



Republic of Mauritius



# National Drug Observatory Report 2021

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National Drug Secretariat  
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Prime Minister  
Republic of Mauritius

### **FOREWORD**

*This sixth National Drug Observatory (NDO) Report reviews the challenges of the drug scourge that is undermining families. It also provides an update on progress made towards reducing the menace of drug addiction in Mauritius.*

*The report has been prepared by the National Drug Secretariat, which operates under the aegis of my Office. It not only highlights what we have achieved in terms of Drug Control through seizures and arrests, but it also offers an insight into the medical and societal consequences of the drug problem.*

*The situation can be assessed on the basis of health seeking behaviors at specialised centres as well as from data that show the number of admissions in health institutions.*

*The NDO Report 2021 is not only a reminder of the devastating impact that drug trafficking and drug consumption have on individuals and families but it also demonstrates our resolve to respond to drug trafficking in the most efficient way.*

*Mauritius conducted last year, for the first time, a large-scale national survey on drug use under the technical guidance of an international consultant provided through a consultative partnership with the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator.*

*The survey made in 2021 among people who use drugs has displayed different aspects of the problem such as the type of substances being used and the age groups that are most vulnerable.*

*I am convinced that such valuable information will be analysed by programme managers and by those involved in the formulation and implementation of strategies and programmes. Their findings will guide our national response, more particularly our prevention strategies and actions.*

*Drug trafficking is a major concern for this Government. The recent seizures of unprecedented amount of drugs is further testimony to our determination and motivation to cut entry and trafficking of drugs in our island.*

*I seize the opportunity to congratulate our Law enforcement agencies for the remarkable work they are accomplishing on the ground.*

*I wish to reiterate that the prevention aspect of Drug Use constitutes one of the most important strategies in our fight against drugs. While acknowledging that much is being done already by the various stakeholders in Mauritius, I would like to stress that there is still much more to be done in that regard. We need to shoulder our responsibility as citizens, as religious or social leaders, and as parents.*

*We are dealing here with an issue that concerns our biggest asset, today's youth. Our future is at stake. So I make an earnest request to all my fellow countrymen to unite in this fight for a noble cause.*



*Pravind Kumar Jugnauth  
Prime Minister*

*16 November 2022*

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## Acronyms

<b>ADSU</b>	Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit
<b>ATS</b>	Amphetamine-Type Stimulants
<b>CNS</b>	Central Nervous System
<b>FSL</b>	Forensic Science Laboratory
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IBBS</b>	Integrated Biological and Behavioral Study
<b>ICD</b>	International Classification of Diseases
<b>LSD</b>	Lysergic acid diethylamide
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MDMA</b>	Methyldioxymethamphetamine (Ecstasy)
<b>MOH&amp;W</b>	Ministry of Health and Wellness
<b>MRA</b>	Mauritius Revenue Authority
<b>MST</b>	Methadone Substitution Therapy
<b>NCD</b>	Non Communicable Diseases
<b>NDO</b>	National Drug Observatory
<b>NDS</b>	National Drug Secretariat (Mauritius)
<b>NGO</b>	Non Government Organization
<b>NPS</b>	New Psychoactive Substance ( <i>Synthetic drug</i> )
<b>NSP</b>	Needles and Syringes Programme
<b>OAT</b>	Opioid Agonist Treatment
<b>PWID</b>	People Who Inject Drugs
<b>ROITI</b>	Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
<b>THC</b>	Tetrahydrocannabinol
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>YEPAD</b>	Youth Empowerment Programme Against Drug

## National Drug Observatory annual reports

The Republic of Mauritius has been publishing annual National Drug Observatory (NDO) Reports since 2015 when it all started at the Ministry of Health and Wellness. As from 2019, in the wake of the implementation of the 5-year National Drug Control Master Plan 2019-2023, the responsibility to provide annual NDO reports now falls under the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism of the National Drug Secretariat (NDS) of the Prime Minister's Office, Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity (ROITI) Division.

NDO annual reports attempt to give a picture of the drug situation in Mauritius by examining available factual and reliable drug-related data and information. The following areas are generally considered, namely, health problems resulting from drug use, measured mainly through admissions in public health institutions; health response to drug use, through drug-related health programmes by Government and NGOs, drug control and law enforcement activities and performances, through the Mauritius Police Force and the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs. Convicted drug offences and imprisonment, through data obtained from the Mauritius Prisons Services, published reports of the Judiciary and reports of Statistics Mauritius and finally through drug related data obtained from other miscellaneous sources.

By the time this 2021 report was prepared in 2022, the National Drug Secretariat has started alongside the implementation of a strengthened drug M&E system. New data collection tools have been designed and there is now more inclination and a shift towards standardized information to meet evaluation of programme standards, as well as, regional and international reporting obligations. The enhanced information system is actually running on a pilot basis by the time data providers adjust their respective capacities to cope with the new exigencies of data collection and reporting. Thus, it is expected that as from year 2023, NDO reports will be generated fully from the strengthened information system.

The purpose of the enhanced M&E framework is to stand as the standard tool for maintaining and applying systematically the principles of a results-oriented monitoring and evaluation of the national system of drug control and response to health effects of drug use. A sound M&E system helps to justify and ensure accountability in the use of resources, guarantee achievement of results, be a clear basis for decision-making, and ensure the advocacy of knowledge sharing.

## The 2021 National Drug Observatory Report

This present report refers to the one-year period from January to December 2021. Additional information and data for earlier periods are also included for trend analysis purposes. Indicators are constructed using essentially secondary data. As a result, most indicators are of reported nature, retrieved from routine service statistics and therefore they should be interpreted carefully given that they also relate to institutional and administrative settings and performances.

Data related to inpatient treatment cases have been provided by the Health Records Division of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.



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- Drug control law enforcement agencies;
- Line Ministries, public departments and public bodies involved in drug-related services;
- Non Government Organisations involved in drug use rehabilitation programmes; and
- All those who have contributed to this report in one way or another, whether through public or nongovernment organizations

## Country profile

### Health, demographic and socio-economic status

#### ○ Demographic dynamics and age structure

In 2021, as at 31<sup>st</sup> December, the population of the Republic of Mauritius was estimated at 1.26 million inhabitants. The population grew at a rate of -0.17% over the last year. The Republic of Mauritius, with a total land area of 2,007 km<sup>2</sup>, had a population density of 630 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. Among its constituent islands, the Island of Mauritius had the highest density, 653 persons/km<sup>2</sup> compared to 404 persons/km<sup>2</sup> for the Island of Rodrigues.

The total fertility rate went down from 1.6 in 2010 to 1.4 in 2021 with a net reproduction rate of 0.7, indicating that the country is still experiencing demographic trend of below replacement level. The median age of the population of Mauritius has nearly doubled in 49 years, from 19 years in 1972 to 38 years in 2021, indicating that the ageing process is maintaining its upward trend. In 2021, crude birth rate was 10.3 per 1,000 mid-year population. The elderly population 65 years and above was 13% of the population in 2021 and is projected to reach a figure of 27% by the year 2060. In 2021, the population of children aged less than one year accounted for 1%, children under 15 years represented 17%, while the population aged 15-64 years accounted for 71%.

#### ○ Human development and the national economy

Life expectancy for male was 70 years in 2021, while for female it was 77 years. Government education expenditure stood at 3.5% of total government expenditure. School enrolment at the primary level and secondary level, was respectively 100% and 72%. In 2021, GDP growth rate was +4.2%, with a GDP per capita of 379,500 Mauritian rupees (Roughly \$9,000). Unemployment rate was 9.1%, while youth (16-24 years) unemployment rate was 27.7%. Thus, the human development index was 0.80 (*Very high*) in 2020 as compared to 0.67 in 2000 and 0.76 in 2010. In 2020, globally Mauritius ranked 62<sup>nd</sup> among all countries, in terms of human development (*Human development report 2021*), as compared to the 66<sup>th</sup> place in 2019.

- **Health**

The Mauritian morbid condition is characterized by a significant level of non-communicable diseases (NCD), especially among the elderly group. The recent national NCD survey carried out in 2022 revealed that 20% of the adult population were living with diabetes mellitus. Regarding infectious diseases, major communicable infections including indigenous malaria, have been either eradicated or eliminated from the country. Apart from the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, surveillance concern is now additionally about a few emerging infectious diseases like chickungunya and dengue, for instance. The national incidence of Tuberculosis was 7.2 per 100,000 population in 2021. In 2019, based on UNAIDS Spectrum, incidence of HIV was 0.57 per 1,000 population and HIV prevalence was around 1% in the population aged 15-49 years. In 2020, out of 3,386 specimens tested for hepatitis C in public laboratories, the positivity rate stood at 5%.

In 2021, infant mortality rate was 13.8 per 1,000 live births. In the main Island of Mauritius, which is 97% of the population of the country, the leading causes of death were attributed to cardiovascular diseases, 34.5%, followed by diabetes mellitus, 20.0% and neoplasm (*cancer*) 10.6%. In 2021, in the main Island of Mauritius, national deaths due to infectious diseases accounted for 2% (ICD 10 classification).

## Introduction

### Drug trafficking and consumption in Mauritius

In Mauritius, combining different sources of information, especially health institutions and drug control agencies, there is evidence to say that the use of illicit drugs or abuse of prescription drugs, is portrayed by the consumption of a variety of substances. Various past reports have mentioned drugs such as, Heroin-(*Opioid*), Cannabis herbs, Cannabinoids-(*Synthetic THC*), Hashish-(*Cannabis resin*), Methadone-(*Opioid*), Cocaine-(*Coca leaves -stimulant*), Methamphetamine-(*Central nervous system-stimulant*), Ecstasy- (*Methylenedioxymethamphetamine - MDMA*), Rivotril-(*Clonazepam-benzodiazepine drug*), Valium-(*Diazepam-benzodiazepine drug*), Mogadon-(*Nitrazepam-benzodiazepine drug*), Panadeine-(*Paracetamol+CodeinePhosphate-opioid*), Cough syrup, Tramadol-(*Pain-treatment- opioid*), New psychoactive substances, Subutex-(*Buprenorphine-opioid*), and Nova-(*Pregabalin*), amongst others. However, cannabis herbs, heroin and new psychoactive substances are among the most substantial circulating drugs in the country, in terms of consumption and trafficking.

Even if drug offences represent only 7% of all offences (*excluding road traffic offences*) and that the national drug use prevalence is equally 7% for adult non-injecting drug users (National Drug Use survey 2021), evidence-based information shows that there are some drug concerns in the country, namely in terms of health, social and economic implications. Each year, around 5,000 drug offences are reported by the Mauritius Police Force and on average 50,000 cannabis plants are uprooted annually. Just about 2,000 convicted drug offences are reported by the Judiciary. The annual average quantity of drug seized by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs for the past five years is heroin around 60kg, cannabis herbs 30 kg, hashish (cannabis resins) 10 kg, ecstasy around 200 and roughly 1 kg of cocaine.

