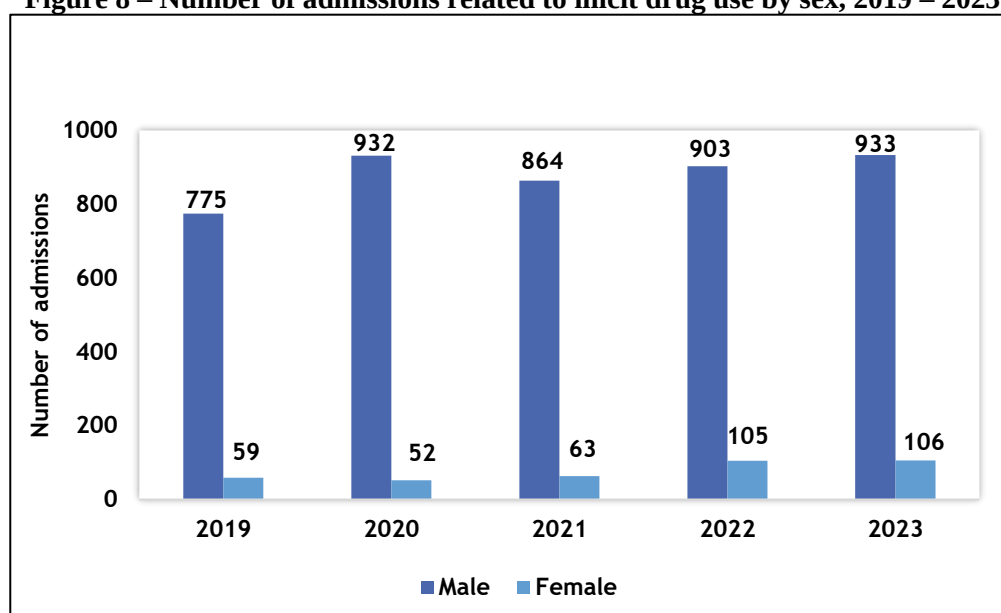
There was an average annual number of 958 admissions in the public health institutions for the five-year period 2019-2023 with a cumulative number of 4,792 cases out of which 8.0% were female (Table 20).

Table 20 – Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by sex, 2019 – 2023

Sex	Number of admissions					% change 2023 over 2022	Yearly average number of admissions
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Male	775	932	864	903	933	+ 3.3	881
Female	59	52	63	105	106	+ 1.0	77
Both sexes	834	984	927	1,008	1,039	+ 3.1	958

Source: Ministry of Health and Wellness (Health Records Division)

Figure 8 – Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by sex, 2019 – 2023



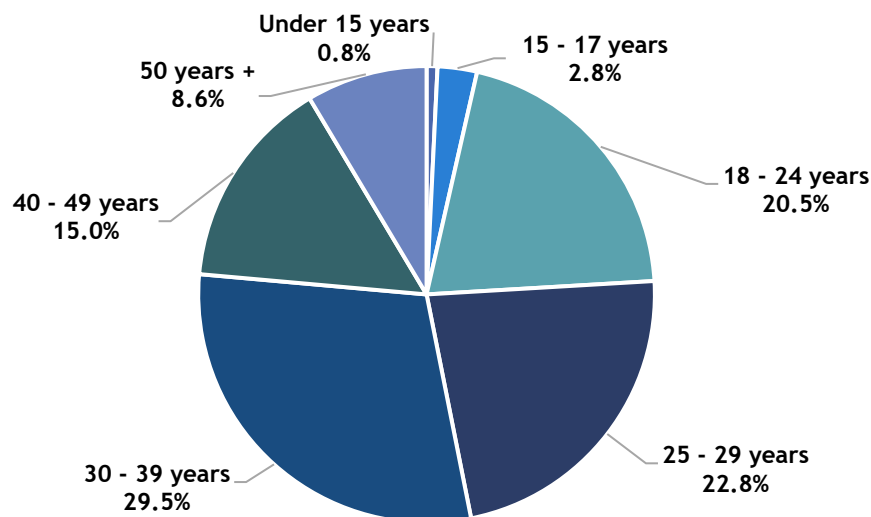
In 2023, the age distribution of drug-related inpatient treatment cases in public health institutions was as follows; Under 15 years (0.8%), 15-17 years (2.8%), 18-24 years (20.5%), 25-29 years (22.8%), 30-39 years (29.5%), 40-49 years (15.0%) and 50 years and above (8.6%). Male admissions related to drug use were highest in the age group 30-39 years with 30.0% while for female, admissions were highest in the age group 25-29 years with 27.4%. Overall admissions were highest in the age group 18-39 years (72.7%) with almost an equal proportion for both male and female (Table 21).

Table 21 – Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by age group and sex, 2023

Age group (Years)	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Both sexes	Percentage (%)
10 – 14	6	0.6	2	1.9	8	0.8
15 – 17	27	2.9	2	1.9	29	2.8
18 – 24	190	20.4	23	21.7	213	20.5
25 – 29	208	22.3	29	27.4	237	22.8
30 – 39	280	30.0	27	25.5	307	29.5
40 – 49	138	14.8	18	17.0	156	15.0
50 +	84	9.0	5	4.7	89	8.6
All Age groups	933	100.0	106	100.0	1,039	100.0

Source: Ministry of Health and Wellness

Figure 9 – Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by age group, 2023