In addition, control by the authorities shows that importation of major illicit drugs is increasing, in terms of quantity and value seized. Drug values amounting up to several billion rupees have been seized during the past decade, while cases of money laundering have been reported.

Regarding health, about 900 annual drug-related inpatient treatment cases has been registered during the past several years in public health institutions. Health problems following presumable use of new psychoactive substances constitute one of the major reasons for drug-related inpatient

treatment in public health institutions, while heroin users are also a significant component of people necessitating drug-related hospitalization. Triangulation of information indicates that, female drug users generally account for 10% to 15% of drug users in Mauritius. People in need of inpatient treatment, due to drug problems, are from all age groups with a particular popularity for the 20-34 years. In addition, drug-related inpatients come from all parts of the country, the impact in the rural areas being now as substantial as in the urban ones. Furthermore, polydrug use is causing quite a number of health harms to those who are addicted. Multiple drugs use is indicating the strong drug dependence nature of some Mauritian drug users.

In 2020, the population size of people who actively injected drugs were estimated to be around 6,000 (*Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance 2020 (IBBS)*). Continuous monitoring of this high-risk group, every two years, remains vital since it currently represents around 22% of newly detected HIV cases in 2021. In addition, the prevalence of HIV among this key population is estimated to be around 21% (*IBBS 2020*). International comparison shows that, in Africa, in year 2020 out of 920,000 people who inject drugs, 11% were living with HIV, (UNODC 2022).

In Mauritius, the majority of people who inject drugs never starts injecting practices without having firstly experienced non-injecting drug use. For instance, 90% had ever used non-injecting drugs before using the injecting method (*IBBS 2020*). Non-injecting practices appear to be the gateway that leads people to injecting drug use. In fact, the 2020 *IBBS* had shown that among people who were injecting drugs, 60% also consumed cannabis, 45% were also non-injecting heroin users, and 46% were using synthetic drug as a non-injecting drug.

## The world drug situation

### (a) Drug demand market

According to the *UNODC World Drug Report 2022*, at drug demand level, in 2020 cannabis was still definitely the most used drug, with 209 million users, that is, 4% of the global population. Cannabis users worldwide have increased by 23% for the last ten years. As regards opioids, an estimated 61 million people were using this substance in 2020. Opioids users represented 1.2% of the global population. In 2020, 50% of opioids users were from the South and South-West of Asia. Globally, heroin users accounted for 51% of global opioids users, while 40% of people who were

in drug treatment in 2020 reported opioids as their primary drug of use. Globally, two-third of deaths due to drug use (mainly overdoses) were attributed to use of opioids.

In 2020, an estimated 34 million people were using amphetamines, representing 0.7% of the global population. Qualitative observations indicate that use of amphetamines is increasing. Furthermore, 21.5 million people were on cocaine, 0.4%, with Europe and North America as the main user markets. Ecstasy amounted to 20 million users, 0.4%. Finally, new psychoactive substances were consumed in most part of the world in 2020.

### **(b) Drug supply market**

Cannabis cultivation, seizures of cannabis herbs and cannabis resins, were all reported to be on the increase in 2020. Seizures of cannabis resins have been particularly high. North Africa is a hub for interregional cannabis resin smuggling to Western Europe.

The total land area occupied by opium poppy cultivation decreased by 16% in 2021, but still it was observed that its production increased by 7% in 2020. Afghanistan continues on its profile of being the leading global illicit opium producer. This country accounted for 86% of the global opium production. In addition, the Balkan route, being the main migratory pathways into Europe, remains the main trafficking channel for opiates. Moreover, heroin is trafficked from South-west Asia to all African sub-regions. East Africa is mostly used as the entry point to markets in Western and Central Europe.

Cocaine trafficked by sea is gaining in proportion. The majority of seized cocaine is associated with maritime trafficking. In 2020, a high record of pure cocaine manufacture was reported, namely, 1,982 tons. Most cocaine in Africa are seized near coastlines. Some regions in Africa are used as transshipment of cocaine between South America and Europe. High amount of ATS, predominantly methamphetamines, were seized in 2020. Drug traffickers are using non-controlled chemicals for use as precursors, pre-precursors and designer precursors in the manufacture of ATS to avoid existing rules, regulations and international controls. America, Asia Europe and Oceania are all involved in ATS manufacture.

In 2020, 548 types of new psychoactive substances were reported globally, out of which 77 (14%) were identified for the first time. During the past ten years, the number of countries reporting

seizures of new psychoactive substances has doubled to reach a figure of 57 countries in 2020. Seizures of new psychoactive substances involved mainly synthetic cannabinoids and ketamine. New psychoactive substances classified as “novel benzodiazepines” is a growing concern.

### **(c) Miscellaneous global drug challenges and approach to drug use**

It is observed that cocaine production is escalating. Seizures of amphetamines and methamphetamines have multiplied. Cocaine and amphetamines are proliferating increasingly towards vulnerable regions of the world. Young users are becoming more prevalent. Women are 40% of the population using pharmaceutical drugs for non-medical purposes. UNODC is urging countries to; improve data collection and analysis of data to enhance early warning and evidence-based response; close treatment gaps with UNODC/WHO standards for youth, women and at-risk groups, while increasing access to services without stigma by mobilizing health, justice, social welfare, education, media and entertainment for a whole-of-society-approach to strengthen UNODC/WHO standard evidence-based prevention.

## Executive summary

As at December 2021, the population of the Republic of Mauritius was estimated at 1.26 million inhabitants. The population of children aged less than 15 years represented 17% of the total population, while the adult population aged 15-64 years accounted for 71% of the total population. According to latest data available, Mauritius which ranked 66<sup>th</sup> in 2019 in terms of human development index (HDI), has progressed to the 62<sup>nd</sup> rank in 2021 (*Human development report 2021*), with a very high HDI of 0.80. HDI is a composite indicator which considers the national economy, health and education status.

- **Drug offence and drug control**

In 2021, with 4,826 reported drug offences, the drug offence rate stood at 3.8 per 1,000 inhabitants. From 2020 to 2021, the number of reported drug offences decreased by 8.4% from 5,268 to 4,826.

For the last 5-year period 2017-2021, the average annual drug offence rate was 3.6 per 1,000 per year, as compared to 2.7 per 1,000 per year for the previous 5-year period 2012-2016, that is a percentage increase of 33.3% between the two 5-year periods.

In 2021, out of the 4,826 drug offences reported, 45.9% were cannabis-related offences, followed by 26.3% for heroin-related offences. 22.0% of drug offences were attributed to synthetic cannabinoids. Other drugs, comprising mainly methadone and hashish, stood at 3.5%. Finally, sedatives/tranquilizers accounted for only 2.3%.

Reporting of synthetic-cannabinoid-related offences was quasi inexistent in 2012, while afterwards it reached a peak proportion of 30.9% of all drug offences in 2018. It correspondingly stood at 22.0% in 2021.

From 2018 to 2020, possession of drugs has been the most popular nature of drug offence reported, with 71.8% in 2018, 72.1% in 2019 and 59.7% in 2020, as respective annual proportion of all drug offences. In 2021, possession of drugs accounted for 73.8% of total drug offences reported.



During the last fifteen years, annual drug offences as a proportion of all offences (*drug + non-drug offences*) have oscillated between 8.3% in 2007 and 6.6% in 2021, with a peak of 10.9% observed in 2019.

In 2021, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) of the Mauritius Police Force has reported 3,623 drug offences cases, out of which, there were 3,284 arrests. For the last three years 2019-2021, the average annual number of drug offence cases reported by ADSU was 3,813 per year and the average annual number of drug-related arrests was 3,245.

In 2021, among ADSU drug-related arrests, **cannabis products**, consisting of mainly herbs and relatively few hashish (*cannabis resin*), represented 36.2% of arrest cases. **Opioids**, essentially heroin and few methadone cases, stood at 34.5% of arrests. **New psychoactive substances** amounted to 26.7% of ADSU arrests, **CNS depressants**, 2.4% and the remaining 0.2% included essentially **CNS stimulants** and **hallucinogens**, namely cocaine, ecstasy, LSD and methamphetamine.

For the last nine years 2013-2021, the reported street value of drugs seized by the ADSU amounted to 13.7 billion rupees, out of which, an estimated street value of 10.9 billion rupees, 80%, were associated to seizures of heroin.

For the last seven years 2015-2021, ADSU has reported the uprooting of 407,672 cannabis plants, giving an average of 58,239 plants uprooted per year, with uprooting ranging from a minimum of 42,278 to a maximum of 72,300 plants annually. In 2021, 50,058 cannabis plants were uprooted.

Drug seizure cases by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs have been on a steady increasing trend from 2015 up to 2019, from 38 cases to 126 cases, that is a percentage change of +231.6%. In 2020, a downward shift was observed, that is, only 38 cases were reported, as compared to the 126 cases of year 2019, resulting in a percentage decrease of -69.8% between 2019 and 2020.

For the last five years 2017-2021, Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs has performed 371 seizure cases, out of which, 45% were associated to cannabis products (*Seeds+herbs+hashish*) seizures, 28.8% to opioids seizures, 15.1% to new psychoactive substance seizures, 5.9% to hallucinogens seizures and finally CNS stimulants seizures were only 2% of the distribution.

The Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs has performed seizures of illicit drugs in 54 months out of the 60 months from January 2017 to December 2021, representing a high surveillance regularity performance, that is, a successful-detection-months rate of 90% for the 5-year period 2017-2021.

In 2021, 86.7% of convicted drug offences were sentenced with fines, against 13.1% imprisonment. 0.2% was attributed to conditional and absolute discharges.

- **Health effects of drug use in Mauritius, in 2021**

From 2020 to 2021, inpatient treatment cases in public health institutions following drug use problems, decreased by 6%, that is, from 984 admissions in 2020 to 927 in 2021. For the same period, male drug-use-related admissions decreased by 7%, while female drug-use-related admissions increased by 21%.

The yearly average of drug-use-related admissions in public hospitals for the last three years 2019-2021, was 915 admissions per year (857 for men, 58 for women). Based on the last 5-year period 2017-2021, there is an indication that women drug-use-related admissions accounted for 6% of the cumulative total of 4,688 drug-use-related admissions that occurred between 2017 and 2021.

In 2021, just about two-third of drug-related admissions in public hospitals were inpatients in the age band 20-34 years. Those aged less than 20 years stood at 11%, essentially teenagers in the age group 15-19 years.

The rural region represented 56% of all drug-related admissions in public hospitals against 44% for the urban region. Moka district was relatively the least reported district, with an estimated district-wise rate of 4 drug-use-related admissions per 10,000 population, as compared to the highest drug-use affected district of Port Louis, with a corresponding rate of 14 drug-related admissions per 10,000 population.

In 2021, 87% of drug-use-related admissions were reported as presumable use of new psychoactive substances and/or heroin. However, consumption of new psychoactive

substances was the leading reported presumable cause necessitating drug-use inpatient treatment in public hospitals, with 55% of the drug-use-related admissions.

In 2021, 52% of drug-use-related inpatients in public health hospitals attended a specialized inpatient mental healthcare facility, against 48% who had benefitted general inpatient care in general hospitals.

For the one-year period, from January to December 2021, several conditions associated to mental and behavioral disorders were reported among drug-use-related inpatient cases, namely; anxiety, visual & auditory hallucination, bipolar mood disorder, confusional state, depression, psychosis, withdrawal symptoms, conduct disorder, restlessness, aggressive behavior and finally schizophrenia.

- **The health programmatic response to drug use**

In 2021, 715,773 needles and 701,497 syringes were distributed to people who inject drugs. Out of the 715,773 needles, NGOs' services accounted for 54% of the distribution, against 46% for public services. On average, an estimated 129 needles and 116 syringes were distributed per injecting drug user, which is roughly 59% of the WHO target of 200 syringes/needles per year by 2020 or 43% of the target of 300 syringes/needles per year, by 2030.

In 2021, at public needles and syringes programme service points, 1,612 clients were registered, out of which, women were 9%. At government and NGOs services, there were on average, respectively 1,734 and 1,799 clients attending Needles and Syringes service points on a monthly basis.

In 2021, 1,159 opioids users were induced on methadone through the methadone substitution therapy programme and 95% of them were male patients. 6,544 clients were on methadone maintenance programme. Male clients constituted 96%, against 4% female clients.

In 2021, 1,368 people suffering from drug dependence had benefitted rehabilitative new episodes of treatments at the five Government Addiction Units. Follow-up cases at these Addiction Units amounted to 5,148 cases giving an average number of 429 follow-up cases per month. In 2021, 84% of new cases at Government Addiction Units were between 18-39 years.

39% were less than 25 years. On the other hand, 72% of all new patients seeking rehabilitative treatment were using primarily heroin,

- **New cases seeking rehabilitative treatment at Non-Government Organization**

For the last three years 2019-2021, the average yearly new cases at NGO centres amounted to 2,121 cases per year. In 2021, there were 2,375 new cases. In 2021, the majority, 80%, of new patients having sought rehabilitative services at NGOs, were in the age band 18-39 years. NGOs' new cases under 18 years were only 4%.

In 2021, at NGOs rehabilitative services, women stood at 33% among cannabis-use patients and 32% among new-psychoactive-substance-use patients, as compared to heroin-use patients among whom women represented only 11%. Overall, new female drug-use rehabilitation beneficiaries stood at 17% of all NGOs new clients both sexes in 2021.

The statistical distribution of primary substances used among the total 2,375 new patients attending NGO centres in 2021, was as follows; heroin, 69%, new psychoactive substances, 6%, cannabis, 5%, polydrug users, 11% and 9% for unspecified substances.

# Chapter 1 Health effects of illicit drug use and abuse of prescription drugs

## 1.1 Hospitalisation in public health institutions following drug use in 2021

### 1.1.1 Pattern of inpatient treatment cases in public health institutions due to drug use problems

In 2021, there were 927 admissions in public health institutions due to drug use problems, out of which, 63 admissions (6.8%) were female cases.

From 2019 to 2020, inpatient treatment cases in public health institutions following drug use problems, increased by 18.0%, that is, from 834 admissions to 984 admissions. From 2020 to 2021, inpatient treatment cases in public health institutions following drug use problems, decreased by 5.8%, that is, from 984 admissions to 927.

From 2019 to 2020, male drug-use-related admissions increased by 20.3% from 775 admissions to 932 admissions, but from 2020 to 2021, male drug-use-related admissions decreased by 7.3%, that is, from 932 admissions in 2020 to 864 admissions in 2021. On the other hand, female drug-use-related admissions decreased by 11.9%, from 59 admissions in 2019 to 52 admissions in 2020, while from 2020 to 2021 female drug-use-related admissions increased by 21.2%, from 52 admissions to 63 admissions.

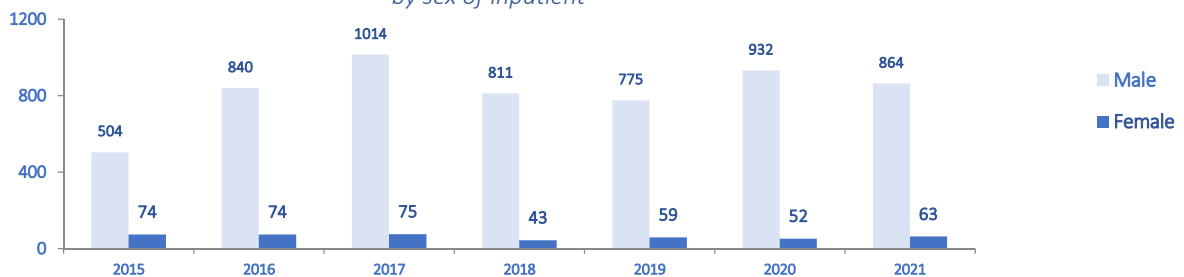
The average annual number of admissions for the 3-year period 2016-2018 was 952 admissions per year, as compared to an average of 915 yearly admissions for the 3-year period 2019-2021, representing an average decrease of 3.9% between these two 3-year periods.

During the last five years, from 2017 to 2021, considering the 5-year cumulative number of 4,688 reported drug-use-related admissions in public health institutions, overall female admissions accounted for only 6.2%.

Table 1 - Public Health Institutions  
 Number of admissions due to complications following drug use, 2015 – 2021

Sex	Period 2015 - 2021							% change 2020 /2019	% change 2021 /2020	Average yearly number of admissions	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			2016-2018	2019-2021
Male	504	840	1014	811	775	932	864	+20.3%	-7.3%	888	857
Female	74	74	75	43	59	52	63	-11.9%	+21.2%	64	58
Both sexes	578	914	1089	854	834	984	927	+18.0%	-5.8%	952	915

Figure 1  
 Public Health Institutions  
 Number of admissions due to complications following drug use, 2015 – 2021  
 by sex of inpatient



## 1.1.2 Age and residence of drug users treated as inpatients in public health institutions

### (i) Age distribution of drug-related inpatient cases in public hospitals, in 2021

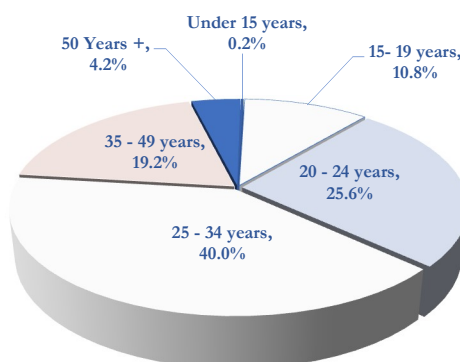
In 2021, the age distribution of drug-related inpatient treatment cases in public health institutions, was as follows; 0.2% were aged 10-14 years, 10.8% were aged 15-19 years, 25.6% were aged 20-24 years, 40.0% were aged 25-34 years, 19.2% were aged 35-49 years and 4.2% were aged 50 years and above. Thus, inpatient treatment cases were essentially in the age band 15-49 years, that is, 95.6%.

The age distribution by gender showed that a rather similar pattern was observed respectively among males and among females. For instance, for the age group 20-24 years it was 25.6% among male admissions and 25.4% among female admissions. In the same way, considering cases of admissions of age 25 years and above, it was 63.3% among male admissions, against the corresponding figure of 65.1% among female cases.

Table 2  
Public Health Institutions  
Number of admissions due to complications following drug use, in 2021  
*By age and sex*

Age group of inpatient	Male Cases	Percent	Female cases	Percent	Both sexes	Percent
10 – 14	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	2	0.2%
15 – 19	94	10.9%	6	9.5%	100	10.8%
20 – 24	221	25.6%	16	25.4%	237	25.6%
25 – 29	206	23.8%	11	17.5%	217	23.4%
30 – 34	148	17.1%	6	9.5%	154	16.6%
35 – 39	71	8.2%	16	25.4%	87	9.4%
40 – 49	86	10.0%	5	7.9%	91	9.8%
50 – 59	25	2.9%	1	1.6%	26	2.8%
60 +	11	1.3%	2	3.2%	13	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Figure 1  
Public Health Institutions  
Number of admissions due to complications following drug use, in 2021  
*by age group*



**(ii) Geographical residence of drug-related inpatient cases in public hospitals, in 2021**

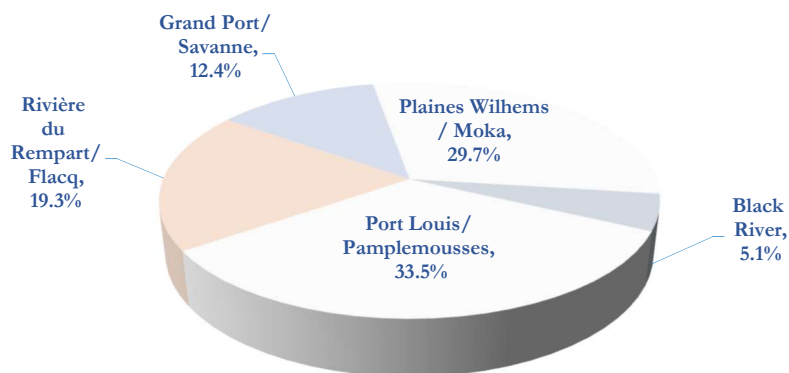
An analysis by district of residence of the drug inpatient showed that, Port Louis and Pamplemousses districts combined as the northwestern region of the Island of Mauritius, was the most popular geographical area reported for cases of drug-related admissions, with almost one third of all drug-related admissions in 2021. The second most important region reported, was the central region of Plaines Wilhems and Moka districts combined, 29.7%, even if Moka district accounted only for 11.0% within this central region with only 3.2% of total admissions. The northeastern region, characterized by the districts of Rivière du Rempart and Flacq, collectively stood at 19.3% of all admitted drug cases, while 12.4% of admissions were

attributed to Grand Port and Savanne districts together for the southern region. Finally, Black River district alone in the west represented 5.1% of the total drug-related admissions in 2021.

Table 3  
Public Health Institutions  
Number of admissions due to complications following drug use, in 2021  
*by district of residence and sex*

District	Male cases	Percent	Female Cases	Percent	Both Sexes	Percent
Port Louis	142	16.4%	18	28.6%	160	17.3%
Pamplemousses	136	15.7%	14	22.2%	150	16.2%
Rivière du Rempart	97	11.2%	5	7.9%	102	11.0%
Flacq	74	8.6%	3	4.8%	77	8.3%
Grand Port	70	8.1%	3	4.8%	73	7.9%
Savanne	39	4.5%	3	4.8%	42	4.5%
Plaines Wilhems	233	27.0%	13	20.6%	246	26.5%
Moka	29	3.4%	1	1.6%	30	3.2%
Black River	44	5.1%	3	4.8%	47	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Figure 2  
Public Health Institutions  
Number of admissions due to complications following drug use, in 2021  
*by district of residence*



### 1.1.3 Illicit substances reported among drug-use inpatients, in public health institutions

#### (a) Leading drugs responsible for drug-use related admissions in 2021

Opioids and new psychoactive substances continue to be the most popular presumed illicit substances responsible for drug-use-related admissions in public health institutions. In fact, in 2021, 86.7% of these admissions were reportedly attributed to complications following use of



new psychoactive substances and/or heroin. Overall, 55.3% had used new psychoactive substances, 31.4% heroin and only 6.0% cannabis. The remaining 7.2% were cases of admissions due to use of other unspecified drugs as well as cocaine.