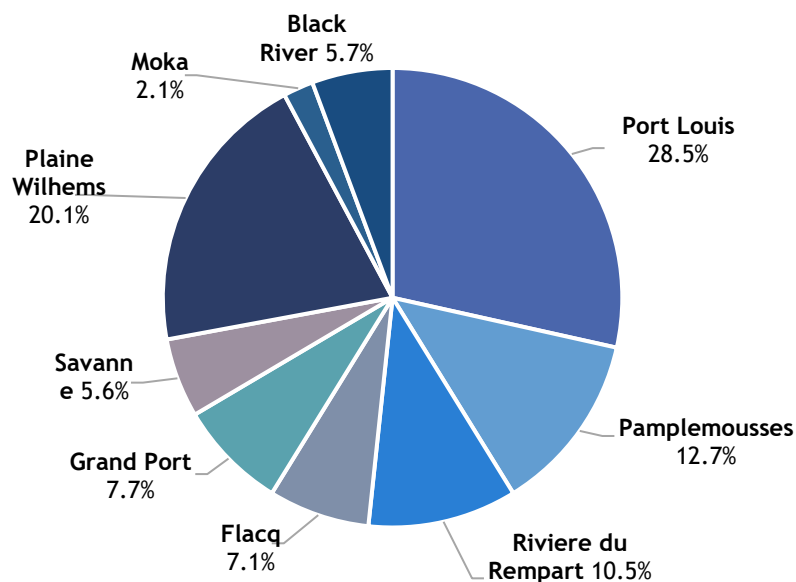


Drug related inpatient cases by district of residence indicates that the highest number of admissions were from Port Louis with 296 cases representing 28.5%, followed by Plaine Wilhems with 209 admissions (20.1%). Pamplemousses and Riviere du Rempart catered for 12.7% and 10.5% of admissions respectively, while Moka district had the least number of admissions with 2.1% (Table 22).

Table 22 – Number of admissions related to illicit drug use by district of residence and sex, 2023

District	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Both Sexes	Percentage (%)
Port Louis	265	28.4	31	29.2	296	28.5
Pamplemousses	111	11.9	21	19.8	132	12.7
Riviere du Rempart	96	10.3	13	12.3	109	10.5
Flacq	67	7.2	7	6.6	74	7.1
Grand Port	76	8.1	4	3.8	80	7.7
Savanne	56	6.0	2	1.9	58	5.6
Plaine Wilhems	188	20.2	21	19.8	209	20.1
Moka	21	2.3	1	0.9	22	2.1
Black River	53	5.7	6	5.7	59	5.7
All districts	933	100.0	106	100.0	1,039	100.0

Figure 10 – Number of admissions related to drug use by district of residence, 2023



NPS continued to be the prime presumed illicit substances responsible for illicit drug-use-related admissions in public health institutions. In 2023, some 39.8% of these admissions were reportedly attributed to use of NPS followed by opioids with 33.9%. Cannabis represented 10.7% while 14.4% were due to use of other unspecified drugs.

40.5% of the admissions among males were related to use of NPS while among females, it represented 34.0%. A higher proportion of female (44.3%) admissions was due to Opioids in comparison to male, whereby it represented 32.7% of admissions.

It is to be noted that 14.4% inpatient treatment cases related to drug use was under the other unspecified substances group.

Admissions related to Opioids has been constantly on the increase during the period five years with 157 cases in 2019 reaching to 352 in 2023 (Table 23).

Table 23 – Number of cases of Inpatient treatment related to drug use by presumed illicit substance used, and by sex, 2023

Presumed illicit substance used	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Both Sexes	Percentage (%)
New psychoactive substances ¹	378	40.5	36	34.0	414	39.8
Opioids	305	32.7	47	44.3	352	33.9
Cocaine	4	0.4	1	0.9	5	0.5
Cannabis	100	10.7	11	10.4	111	10.7
Abuse of medicinal products ²	6	0.6	1	0.9	7	0.7
Other unspecified ³ substances	140	15.0	10	9.4	150	14.4
All substances	933	100.0	106	100.0	1,039	100.0

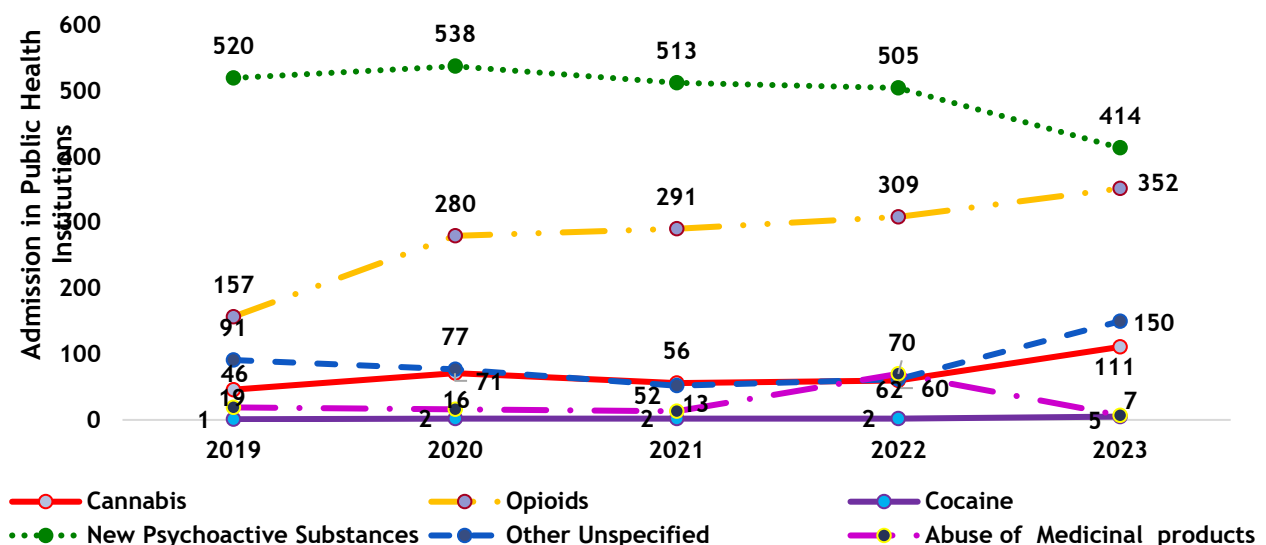
Source: Ministry of Health and Wellness (Health Records Division)