In 2021, taking into account the fact that female-drug-use-related admissions represented only 6.8% of all drug-use-related admissions, it is to be noted that while new psychoactive substances were the most presumably used drugs associated with male-drug-use-related admissions, 57.6%, correspondingly it only stood at 23.8% among female-drug-use-related admissions. However, inversely, opioid-use-related admissions were most significant among females, that is, 44.4% of female-drug-use-related admissions, against 30.4% among male-drug-use-related admissions (See Table 4 below).

Table 5 below shows a comparison of year 2016 to year 2021 regarding the distribution of presumed drugs used among drug-use-related inpatients in public hospitals. This comparative analysis confirms the persistent trendy situation about opioids and new psychoactive substances as being the two mostly reported drugs consumed among cases of admissions following drug use in the recent past years. In fact, both 2016 and 2021 showed similar trend in the drug-specific distribution of drug-use-related admissions in public hospitals.

Table 4  
Public Health Institutions  
Inpatient treatment cases due to complications following drug use, in 2021  
*by presumed illicit substance used and sex*

Presumed illicit substance used	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Both Sexes	Percent
New psychoactive substances	498	57.6%	15	23.8%	513	55.3%
Opioids	263	30.4%	28	44.4%	291	31.4%
Cannabis	45	5.2%	11	17.5%	56	6.0%
Other and unspecified	58	6.7%	9	14.3%	67	7.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 5

Public Health Institutions  
**Inpatient treatment cases due to complications following drug use, in 2016 and 2021**  
*by presumed illicit substance used*

(Year 2016 compared to Year 2021)

Presumed illicit substances	Year 2016	Percent	Year 2021	Percent
New psychoactive substances	418	45.7%	513	55.3%
Opioids	216	23.6%	291	31.4%
Cannabis	58	6.3%	56	6.0%
Other and unspecified substances	<u>222</u>	<u>24.3%</u>	67	7.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**(b) Age and type of substances consumed among males admitted in public hospitals following drug use**

An analysis of age distribution by substances used by male inpatients revealed that the age group under 20 years accounted for only 24.4% among cannabis-use inpatients, as compared to 10.3% among opioid-use inpatients and 9.4% among new-psychoactive-substances-related inpatient cases

Regarding the age group 20-34 years, among male admitted heroin users, this age group represented 70.3%, within new-psychoactive-substance-use inpatients, they represented 69.1% and among cannabis drug-use-related admissions, they stood at 42.2%.

The age group 35 years and over accounted for 33.4% among male cannabis-use inpatients, as compared to 21.5% among new psychoactive substances inpatients and 19.4% among opioids-use inpatients.

Figure 3  
 Public Health Institutions  
**Age-specific distribution of drug-use-related male inpatients - 2021**  
*by presumed drug consumed*



Table 6  
Public Health Institutions  
**Age-sex distribution (%) of drug-use-related admissions – 2021**  
*by type of presumed substance used*

Age group (Years)	Cannabis (%)			Opioids (%)			New psychoactive substances (%)			Cocaine (%)			Mixed substances (%)			Unspecified (%)			All drugs (%)						
	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	2.2	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	
15 – 19	22.2	18.2	21.4	10.3	10.7	10.3	9.2	6.7	9.0	0.0	-	0.0	24.1	0.0	19.4	14.8	0.0	13.8	10.9%	9.5%	10.8%				
20 – 24	11.1	27.3	14.3	26.2	28.6	26.5	27.7	20.0	27.5	100.0	-	100.0	13.8	28.6	16.7	11.1	0.0	10.3	25.6%	25.4%	25.6%				
25 – 29	15.6	9.1	14.3	29.3	21.4	28.5	22.9	20.0	22.9	0.0	-	0.0	17.2	14.3	16.7	11.1	0.0	10.3	23.8%	17.5%	23.4%				
30 – 34	15.6	0.0	12.5	14.8	14.3	14.8	18.5	0.0	18.0	0.0	-	0.0	17.2	14.3	16.7	18.5	50.0	20.7	17.1%	9.5%	16.6%				
35 – 39	4.4	18.2	7.1	8.7	17.9	9.6	7.6	53.3	9.0	0.0	-	0.0	10.3	14.3	11.1	18.5	0.0	17.2	8.2%	25.4%	9.4%				
40 – 49	22.2	27.3	23.2	8.7	3.6	8.2	9.1	0.0	8.8	0.0	-	0.0	13.8	0.0	11.1	14.8	50.0	17.2	10.0%	7.9%	9.8%				
50 – 59	4.4	0.0	3.6	1.1	3.6	1.4	3.4	0.0	3.3	0.0	-	0.0	3.4	0.0	2.8	7.4	0.0	6.9	2.9%	1.6%	2.8%				
60 +	2.2	0.0	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.7	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	28.6	5.6	3.7	0.0	3.4	1.3%	3.2%	1.4%				
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No of cases	n= 45	n= 11	n= 56	n= 263	n= 28	n= 291	n= 498	n= 15	n= 513	n= 2	n= 0	n= 2	n= 29	n= 7	n= 36	n= 27	n= 2	n= 29	n= 864	n= 63	n= 927				

### (c) Specialized mental health treatment and associated diseases following drug use

Out of the total 927 drug-use-related admissions in public hospitals in 2021, 483 cases (52.1%) had undergone specialized mental healthcare inpatient treatment, against 47.9% who had benefitted non-specialized general inpatient care. Female specialized mental healthcare inpatient treatment due to drug use represented 4.8% of all (both sexes) specialized drug-use-related inpatient care.

Furthermore, presumed consumption of new psychoactive substances was the most important reason necessitating drug-use specialized inpatient mental healthcare, that is, 61.5%, against 29.8% for opioid-related specialized inpatient mental healthcare and 3.3% for cannabis-related specialized care. Other and unspecified drugs represented 5.4% of specialized care.

For the one-year period, from January to December 2021, among drug-related inpatient cases who had specialized mental healthcare treatment, several conditions associated with mental and behavioral disorders were reported, namely; anxiety, visual and auditory hallucination, bipolar mood disorder, confusional state, depression, psychosis, withdrawal symptoms, conduct disorder, restlessness, aggressive behavior and finally schizophrenia.

## 1.2 Death due to drug use, in 2021

In 2021, 46 drug-related deaths were reported, out of which, four were females. Almost an equal proportion of death was within the age group of 25 to 34 (39%) and within 35 to 44 age group (37%). Similarly, 13% of death were in the younger age group 18 to 24 and 11% were related to those above 45 years of age. It is to be noted that in over 80% of the death cases in 2021, opioid metabolites were detected.

## **Chapter 2 The National Drug-Use Health response**

The National Health response to drug use problems is ensured by the governmental services as well as nongovernmental organisations. Nongovernmental organizations being collaborative partners to the public health set up, deliver a range of rehabilitative services, namely psychosocial supports, follow ups of patients undergoing detoxification or drug substitution therapy and other harm reduction activities, such as, the provision of sterile needles and syringes. NGOs and government are also both engaged in drug use prevention activities.

At the level of public health institutions, the public entities involved in delivering drug related services are the Addiction Units, the Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) Centres, the specialized mental health care services through BSMHCC. Specialised residential care services for minors are offered at the Nenuphar ward of the Long Mountain Hospital while a Suboxone-Naltrexone-based detoxification residential programme is conducted at the Mahebourg Hospital.

Finally, the Needle and Syringes Programme (NSP), which focuses on the control and reduction of blood-borne infections among people who inject drugs, is maintained through complementary services of government and NGOs.

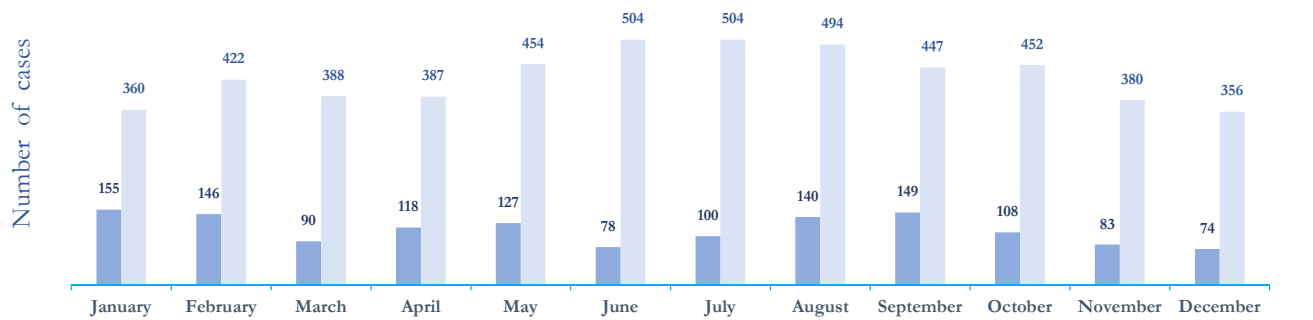
### **2.1 Addiction Units, Ministry of Health and Wellness**

#### **2.1.1 New clients and follow-up cases at Addiction Units, in 2021**

In 2021, the five Addiction Units under the Ministry of Health and Wellness had received 1,368 new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment due to complications following drug use. The average monthly number of cases was 114. Monthly cases fluctuated, ranging from the lowest monthly cases of 74 new patients in December to the highest monthly cases of 155 new patients registered in January.

In 2021, follow-up cases at the five Addiction Units amounted to 5,148 giving an average monthly number of 429 follow-up cases. The minimum number of follow-up cases registered in one month was 356, against the maximum monthly number of 504 cases.

Figure 4  
Addiction Units - 2021  
Monthly new cases and follow up  
of patients who sought rehabilitative treatment following drug use



### 2.1.2 Age distribution and substances used among new clients of Addiction Units

In 2021, while on one hand, 36.6% of those admitted in public hospitals for drug use problems were aged less than 25 years, on the other hand, within Addiction Units, new patients aged less than 25 years seeking rehabilitative treatment represented 39.0% of all the new cases. New cases aged less than 18 years accounted for only 6.2% at Addiction Units. In fact, most new cases at Addiction Units were between 18-39 years, that is, 83.7%. Fewer new cases, 10.1%, were associated with patients aged 40 years and above.

Table 7  
Addiction Units - 2021  
New cases seeking rehabilitative  
treatment due to complications  
following drug use,  
*by age group of patient*

Age group (Years)	Number	Percent
Under 18 years	85	6.2%
18 - 24	448	32.7%
25 - 29	433	31.7%
30 - 39	264	19.3%
40 - 49	99	7.2%
50 years & over	39	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 2.1.3 Primary drugs used among new patients at Addiction Units in 2021

In 2021, at Addiction Units, 72.4% of new patients seeking rehabilitative treatment due to complications following drug use, were using primarily heroin, as compared to 58.6% in 2019 and 71.0% in 2020. In the same year, 9.8% of new cases were related to new psychoactive

substances as primary substance of use, as compared to 16.1% in 2020 and 25.0% in 2019. It is to be noted that, in 2021, 15.7% of new cases at Addiction Units were reported under the other Illicit and unspecified category. (See Table 8 below).

Primary drug of new patient	2021		Percent 2020	Percent 2019
	Number	Percent		
Heroin	990	72.4%	71.0%	58.6%
New psychoactive substances	134	9.8%	16.1%	25.0%
Cannabis	29	2.1%	2.6%	7.0%
Other illicit and unspecified drugs	215	15.7%	10.2%	9.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	100.0% (n= 1,135)	100.0% (n= 1,212)

## 2.2 Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST)

### 2.2.1 New cases and follow-ups at the MST centres

In 2021, out of 1,674 new cases attending the MST centres, 1,335 cases were screened, out of which 1,238 (92.7%) were male clients against 97 (7.3%) female clients. 1,159 cases were induced on methadone, that is, 86.8% of the clients screened. Out of those induced, males represented 95.3% against 4.7% females.

Table 9  
Methadone Substitution Therapy - 2021  
Number of cases  
by treatment phase

New cases	1,674
Screened	1,335 (1,238 males, 97 females)
Induction	1,159 (1,105 males, 54 females)

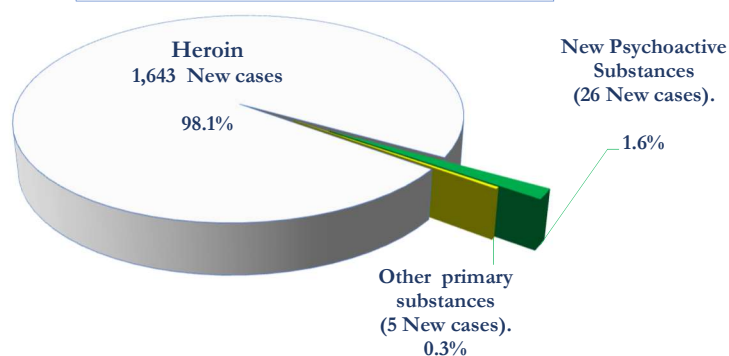
Age distribution for the 1,674 new cases attending MST centres showed that those aged less than 18 years stood at 0.5%, 18-24 years, 25.3%, 25-29 years, 33.8%, 30-39 years, 24.9%, 40-49 years, 12.2% and finally those aged 50 years and over were 3.4%.

98.1% of the 1,674 new cases were related to heroin as the primary drug consumed.

Table 10  
 Methadone Substitution Therapy - 2021  
**New cases attending MST centres,**  
*by age group*

Age group	Number	Percent
Less than 18 years	8	0.5%
18 - 24	423	25.3%
25 - 29	565	33.8%
30 - 39	417	24.9%
40 - 49	204	12.2%
50 years & over	57	3.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,674</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Figure 5  
 Methadone Substitution Therapy - 2021  
**1,674 new cases attending MST centres**  
*by primary substance used*



Note: 1,234 cases of polydrug use, out of the 1,674 new cases, that is, 73.7% of new cases in 2021

## 2.2.2 Methadone dispensing for clients on methadone maintenance

In 2021, 6,544 clients were on methadone maintenance programme and were administered their daily doses through 46 dispensing sites. Male clients constituted 95.8% against 4.2% female clients.

Table 11  
**Number of clients registered at the different methadone centres, in 2021**

METHADONE CENTRES	Male	Female	Both sexes
ST CROIX	2,972	101	3,073
BOULOUX	1,836	100	1,936
CENTRE FRANGIPANE	762	53	815
MAHEBOURG	698	22	720
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,268</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>6,544</b>



## 2.3 Suboxone Detoxification Programme

In 2021, there were 207 admissions at the Mahebourg Suboxone Detoxification Centre, out of which, 169 (81.6%) were new admissions, against 38 (18.4%) re-admissions. The monthly average of admissions was 14. The age group 18-29 years was the most popular age group among admissions, 73.4%, followed by the age group 30-39 years, 23.7%, while those aged 40 years and over stood at 2.9% of all admitted cases. The majority, 95.7% were using heroin as the primary drug.

## 2.4 Needles and Syringes Program (NSP)

### 2.4.1 Distribution of needles and syringes

In 2021, 715,773 needles and 701,497 syringes were distributed to people who inject drugs. Out of the 715,773 needles, nongovernment organizations accounted for 53.6% of the distribution, against 46.4% for the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOH&W). Overall, the MOHW and NGOs' NSP programs combined, the average monthly distribution of needles was 59,648 needles per month and the average number of syringes was 58,458 syringes per month.

When the covid-19 restriction measures were in place in 2020, it was observed that from 2019 to 2020 the number of syringes distributed decreased by 42.2% (-72.3% for MOH&W and -8.7% for NGOs). From 2020 to 2021 it overall increased by 28.1% (+132.9% for MOH and -7.3% for NGO).

For the last five years 2017-2021, the highest annual number of syringes distributed occurred in 2019 with 947,002 syringes, against the lowest annual distribution, which occurred in 2020 with 547,647 syringes, while the average annual number of syringes distributed for the same 5-year period 2017-2021 was 747,235 syringes per year. For the same 5-year period 2017-2021, NGO stood at 52.2% of cumulative distributed syringes against 47.8% for MOH&W.

Table 12  
Number of syringes distributed, 2017 - 2021

NSP service provider	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Ministry of Health and Wellness	390,028	436,126	498,339	138,162	321,782
NGOs	365,753	348,123	448,663	409,485	379,715
Total	755,781	784,249	947,002	547,647	701,497

#### 2.4.2 Attendances at NSP program centres

In 2021, the NSP program registered 20,812 and 21,587 attendances at MOHW and NGOs distribution sites respectively. 1,612 clients were registered in 2021 by the MOHW. The average monthly number of clients who attended NSP programme of the MOHW was 1,734 against a corresponding monthly average of 1,799 at NGOs' NSP sites. Among the MOHW clients, women represented 8.7%.

#### 2.5 The drug prevention programme by the MOHW

In 2021, drug prevention programme targeted mainly students at educational institutions, the general population at the level of community, employees at the workplace and the general youth population. The drug prevention activities were delivered through different communication mediums, namely TV & radio broadcasts, workshops, talks and through the structured programme known as the Youth Empowerment Programme Against Drugs (YEPAD).

Additionally, 179 educators were trained on the "Get connected" which is a drug use prevention activity targeting school children 12-14 years since 2019. This skills-based programme is inspired and tailored from the European Union Unplugged Programme. It is a programme in line with UNODC recommended prevention standards.

For the year 2021, 231 students were sensitized at the level of educational institutions while 559 people were reached through drug prevention programme in the community and 377 persons were sensitized at the level of the workplace. 53 "out of school" youth were sensitized on the ill-effects of drug. In addition, 312 participants were reached by the Youth Empowerment Programme Against Drugs (YEPAD).

The MOHW also conducted 12 training workshops on the issue of new psychoactive substances whereby 298 officers of the public service as well as social workers from the NGOs participated.

## **2.6 Patients seeking rehabilitative treatment through NGOs**

### **2.6.1 New cases attending NGOs' rehabilitation services**

In 2021, 2,375 new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment were reported at eleven NGO rehabilitation centres, as compared to 1,880 in 2020 and 2,109 in 2019. For the last three years, the average yearly new cases at NGO centres amounted to 2,121 cases per year. In 2021, the average number of patients seeking new treatment episode at NGOs' rehabilitation centres amounted to 216 new cases per centre, while the minimum number reported was 26 for one particular centre and the maximum number reported was 455 at another centre.

### **2.6.2 Age distribution of new cases attending NGOs' rehabilitation services**

The majority of new cases at NGOs in 2021, (79.7%), were in the age band 18-39 years. New cases under 18 years were only 3.9%, while those aged 40 years and above stood at 16.4%.

New cases at NGOs' centres decreased by 10.9% from 2019 to 2020 and then increased by 26.3% from 2020 to 2021. This was mainly due to the covid-19 restriction measures effects, which had reduced the mobility of the Mauritian population as a whole, essentially in 2020. An analysis of the covid-19 restriction measures effects, on attendances at NGOs' rehabilitation centres, by age group of patients, showed that from 2019 to 2020, the reduction of new patients was more consequential for those aged 50 years and over, that is a percentage decrease of 26.1%, followed by those aged 40-49 years, -17.8%, then by -16.5% among those aged 30-39 years, and -5.7% for patients aged 18-29 years. The older the age of the patient, the higher was the decrease from 2019 to 2020. Finally, NGOs' new cases aged less than 18 years, in contrast to other age groups, increased by 5.8% in the same period 2020 over 2019.

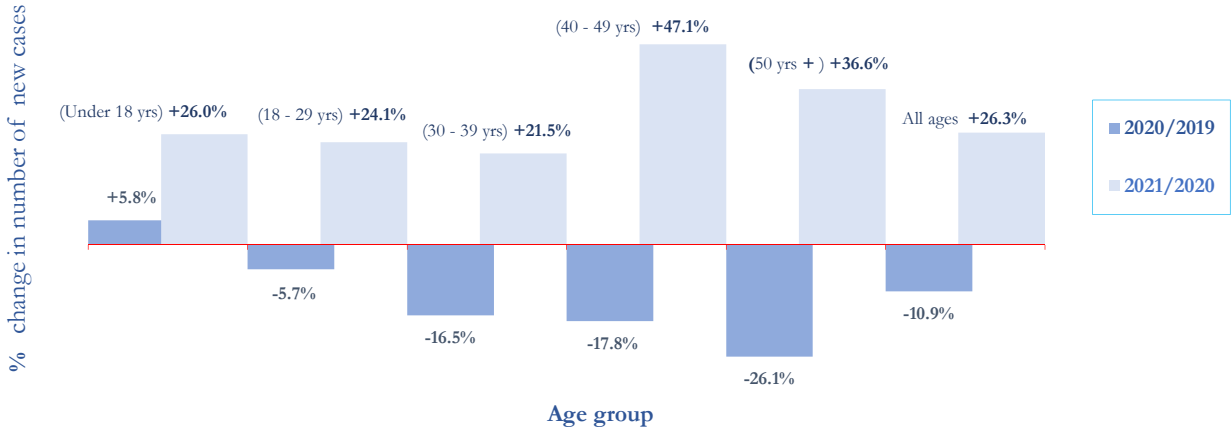
From 2020 to 2021, there were increases in all age groups, with a particular high rate for the age group aged 40- 49 years, that is, by +47.1%, while the overall increase was +26.3% for all ages.