¹ (also known as Synthetic drugs) comprises of specified, mixed and unspecified synthetic drugs

² comprises of methadone and other medicinal products

³ comprises of mixed illicit / medicinal and unspecified drugs

Figure 11 – Number of cases of Inpatient treatment in Public Health Institutions by type of illicit drug, 2019 – 2023



With regard to the age factor of admission cases related to the three main types of illicit substances in 2023, NPS related admissions (414) had almost an equal proportion of admissions of around 23% among the three age groups of 18-24, 25-29 and 30-34 years old.

Among Opioids related admissions (352), the highest proportion of admissions, was in the age group of 25-29 with 25%, followed by 21.3% in the age group of 30-34 and 17.6 % within the younger age group of 18-24 years.

In 2023, of the 111 admissions related to Cannabis use, 31.5% was between 18-24 years of age, followed by almost an equal proportion of around 17.1% within the age group of 25-29 and 30-34 respectively (Table 24).

Table 24 – Percentage distribution of illicit drug-use-related admissions by type of presumed substance used, age group and sex, 2023

Age group (Years)	Cannabis / Marijuana			Opioids			Cocaine			New psychoactive substances ¹			Abuse of medicinal products ²			Other unspecified ³ substances			All substances		
	(%)			(%)			(%)			(%)			(%)			(%)			(%)		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Under 15	1.0	9.1	1.8	0.0	2.1	0.3	50.0	0.0	40.0	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.6	1.9	0.8
15 - 17	6.0	9.1	6.3	1.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	10.0	2.0	2.9	1.9	2.8
18 - 24	31.0	36.4	31.5	17.7	17.0	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.3	27.8	23.7	16.7	0.0	14.3	11.4	10.0	11.3	20.4	21.7	20.5
25 - 29	17.0	9.1	16.2	23.6	34.0	25.0	25.0	100.0	40.0	23.8	22.2	23.7	33.3	100.0	42.9	18.6	20.0	18.7	22.3	27.4	22.8
30 - 34	18.0	9.1	17.1	21.6	19.1	21.3	25.0	0.0	20.0	21.7	16.7	21.3	16.7	0.0	14.3	12.9	30.0	14.0	19.9	17.9	19.7
35 - 39	9.0	0.0	8.1	12.8	10.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	2.8	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.3	20.0	10.0	10.1	7.5	9.8
40 - 49	11.0	18.2	11.7	14.4	17.0	14.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.2	19.4	13.8	33.3	0.0	28.6	22.1	10.0	21.3	14.8	17.0	15.0
50 +	7.0	9.1	7.2	8.9	0.0	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	11.1	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.6	0.0	22.0	9.0	4.7	8.6
No. of cases by all age group by gender & type of substances)	n = 100	n = 11	n = 111	n = 305	n = 47	n = 352	n = 4	n = 1	n = 5	n = 378	n = 36	n = 414	n = 6	n = 1	n = 7	n = 140	n = 10	n = 150	n = 933	n = 106	n = 1,039
% All age group by gender & type of substances	10.7	10.4	10.7	32.7	44.3	33.9	0.4	0.9	0.5	40.5	34.0	39.8	0.6	0.9	0.7	15.0	9.4	14.4	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of cases (All Drugs & All age group)																			n = 933	n = 106	n = 1,039

Source: Ministry of Health and Wellness

¹ (also known as Synthetic drugs) comprises of Specified, Mixed and Unspecified Synthetic drugs² comprises of Methadone and Other Medicinal products³ comprises of Mixed Illicit / Medicinal and Unspecified drugs

2.2 Drug Related Dedicated Health, Care and Support Services

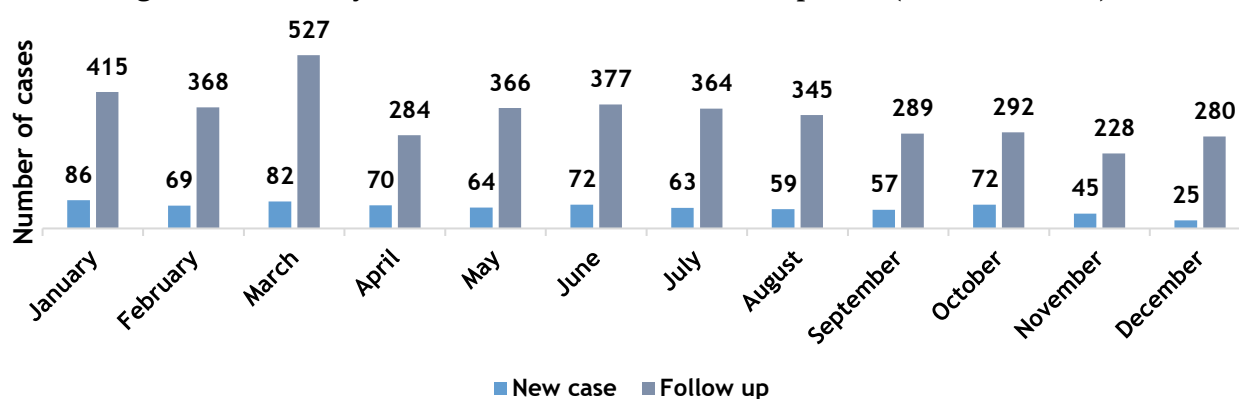
Drug related dedicated health services of the MoHW comprise five Addiction Units in each of the health region, three Methadone Centres (Outpatient), two Induction/Detoxification residential Wards at Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre (BSMHCC) and the Nenuphar Ward for minors.

Furthermore, there are 10 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in providing rehabilitative treatment, care and support to People Who Use Drugs.

2.2.1 Addiction Units-Outpatient Services (MoHW)

In 2023, the five Addiction Units falling under the MoHW had registered 764 new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment services for drug use. The average monthly number of new cases was 64. Monthly new cases ranged between only 25 cases in December and 86 cases in January 2023. Follow-up cases at these units amounted to 4,135 with a monthly average of 345. The minimum number of follow-up cases registered in one month was 228 in November, against a maximum of 527 cases in March (Table 26 and Figure 12).

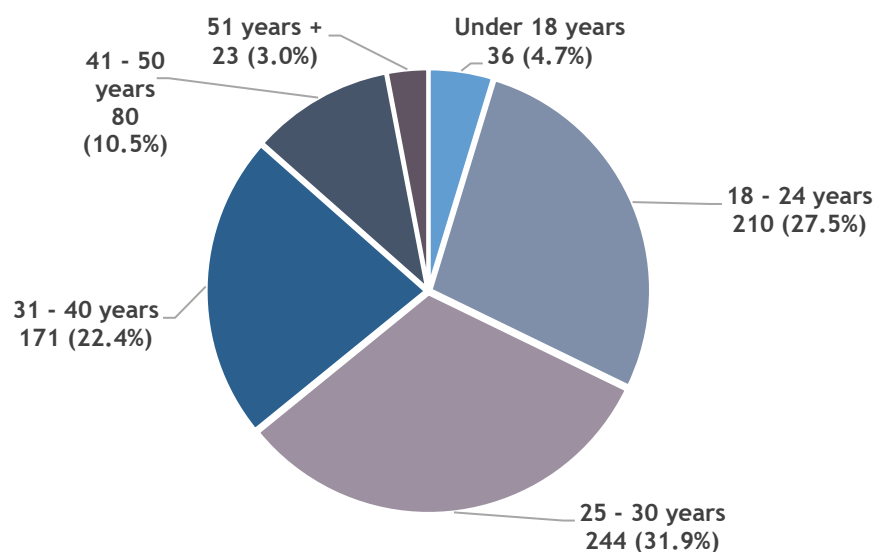
Figure 12 – Monthly number of new cases and follow up cases (Addiction Units), 2023



32.2% of all the new cases of patients seeking rehabilitative treatment at the Addiction Units in 2023, were aged less than 25 years. New cases aged less than 18 years accounted for only 4.7%. In fact, majority of new cases attending the Addiction Units were between 18 and 40 years (81.8%), while 13.5% were aged 41 years and above (Table 25 and Figure 13).

Table 25 – Number of new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at Addiction Units due to drug use by age group, 2023

Age group (Years)	Number	Percentage (%)
Under 18	36	4.7
18 – 24	210	27.5
25 – 30	244	31.9
31 – 40	171	22.4
41 – 50	80	10.5
51 +	23	3.0
All age groups	764	100.0

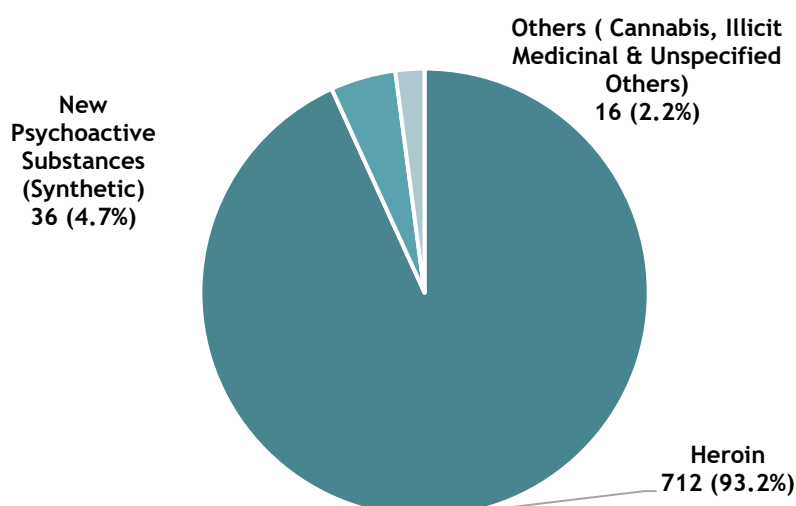
Figure 13 – New cases at Addiction Units by age group, 2023

With regard to the primary substance of use, among the new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at the Addiction Units, the majority (93.2%) of them were primarily using heroin in contrast with those admitted following complications due to drug use during the same period, whereby the main substance concerned was NPS. Only 4.7% of new cases were related to NPS compared to 5.4% in 2022. 1.4% of new cases were reported under other Illicit and unspecified category in 2023 compared to 9.9% in 2022 (Table 26).