In summary, based on figures for the last three years 2019-2021, it has been found that NGOs services registered an average of 80 new cases annually for those aged less than 18 years, compared to an average of 1,100 annual new cases among those aged 18-29 years, and some 600 new cases for the age group 30-39 years. With regard to the age group 40-49 years NGOs, registered an average of 200 new cases annually and for the above 50 age group there was around 100 new cases per year.

Table 13  
 Non-Government Organizations - 2019, 2020 & 2021  
 Number of yearly new cases seeking rehabilitative treatment following complications due to drug use, by age group of patient

Age group (Years)	2019		2020		2021		% change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	2020 /2019	2021 /2020
Under 18 years	69	3.3%	73	3.9%	92	3.9%	+5.8%	+26.0%
18 - 29	1,087	51.5%	1025	54.5%	1,272	53.6%	-5.7%	+24.1%
30 - 39	612	29.0%	511	27.2%	621	26.1%	-16.5%	+21.5%
40 - 49	230	10.9%	189	10.1%	278	11.7%	-17.8%	+47.1%
50 years and over	111	5.3%	82	4.4%	112	4.7%	-26.1%	+36.6%
Total	2,109	100.0%	1,880	100.0%	2,375	100.0%	-10.9%	+26.3%

Figure 6  
 Non Government Organizations  
 Effect of Covid-19 restriction measures on incidence of cases seeking rehabilitative treatment  
 Percentage change in yearly new cases, (2020 over 2019) and (2021 over 2020), by age group



**2.6.3 Gender differential of patients and types of drugs used among new patients attending NGOs’ services**

Out of the 2,375 new patients attending NGO centres in 2021, 82.8% were male against 17.2% females.

Among heroin users, males accounted for 89.4% against 10.6% females, as compared to 66.1% males and 33.9% females among cannabis users. With regard to new psychoactive substances users, males were 68.7% against 31.3% females (See Table 14 below).

The distribution of primary substances used among the total 2,375 new patients at NGO centres in 2021, was as follows; 68.8% for heroin, 6.3% for new psychoactive substances, 4.8% for cannabis, 11.0% for polydrug users and 9.0% unspecified substances (See Table 15 below).

The distribution of substances by gender showed that among males, heroin use stood at 74.3%, new psychoactive substances, 5.2%, cannabis 3.9%, polydrug users, 9.0% and 7.6% other and unspecified drugs (See Table 15 below).

The distribution of substances among females was as follows; 42.6% for heroin, 20.6% for polydrug users, 11.5% for new psychoactive substances and 15.9% for other and unspecified drugs (See Table 15 below).

Table 14  
Nongovernment Organizations  
Sex distribution of new cases seeking treatment at rehabilitation centres,  
*by type of primary drug*

Sex	Heroin	Percent	Cannabis	Percent	New Psychoactive substances	Percent	Polydrug	Percent	Others	Percent	Total	Percent
Male	1,461	89.4%	76	66.1%	103	68.7%	178	68.2%	149	69.6%	1,967	82.8%
Female	174	10.6%	39	33.9%	47	31.3%	83	31.8%	65	30.4%	408	17.2%
Both sexes	1,635	100.0%	115	100.0%	150	100.0%	261	100.0%	214	100.0%	2,375	100.0%

Table 15  
Nongovernment Organizations  
Drug distribution of new cases seeking treatment at rehabilitation centres,  
*by sex of patient*

Primary drug	Male		Female		Both sexes	
Heroin	1,461	74.3%	174	42.6%	1,635	68.8%
New psychoactive substances	103	5.2%	47	11.5%	150	6.3%
Cannabis	76	3.9%	39	9.6%	115	4.8%
Polydrug	178	9.0%	83	20.3%	261	11.0%
Other	149	7.6%	65	15.9%	214	9.0%
Total	1,967	100.0%	408	100.0%	2,375	100.0%

## 2.6.4 Follow-up of cases, psychosocial support and prevention activities at NGOs' services

### (a) Follow-up cases

In 2021, there were 1,272 follow-up cases of patients at eleven NGOs rehabilitation centres, out of which, 1,110 (87.3%) were male cases against 162 (12.7%) female cases. The number of follow-ups per centre was on average 116 cases per centre (101 males, 15 females). The minimum number of follow-ups reported in one particular centre was 87 cases, against a maximum number of 224 cases in another centre.

Out of the total 1,272 follow-ups in 2021, those associated with Opioid Agonist Treatment, accounted for 80.7% (1,026 cases). The other remaining 19.3% follow-up cases (246 cases) were related to non-OAT-patients after having mainly consumed heroin and to a lesser extent, those who had consumed new psychoactive substances, cannabis and other substances.

Out of 1,026 follow-up cases directly related to Opioid Agonist Treatment, Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) follow-ups represented 54.7%, Codeine follow-ups, 41.8% and finally 3.5% were attributed to Suboxone follow-ups cases. However, considering the total number of 1,272 follow-up cases at all NGOs in 2021, Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) follow-ups represented 44.1%, Codeine follow-ups, 33.7% and finally 2.8% were attributed to Suboxone follow-ups cases. It is to be noted that the distribution of follow-ups by type of OAT treatment at NGOs were almost identical for male patients and female patients.

Table 16  
Nongovernment Organizations  
Follow-up cases of patients at rehabilitation centres,  
by type of follow-up and sex of clients

Follow-up cases		Male			Female			Both sexes		
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)	<i>Methadone</i>	488	54.4%	44.0%	73	56.6%	45.1%	561	54.7%	44.1%
	<i>Codeine</i>	373	41.6%	33.6%	56	43.4%	34.6%	429	41.8%	33.7%
	<i>Suboxone</i>	36	4.0%	3.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	36	3.5%	2.8%
	Sub-Total (OAT)	<b>897</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>79.6%</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>80.7%</b>
Heroin		<b>86</b>		7.7%	<b>1</b>		0.6%	<b>87</b>		6.8%
New psychoactive substances		<b>5</b>		0.5%	<b>0</b>		0.0%	<b>5</b>		0.4%
Cannabis		<b>1</b>		0.1%	<b>0</b>		0.0%	<b>1</b>		0.1%
Unspecified substances		<b>121</b>		10.9%	<b>32</b>		19.8%	<b>153</b>		12.0%
TOTAL FOLLOW UPS		<b>1,110</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>162</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,272</b>		<b>100.0%</b>

(b) **Psychosocial support provided**

In 2021, data on psychosocial support delivered to patients were available for nine centres out of eleven NGOs centres. For the same year, 1,398 cases of psychosocial support were reported, involving 1,147 (82.0%) male cases against 251 (18.0%) female cases.

Table 17  
Nongovernment Organizations  
Summary of cases of psychosocial support provided by rehabilitation centres

Client	Number of cases of psychosocial support provided	Percent	Average number of cases per centre	Minimum number of cases per centre	Maximum Number of cases per centre
Male	1,147	81.5%	127 ( <i>Nine centres</i> )	6	247
Female	251	18.5%	50 ( <i>Five centres</i> )	8	103
Overall	1,398	100.0%	155 ( <i>Nine centres</i> )	26	277

Data on psychosocial support were not available for two out of eleven NGO centres

2.6.4 (c) **Prevention activities carried out in 2021**

Just like 2020, the year 2021 was also severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic thereby hindering the implementation of primary prevention programme against substance abuse following restriction measures imposed by the authorities.

Substance abuse prevention programme are generally conducted by several stakeholders in Mauritius namely the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mauritius Police Force (ADSU) and Nongovernmental organisations amongst others. In early 2021, a Multi-Sectoral drug prevention action plan was developed enumerating the different prevention activities to be implemented by the respective stakeholders. However, with the Covid-19 restriction measures, many of those activities could not be implemented as reported by the different institutions & organisations.

Drug prevention activities conducted in 2021 by NGOs are as hereunder.

- ❖ AILES, an NGO based at Cite Mangalkan, conducted 4 prevention sessions and HIV testing activities targeting 72 participants namely at La Valette Bambous, Residence Mangalkan, Residence Malherbes and La Tour Koenig.

- ❖ ACTRESA reported having reached 1032 persons through the 22 drug prevention sessions, it conducted mainly between June & December 2021, through different activities such as talks, residential seminars as well as yoga.
- ❖ Centre Dr Idriss Goomany conducted 14 sensitisation programmes reaching 543 participants. The sessions targeted mainly the younger age group and students.
- ❖ Centre D'Accueil de Terre Rouge reported having conducted 9 sessions with 219 participants. The prevention activities were conducted exclusively at the site of the centre with parents.
- ❖ Centre de Solidarite de RoseHill conducted 43 drug prevention activities targeting mainly youngsters within the age group 12-28 years. Most of the sessions were conducted through online platforms, and reached 466 participants.
- ❖ Groupe A de Cassis reported having conducted 83 sessions targeting youngsters mainly through online platform. The total number of people reached by Group A were 1500 in 2021.
- ❖ Group Renaissance de Mahebourg conducted 6 workshops at its centre with families reaching out 47 participants.
- ❖ Help de Addiction conducted 44 prevention sessions sensitizing 576 participants through a variety of activities including talks, yoga classes, occupational therapies as well as meditation.
- ❖ For the year 2021, Sangram Sewa Sadan (SSS) conducted only 1 prevention activity targeting 27 participants.

Table 18  
Nongovernment Organizations  
Summary of prevention activities for the year 2021

Sn	NGOs'	No of Sessions	No of persons reached
1.	AILES	4	72
2.	ACTRESA	22	1032
3.	Centre Dr Idriss Goomany	14	543
4.	Centre D'Accueil de Terre Rouge	9	219
5.	Centre de Solidarite de RoseHill	43	466
6.	Group A Cassis	83	1500
7.	Groupe Renaissance de Mahebourg	6	47
8.	Help de Addiction	44	576
9.	Sangram Sewa Sadan (SSS)	1	27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>4482</b>



## Chapter 3 Drug control and law enforcement against drug offence in Mauritius

### 3.1 Drug offences reported by the Mauritius Police Force

#### 3.1.1 Drug offence rate per 1,000 inhabitants

From 2020 to 2021, the drug offence rate decreased by 9.5% from 4.2 drug offence rate per 1,000 population to 3.8 per 1,000 respectively. For the last five years 2017- 2021, average annual drug offence rate was 3.6 drug offences per 1,000 inhabitants, as compared to an annual average of 2.7 per 1,000 for the previous 5-year period 2012-2016. This represents a percentage increase of 33.3% for average annual drug offence rate (2017-2021) over (2012-2016).