Table 26 – New cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at Addiction Units by main drug use, 2021 – 2023

Main drug	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Heroin	990	72.4	851	82.6	712	93.2
New psychoactive substances	134	9.8	56	5.4	36	4.7
Cannabis	29	2.1	18	1.7	6	0.8
Benzodiazepine	10	0.7	3	0.3	-	-
Other illicit drugs	8	0.6	2	0.2	5	0.7
Unspecified drugs	197	14.4	100	9.7	5	0.7
All drugs	1,368	100.0	1,030	100.0	764	100.0

Figure 14 – New cases of main drug used at Addiction Units, 2023



2.2.2 Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme (MoHW)

In 2023, out of 2,138 new cases attending the Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) centres, some 1,639 cases were induced on methadone with 1,450 (88.5%) males against 189 (11.5%) females (Table 27).

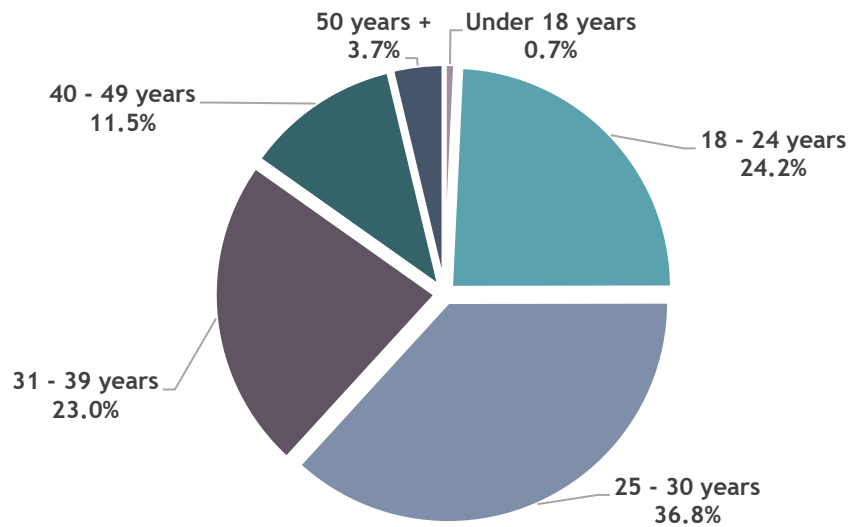
Table 27 – Number of induction cases on Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) programme, 2023

New cases registered	2,138 (1,889 male; 249 female)
Screened	1,973 (1,727 male; 246 female)
Induction	1,639 (1,450 male; 189 female)

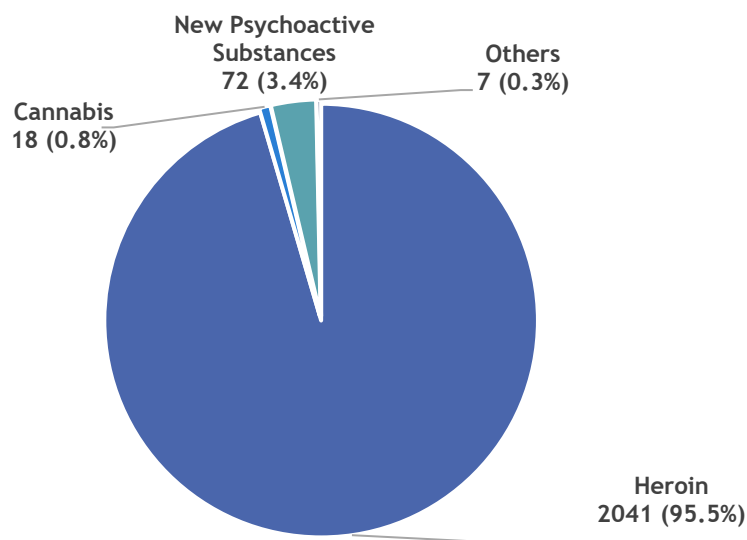
In 2023, out of 2,138 new cases attending the MST centres, the majority (84%) were aged between 18 and 39 years with 15.2% aged 40 and above. Only 0.7% was less than 18 years with 16 cases (Table 28).

Table 28 – Number of new cases attending MST centres by age group, 2023

Age group (Years)	Number of New cases	Percentage (%)
Less than 18	16	0.7
18 – 24	518	24.2
25 – 30	787	36.8
31 – 39	492	23.0
40 – 49	245	11.5
50 years & over	80	3.7
Total	2,138	100.0

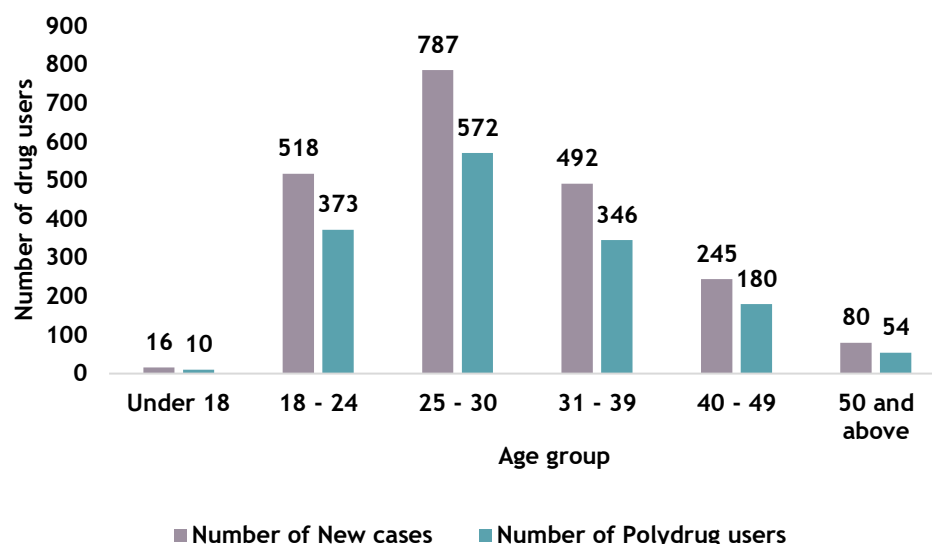
Figure 15 – Number of New cases at Methadone Centres by age group, 2023

In terms of primary drug of use, in 2023, 95.5% of the new cases at the MST centres reported Heroin as main drug of use, with only 3.4% stating mostly using synthetic drugs and less than 0.8% reporting Cannabis as main drug of use. (Figure 16).

Figure 16 – Number of new cases at Methadone Centres by main drug of use, 2023

However, it is also noted that among the 2,138 new cases at the Methadone centre, 71.8% were polydrug users. Concerning the age factor, the highest proportion among the polydrug users were in the age group 25-30 years with 26.8% and lowest were those under 18 years with 0.5% (Figure 17).

Figure 17 – Number of New cases at Methadone Centres of which Polydrug Users by age group, 2023



In 2023, a total of 16,072 attendances were registered in the follow up clinics of the MST centres of which, around 19.6% were reviewed by Psychiatrists and 9.8% by Psychologists (Table 29).

Table 29 – Number of Follow Up cases & Reviews at Methadone Centres, 2023

Follow up/Review	Male	Female	Both sexes
Follow Up	15,512	560	16,072
<i>of which review by</i>			
<i>Psychiatrist</i>	2,901	242	3,143
<i>Psychologists</i>	1,395	187	1,582

In December 2023, some 7,831 clients were on methadone maintenance programme and were daily administered doses through 66 dispensing sites. The highest number of dispensing sites were found in the Dr A. G. Jeetoo health region with 26 sites serving 3,568 methadone beneficiaries, followed by the J. Nehru health region with 14 dispensing sites with 998 beneficiaries. (Table 30)

Table 30 – Number of beneficiaries accessing methadone dispensing daily by health region, as at December 2023

Health Region		Number of dispensing sites		Number of clients
No.	Name			
1	Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital	16	26	2,340
	Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre	10		1,228
2	SSRN Hospital	-	10	968
3	Dr Bruno Cheong Hospital	-	8	875
4	J. Nehru Hospital	10	14	439
	Mahebourg Hospital	4		559
5	Victoria Hospital	-	8	1,422
	All health regions		66	7,831

2.2.3 Suboxone Detoxification Programme (MoHW)

The Suboxone based detoxification programme being conducted at the Mahebourg Hospital has been decentralised and is being henceforth conducted at different centres of the MoHW.

As such, the Suboxone detoxification centre at Mahebourg was operational till August 2023.

The average number of admissions for the period 2019-2022 was 142, while for the year 2023 (August), 70 admissions were registered. (Table 31).

Table 31 – Admissions for Suboxone Detoxification Programme at Mahebourg Hospital, 2019 – 2023

Number of admissions	2019	2020	2021	2022	August 2023
New	141	136	169	124	51
	(83.4%)	(76.0%)	(81.6%)	(76.1%)	(72.9%)
Re-Admission	28	43	38	39	19
	(16.6%)	(24.0%)	(18.4%)	(23.9%)	(27.1%)
Total	169	179	207	163	70
	(100.0%)	(100.0%)	(100.0%)	(100.0%)	(100.0%)

In 2023, admissions for Suboxone detoxification were higher in the age group 25-30 years (42.9%), followed by the 18-24 age group (41%).

Out of the 70 cases, there were 19 cases of re- admissions of which 17 cases were among the 18-30 age group. (Table 32).

Table 32 – Number of admissions for Suboxone Detoxification Programme, at Mahebourg Hospital by age group, 2023

Age group (Years)	Type of Cases		All admission types
	New	Re-admission	
Less than 18	-	-	-
18 – 24	20	9	29
25 – 30	22	8	30
31 – 39	9	2	11
40 – 49	-	-	-
50 & over	-	-	-
All age groups	51	19	70

In 2023, there were 53 admissions at “Centre Frangipane” (BSMHCC) for the Suboxone Detoxification Programme of which 3 were cases of re-admissions. Male admissions made up the vast majority of cases with only 2 females admitted at the centre (Table 34).

Table 33 – Number of admissions by gender for Suboxone Detoxification Programme at Centre Frangipane, 2023

	Type of Cases		Total
	New	Re-admission	
Male	48	3	51
Female	2	-	2
Both Sexes	50	3	53

In 2023, some 88.7% of total admissions at centre Frangipane were in the age group 18-39 years with 47 cases out of the total 53 admissions. The number of new admissions related to heroin was 78% while for NPS it was 22% (Table 34).

Table 34 – Number of admissions by age group for Suboxone Detoxification Programme, at Centre Frangipane by age group, 2023

Age group (Years)	Type of Cases		Total
	New	Re-admission	
Less than 18	-	-	-
18 – 24	17	2	19
25 – 30	15	-	15
31 – 39	12	1	13
40 – 49	5	-	5
50 & over	1	-	1
All age groups	50	3	53

2.2.4 Nenuphar Ward (MoHW)

In 2023, nearly 50% of the admissions at the Nenuphar centre for minors and young adults were in the age group 15-17 years with almost an equal proportion among the age group 18-23 years.

The number of new admissions were highest in the age group 15-17 years (53.3%), while those in age group 10-14 years was 4.4% with only 2 cases. Re-admissions were highest in the age group 18-23 years (56.5%) followed by 44.4% for 15-17 years. The number of new admissions related to Heroin was 91% and for NPS 9% (Table 35).