Table 19  
Mauritius Police Force  
**Trend of reported drug offences, 2007-2021**  
(Number of cases of drug offences and drug offence rate per 1,000 inhabitants)

YEAR	Drug offences		5-year average		5-year Percentage change	
	Number of Cases	Rate /1,000 population	Drug offences reported	Drug offence rate/1000	Drug offences	Drug offence rate
2007	4,464	3.6	4,098	3.3		
2008	4,217	3.4				
2009	4,144	3.3				
2010	3,943	3.2				
2011	3,721	3.0				
2012	3,472	2.8	3,434	2.7	-16.2%	-18.2%
2013	3,227	2.6				
2014	3,631	2.9				
2015	3,468	2.7				
2016	3,370	2.7				
2017	3,719	2.9	4,597	3.6	+33.9%	+33.3%
2018	4,267	3.4				
2019	4,906	3.9				
2020	5,268	4.2				
2021	4,826	3.8				

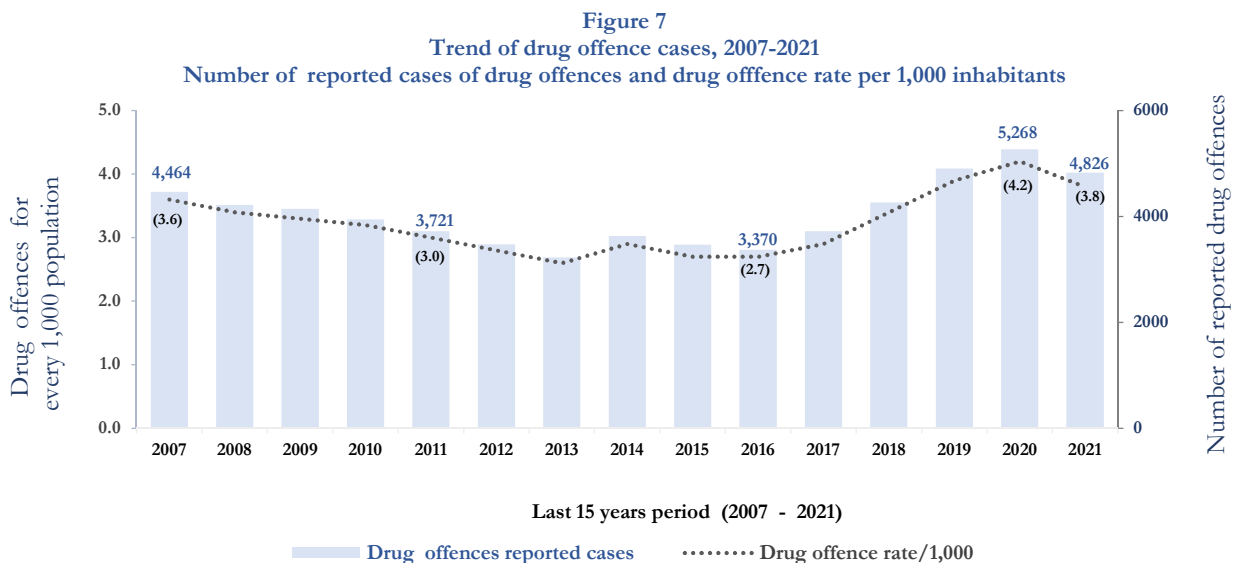
### 3.1.2 Number drug offences reported, type of drugs involved and nature of drug offences

#### 3.1.2.1 Number of annual reported drug offences

From 2020 to 2021, the number of reported drug offences decreased by 8.4% from 5,268 to 4,826. In 2021, the 4,826 drug offences reported by the Mauritius Police Force represented a percentage increase of 29.8% over the 2017 figure of 3,719 drug offences.

For the last five years 2017 to 2021, the average number of annual drug offences reported was 4,597, as compared to an annual average of 3,434 drug offences for the previous 5-year period 2012-2016. This represents a percentage increase of +33.9% for the 5-year period 2017-2021 over the 5-year period 2012-2016 in terms of average annual number of drug offences reported.

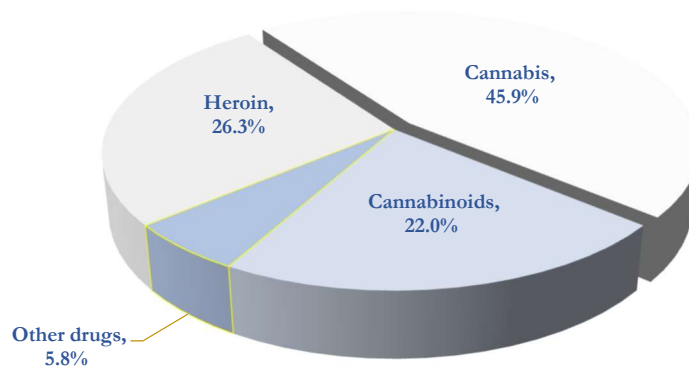
During the last ten years 2012-2021, the lowest annual number of drug offences reported was 3,227 in 2013, against the corresponding highest annual number of 5,268 in 2020.



#### 3.1.2.2 Reported drug offences by drug types

In 2021, out of the 4,826 drug offences reported, 45.9% were cannabis-related offences, followed by 26.3% for heroin-related offences. 22.0% of drug offences were attributed to synthetic cannabinoids. Other drug-related offences comprising mainly methadone and hashish at 3.5% while sedatives/tranquilizers accounted for 2.3%.

Figure 8  
Mauritius Police Force  
**Distribution of 4,826 drug offences reported, in 2021**  
*By type of drug*

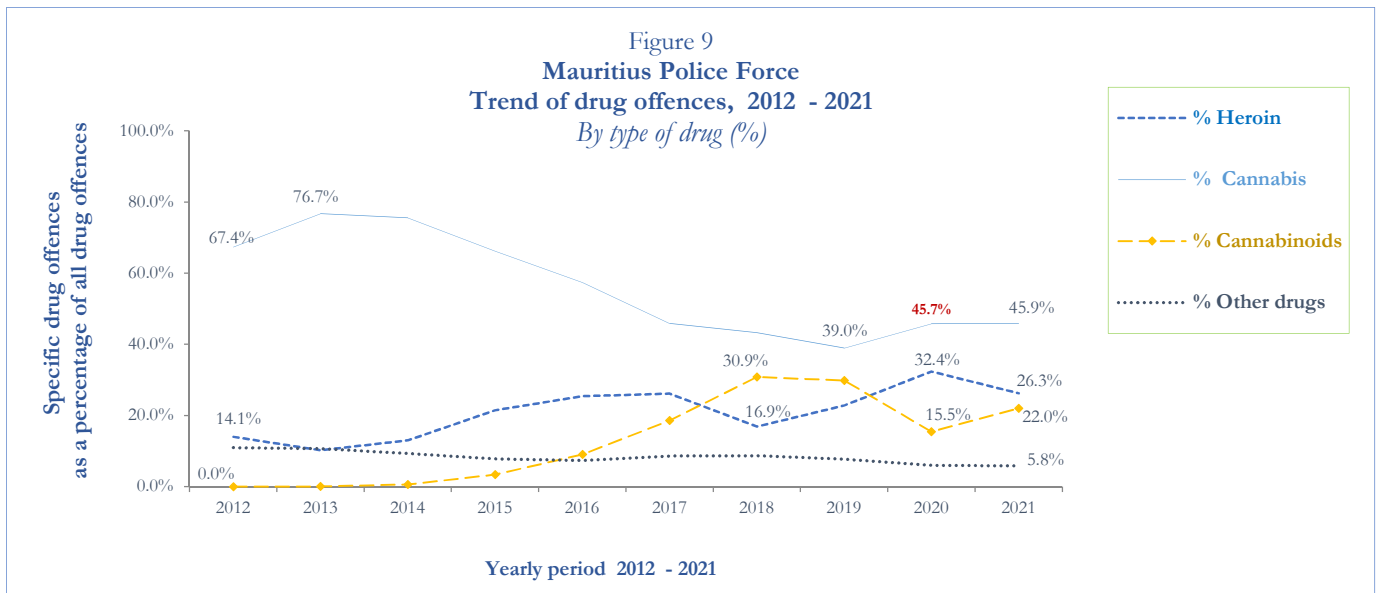


### 3.1.2.3 Trend of drugs offences by drug types

During the last ten years 2012-2021, the percentage of annual cannabis-related offences, over all drug-related offences, has moved down from a high percentage 67.4% observed in 2012 to 45.9% in 2021. Offences related to synthetic cannabinoids which stood at 0.0% in 2012 reached a proportion of 22.0% in 2021. (See Figure 9 below). On the otherhand, heroin related offences increased from 14.1% in 2012 to 26.3% in 2021.

In short, between 2012 and 2021 even if cannabis-related offences have always remained proportionately the most important reported annual drug-specific offence, heroin-related offences and synthetic-cannabinoid-related offences in return have both gained in significance.

It is to be noted that, for the last ten years, the peak annual proportion of heroin-related offences was reported recently in 2020, that is, 32.4% of all drug offences, while the peak for the annual proportion of synthetic-cannabinoid-related offences occurred in 2018 with 30.9% all cases of drug offences. Figure 9 below illustrates the shifts in the drug-type offence pattern when it comes to the use of heroin versus the use of synthetic-cannabinoids, especially in 2018 and 2020, that is, relative increases in heroin-related drug offences have coincided with relative decreases of synthetic-cannabinoids offences and vice-versa.



### 3.1.3 Nature of drug offences registered for the last four years, 2018 - 2021

From 2018 to 2020, possession of drugs has been the most popular type of drug offence reported with 71.8% in 2018, 72.1% in 2019 and 59.7% in 2020, as respective annual proportion of all drug offences. In 2021, possession of drugs accounted for 73.8% of total drug offences reported, followed by cultivation of cannabis plants, 17.2%, dealing of drugs, 2.9%, consumption of drugs, 2.3%, importation of drugs, 0.8% and finally other unspecified drugs 3.0% (See Table 20 below).

In 2020, a year marked by the local covid-19 outbreak, there was a presumable effect of covid-19 restriction measures on the number of reported possession of drugs (See Figure 10 below). In fact, from 2019 to 2020 the proportion of drug-possession-related offences, on all drug offences, decreased by 17.2%, that is, from a proportion of 72.1% in 2019 to 59.7% in 2020, while it then increased to reach a proportion of 73.8% in 2021.

In addition, a spectacular increase of drug-dealing-related offences was reported in 2020 with 963 cases compared to 258 cases in 2019, that is, a percentage increase of 273%, while it decreased by 85.7% from 2020 to 2021 with 138 cases. From 2019 to 2020, the proportion of drug-dealing-related offences, on all drug offences, increased from 5.3% to 18.3%, that is, a percentage increase of 245.3%.