Table 35 – Number of admission (minors / young adults aged < 24 years) at Nenuphar centre by age group, 2023

Age group (years)	Type of admission		All admission types
	New	Re-admission	
Less than 10	-	-	-
10 – 14	2	-	2
15 – 17	24	20	44
18 – 23	19	26	45
All age groups	45	46	91

2.2.5 Rehabilitative, Care and Support services by NGOs

In 2023, among the 1,891 new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment, care and support at the different NGOs, 650 attended AILES, 368 Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge (CATR), 297 attended Centre de Solidarité Pour Une Nouvelle Vie (CDS), 204 HELP De-Addiction, 175 at the Dr Idrice Goomany Centre, 88 at Groupe A de Cassis and 65 at Chrysalide, the women dedicated centre.

The average annual number of people seeking rehabilitative treatment at the ten different NGOs for the period 2019-2023 was around 2,007. The number of people seeking rehabilitative treatment was the lowest (1,833) in 2022, while the highest number was observed in 2021 with 2,345 cases (Table 36).

Table 36 – Number of new cases by NGOs seeking rehabilitative treatment due to drug use, 2019-2023

NGO	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 ¹
Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge (CATR) ²	-	-	415	364	368
Ailes	226	76	164	415	650
Ayurveda Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substances Abusers (ACTReSA)	7	5	26	27	6
Centre de Solidarité pour une nouvelle vie (CDS)	295	357	315	263	297
Chrysalide	170	125	275	145	65
Dr Idrice Goomany Centre	350	359	455	189	175
Groupe A de Cassis	173	157	193	114	88
Groupe Renaissance de Mahebourg	475	250	93	117	10
HELP de Addiction	325	399	337	164	204
Sangram Sewa Sadan	88	132	72	35	28
Total	2,109	1,860	2,345	1,833	1,891

¹ excludes 44 cases related to Alcohol / smoking

² excludes 479 (Year 2019) and 530 (Year 2020) reported without details

The majority of new cases attending the NGOs in 2023, (78.4%), were in the age group 18-39 years. New cases under 18 years represented only 2.4%, while those aged 40 years and above represented 19.3%.

During the period 2019-2023, the average annual number of new cases at NGOs was 63 for those aged less than 18 years, 1,030 among those aged between 18 and 29 years, and 539 for the age group 30-39 years.

In the age groups '40-49 years' and '50 years and above' an average annual number of 223 and 122 new cases were observed respectively for the same period (Table 37).

Table 37 – Number of new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment due to drug use by age group of patients, 2019 – 2023

Age group (Years)	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		% Change 2023/2022
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	
Under 18	69	3.3	73	3.9	92	3.9	41	2.2	39	2.4	-4.9
18 – 29	1,087	51.5	1,025	54.5	1,272	53.6	984	52.8	781	47.2	-20.6
30 – 39	612	29.0	462	24.6	621	26.1	483	25.9	516	31.2	6.8
40 – 49	230	10.9	157	8.4	278	11.7	243	13.1	207	12.5	-14.8
50 and over	111	5.3	163	8.7	112	4.7	111	6.0	112	6.8	0.9
All age groups	2,109	100.0	1,880	100.0%	2,375	100.0%	1,862	100.0%	1,655	100.0	-11.1

In 2023, the distribution of new cases at NGO centres by primary substance of use, showed that Heroin remained the main substance of use for which people sought rehabilitative treatment with 83.2% of cases.

Only 4.1% reported Cannabis as the primary substance and 5.5% stated NPS, while 1 case reported Crystal Meth as the primary substance of use (Table 38).

Table 38 – Distribution of new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at NGOs (rehabilitation centres) by type of substance used and gender, 2023

Primary drug	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Both sexes	Percentage (%)
Heroin/Brown sugar	1,211	83.4	166	81.8	1,377	83.2
Cannabis	66	4.5	2	1.0	68	4.1
Methadone	9	0.6	-	-	9	0.5
Subutex	2	0.1	-	-	2	0.1
New Psychoactive Substances	85	5.9	6	3.0	91	5.5
Polydrug	67	4.6	28	13.8	95	5.7
Other Psychotropics	12	0.8	-	-	12	0.7
Crystal Meth	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.1
Total	1,452	100.0	203	100.0	1,655	100.0

2.2.6 Needle Exchange Programme

The Needle Exchange Programme (NEP) is implemented mainly by the HRU of the MoHW and NGO Collectif Urgence Toxida (CUT).

In 2023, some 975,112 needles and 943,729 syringes were distributed to people who inject drugs. Out of the 975,112 needles, MoHW accounted for 55.9% of the distribution, against 44.1% for the NGO (Table 39).

Table 39 – Number of Syringes and Needles distributed by MoHW & NGOs for Needle Exchange Programme (NEP), 2023

NSP service provider	Syringes		Needles	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW)	525,265	55.7	545,308	55.9
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (CUT)	418,464	44.3	429,804	44.1
All service providers	943,729	100.0	975,112	100.0

For the period 2020-2023, the highest annual number of syringes distributed was in 2023 with 943,729 syringes while the lowest number was in 2020 with 687,402 syringes. The average annual number during the same period works out to 774,756 syringes (Table 40).

Table 40 – Number of Syringes distributed, 2020 – 2023

NSP service provider	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW)	277,917	321,782	359,625	525,265
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (CUT)	409,485	379,715	406,769	418,464
All service providers	687,402	701,497	766,394	943,729

2.3 Death Related to Drug Use- Police Medical Unit

The Police Medical Unit reported 33 deaths related to drug use based on toxicology results received up to July 2024. The majority of the death cases was male with 32 death cases and only one female death case. Out of the 33 deaths, 15 were aged between 25-34 years, 12 were above 35 years of age, while 5 cases were within the younger age group of 18-24 and one case was a minor under 18.

With regard to the illicit substances detected among the death cases, in 30 of the death cases, Opioid was found, of which in 4 cases Opioids together with Benzodiazepine was detected, while in another 5 cases, Opioids as well as Xylazine was identified.

It is to be noted that Xylazine was detected in 3 death cases of which 1 was a minor (Table 41).

Table 41 – Number of deaths related to drug use by sex, age group and class of drugs detected, 2023

Drug Class	Male	Female	Both Sexes	< 18 years	18 – 24 years	25 – 34 years	35 – 64 years	All age groups
Opioids Analgesics	20	1	21	-	2	9	10	21
Opioids and Benzodiazepines	4	-	4	-	1	2	1	4
Opioids and Xylazine	5	-	5	-	1	3	1	5
Xylazine only	3	-	3	1	1	1	-	3
All drug classes	32	1	33	1	5	15	12	33

3.0 DRUG USE PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Prevention Programmes against drugs are conducted mainly at educational institutions, at the workplace as well as in the community at large mainly through events, talks and exhibitions amongst others.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource (MoEHR) has introduced an evidence-based drug prevention programmes comprising of 12 modules implemented with grade 8 students known as “Get Connected”.

Among the 10 NGOs, only Dr Idrice Goomany Centre is involved in the “Get Connected” Programme, while of the remaining nine NGOs only two have conducted talks on drug prevention with students in educational institutions.

The HRU-MoHW and the Education Cell of the ADSU conducted regular sensitisation programmes at schools, the workplace and at the level of the community.

3.1 Harm Reduction Unit-MoHW

The HRU of the MoHW reached out to some 11,485 students in educational institutions, 2,020 workers at the workplace and 954 individuals in the community with sensitisation programmes against drugs in 2023. As such, it conducted 234 sensitisation sessions in educational institutions, 89 sessions at workplace and 36 in the community.

The number of sensitisation sessions conducted in educational institutions which were 521 in 2019, decreased significantly afterwards reaching to only 8 sessions in 2021, particularly due to the COVID 19 situation.

In 2022, the HRU conducted 97 sessions and in 2023, it conducted 234 sessions.

Overall, the HRU has sensitised 14,459 persons in 2023 (Table 42).

Table 42 – Number of sessions and number of persons reached, 2019 – 2023 (HRU-MoHW)

Target group	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Sessions	Persons reached	Sessions	Persons reached	Sessions	Persons reached	Sessions	Persons reached	Sessions	Persons reached
Educational Institutions	521	15,982	247	6,677	8	231	97	2,788	234	11,485
Community	271	9,309	78	2,616	20	559	22	683	36	954
Workplace (public & private sectors)	210	5,575	63	1,568	20	377	104	2,322	89	2,020

3.2 Ministry of Education and Human Resource

The MoEHR implemented an evidence-based drug prevention programme for students of Grade 8 known as the ‘Get Connected’ Programme.

In 2023, the ‘Get Connected’ Programme was implemented in 112 State Secondary Schools of all the 4 educational zones and 49 schools under the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA), reaching out to 10,327 students as reported by MoEHR (Health and Wellness Directorate) (Table 43).

Table 43 – Number of schools¹ and students reached by zone, ‘Get Connected’ programme, 2023 (MoEHR)

Zone	Number of schools	Number of students reached
1	29	2,273
2	29	1,175
3	28	650
4	26	1,360
PSEA	49	4869
Total	161	10,327

¹ include State Secondary Colleges and Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA)

3.3 ADSU Educational Cell

In 2023, drug prevention programme of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) education cell targeted students of educational institutions, the population in general at community level and employees at the workplace. The total number of participants reached, was 8,448. The highest number was in the Education/vocational institutions (5,458) followed by workplace (2,578) (Table 44).

Table 44 – Number of sessions and number of persons reached, 2023

Target group	Number of participants
Educational / Vocational Institutions	5,458
Workplace	2,578
Community	412
All target groups	8,448

3.4. Non-Governmental Organisations

In 2023, NGOs conducted drug prevention activities in educational institutions, in the community, at the workplace as well as targeted programmes for youth.

A total of 18,417 persons were reached through these programmes, the vast majority being the community at large with 13,692 persons.

Only three NGOs conducted drug prevention programmes in educational institutions namely Dr Idrice Goomany Centre (1368 students), the Sangram Sewa Sadan (219 students) and Action for Health Care and Prevention (859 students).

The Idrice Goomany Centre is the sole NGO implementing the ‘Get Connected’ Programme at secondary schools. (Table 45)

**Table 45 – Number of people reached through drug prevention activities
by NGOs and target group, 2023**

NGOs	Educational Institutions	Community	Workplace	Youth in the community	Online	All target groups
Action for Health Care and Prevention¹	859	839	61	75	-	1,834
Ailes	-	688	-	-	-	688
Ayurveda Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substances Abusers (ACTReSA)	-	7,783	-	-	-	7,783
Centre de Solidarité pour une nouvelle vie (CDS)	-	68	-	-	-	68
Chrysalide	-	-	-	30	-	30
Dr Idrice Goomany Centre	1,368	728	222	86	-	2,404
Groupe A de Cassis	-	414	29	1,106	71	1,620
Groupe Renaissance de Mahebourg	-	203	-	-	-	203
HELP de Addiction	-	2,289	-	599	-	2,888
Sangram Sewa Sadan	219	680	-	-	-	899
Total	2,446	13,692	312	1,896	71	18,417

¹ comprises Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge (CATR) and Centre Frère Réne Guillemin (CFRG)