Furthermore, from 2019 to 2020 heroin-dealing offences increased from 10 cases to 410 cases, representing a percentage increase of 4110%, but then decreased by 94.9% in 2021 with only

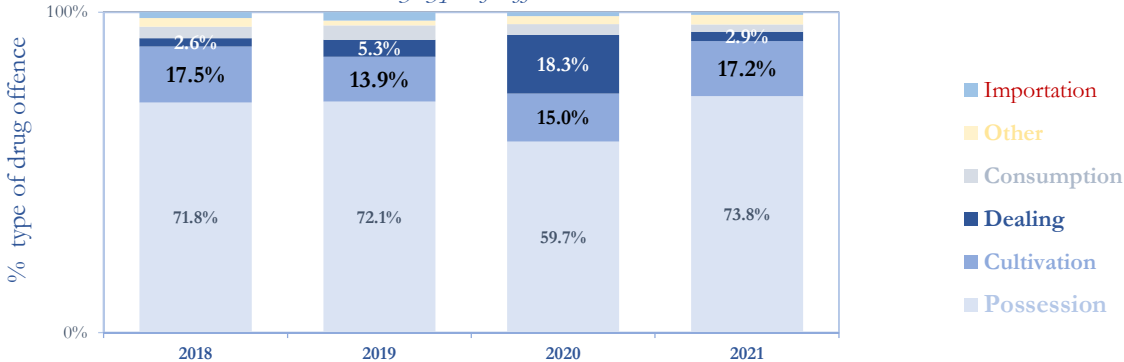
21 cases. On the other hand, cannabis-dealing offences increased by 152.9% from year 2019 with 191 cases to 483 cases in 2020 and then decreased by 89.9% in 2021 with only 49 dealing offences.

In short, the yearly proportion of reported drug-dealing-offences, on all drug offences, is usually 5% or less, however in 2020 it was 18.5% and it went down to 2.9% in 2021.

Table 20  
Mauritius Police Force  
Nature of drug offences reported, 2018 - 2021  
By type of offence

Drug Offence	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Possession	3062	71.8%	3539	72.1%	3144	59.7%	3560	73.8%
Cultivation	746	17.5%	684	13.9%	788	15.0%	830	17.2%
Dealing	110	2.6%	258	5.3%	963	18.3%	138	2.9%
Consumption	154	3.6%	220	4.5%	179	3.4%	113	2.3%
Importation	78	1.8%	129	2.6%	61	1.2%	38	0.8%
Other	117	2.7%	76	1.5%	133	2.5%	147	3.0%
Total	4,267	100.0%	4,906	100.0%	5,268	100.0%	4,826	

Figure 10  
Mauritius Police Force  
Drug offences reported, 2018 - 2021  
By type of offence



**3.1.4 Drug offences as a percentage of all offences (excluding road traffic contraventions)**

The paragraph 3.1.1 above, has depicted the rate of drug offences in the country. This section provides an insight of drug offences connection with other offences, especially discriminating between crime-related and misdemeanor-related drug offences.

During the last ten years 2012-2021, the lowest annual percentage of reported drug offences on all offences (excluding road traffic contraventions), was 7.4% in 2016, against the

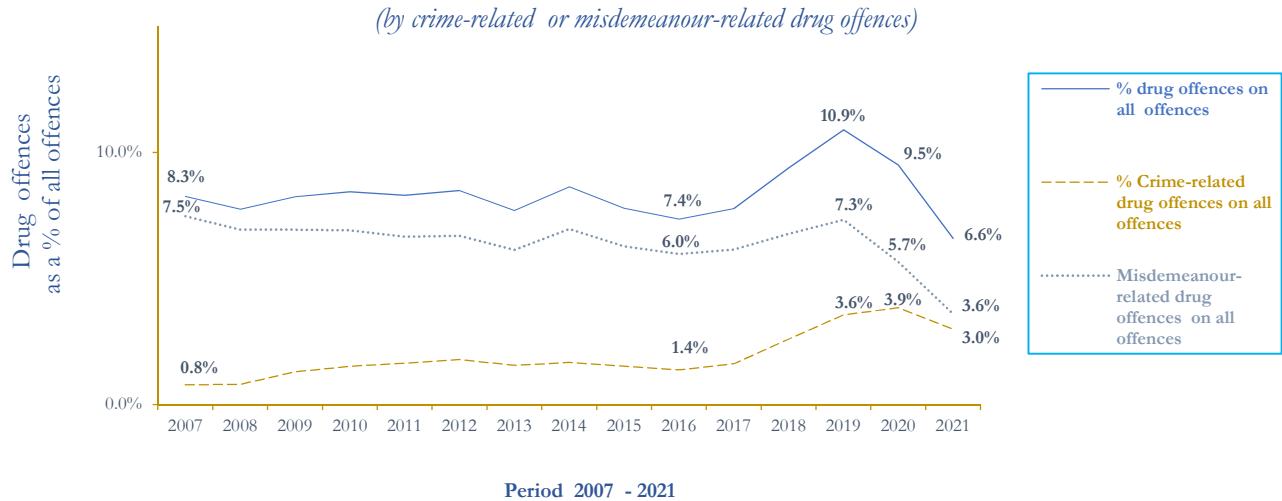
corresponding highest annual percentage of 10.9% in 2019. In fact, between 2012 and 2021 the percentage of drug offences on all offences has been oscillating roughly between 6.6% and 10.9%. After a peak of 10.9% was observed in 2019, it then decreased to 9.5% in 2020 and further to 6.6% in 2021. It is to be noted that, the trend of annual proportion of drug offences on all offences is also influenced by the trend of other non-drug offences (See Table 21 and Figure 11 below), such as offences related covid-19 regulations in 2021, for instance.

In 2021 crime-related drug offences represented 3.0% of all offences (*excluding road contraventions*) and represented 45.6% of all drug offences. Misdemeanor-related drug offences stood at 3.6% of all offences. For the last fifteen years 2007-2021, annual drug offences as a proportion of all offences (*drug + non-drug offences*) have oscillated from 8.3% in 2007 and 6.6% in 2021, with a peak of 10.9% observed in 2019. For the same period, annual percentage of crime-related drug offences on all offences (*drug + non-drug offences*) was 7.5% in 2007 and has ever since, remained steady until 2019 to 7.3%, then it further decreased to 5.7% in 2020 and to 3.6% in 2021(See Figure 11 below).

Table 21 - Mauritius Police Force  
Drug offences as a percentage of all offences, 2007 - 2021

Year	Offences reported (excluding road traffic contraventions)		% drug offences on total offences
	Drug offences	All Offences (Including drug)	(excluding road traffic contraventions)
2007	4,464	54,037	8.3%
2008	4,217	54,413	7.7%
2009	4,144	50,251	8.2%
2010	3,943	46,743	8.4%
2011	3,721	44,818	8.3%
2012	3,472	40,901	8.5%
2013	3,227	41,857	7.7%
2014	3,631	42,034	8.6%
2015	3,468	44,498	7.8%
2016	3,370	45,801	7.4%
2017	3,719	47,792	7.8%
2018	4,267	45,457	9.4%
2019	4,906	45,004	10.9%
2020	5,268	55,402	9.5%
2021	4,826	72,935	6.6%

Figure 11  
Trend of drug offences as a percentage of all offences, excluding road traffic offences,  
2007 - 2021



### 3.1.5 Drug control activities of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU)

#### (a) Number of drug offences cases, drug-related arrests and nature of drug offences reported by ADSU

In 2021, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) of the Mauritius Police Force has reported 3,623 drug offences cases, out of which, there were 3,284 arrests. For the last three years 2019-2021, the average annual number of cases and arrests by the ADSU was respectively 3,813 drug offence cases per year, against 3,245 drug-related arrests per year.

Considering the last three years 2019-2021 and based on ADSU arrests, it can be deduced that the nature of drug offences reported is predominantly characterized by possession of drugs, 52.1%, followed by dealing of drugs, 41.2%, then by cultivation of cannabis plant, 4.6%, importation of drugs, 1.6% and finally money laundering 0.2%.

An observation on the presumable effect of the 2020-2021 covid-19 restriction measures showed that, from 2019 to 2020, the number of drug-related arrests by ADSU increased by 10.5%, while it decreased by only 3% from 2020 to 2021. The 10.5% increase of year 2020 over year 2019 in drug-related arrests was attributable mainly to increases in drug dealing offences and cultivation of cannabis plants in 2020. In fact from 2019 to 2020 drug-dealing-

related arrests increased respectively from 993 to 1,521 arrests, that is, by +53.2%, and then decreased to 1,496 arrests in 2021, that is, by -1.6% (See table 22 below).

The years 2020 and 2021 witnessed a slight reduction in the number of arrests due to possession of drugs with a decreased of 8.1% in 2020 compared to 2019 followed by decrease of 6.3% in 2021 compared to 2020. However, a significant increase of arrests associated to dealing of drugs cases were observed during that period.

Table 22  
Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU)  
Drug offence cases and arrests, reported during the period 2019 - 2021  
By nature of drug offence

Type of drug offence	Number of cases					Number of arrests				
	2019	2020	2021	Total 2019-2021		2019	2020	2021	Total 2019-2021	
				Number	Percent				Number	Percent
Possession	1,813	1,671	1,572	5,056	44.2%	1,826	1,678	1,571	5,075	52.1%
Dealing	934	1,479	1,437	3,850	33.7%	993	1,521	1,496	4,010	41.2%
Cultivating	793	857	536	2,186	19.1%	118	148	182	448	4.6%
Importation	150	69	37	256	2.2%	108	23	23	154	1.6%
Obstruction to Police	2	7	10	19	0.2%	14	9	10	33	0.3%
Money Laundering	2	4	3	9	0.1%	5	8	2	15	0.2%
Others		34	28	62	0.5%	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,694</b>	<b>4,121</b>	<b>3,623</b>	<b>11,438</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,064</b>	<b>3,387</b>	<b>3,284</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**(b) Number of drug offence cases reported by ADSU involving unknown suspects**

Out of the 3,623 reported drug offence cases in 2021, 408 cases (11.3%) were cases involving unknown suspects. Among these unknown suspect cases, the majority was related to cultivation of cannabis plants, 87.5%, while heroin and other cannabis offences combined, accounted for 8.9% (See Table 23 below).



Table 23  
Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU)  
Cases of drug offence reported for known and unknown suspects, in 2021  
*By types of drug*

Drug offence for known/unknown suspects	Number of cases	%
Total cases of known suspects	3,215	88.7%
<b>Total cases of unknown suspects</b>	<b>408</b>	11.3%
<b>Total drug offence cases</b>	<b>3,623</b>	100%
<i>Drug offence for unknown suspects by type of drugs</i>		
<i>Cultivating cannabis plant</i>	357	87.5%
<i>Heroin</i>	19	4.7%
<i>Cannabis herb</i>	17	4.2%
<i>Ecstasy /New psychoactive substances /Hashish</i>	15	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>100%</b>

**(c) Number of drug-related arrests made by ADSU, by class of drugs**

The distribution of ADSU drug-related arrests in 2021, examined by class of drugs, showed that arrest for **cannabis products**, with mainly herbs and few cases of hashish (*cannabis resin*), accounted for 36.2% of arrests. The second most important class of drugs, namely, **opioids**, stood at 34.5% of ADSU arrests, with mainly heroin and few methadone cases. **New psychoactive substances** accounted for 26.7% of ADSU arrests, while **CNS depressants** was at 2.4% and the remaining 0.2% of arrests included essentially **CNS stimulants and hallucinogens**, namely cocaine, ecstasy, LSD and methamphetamine.

Figure 12  
Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU)  
Distribution of arrests for drug offences - 2021  
by Class of drugs

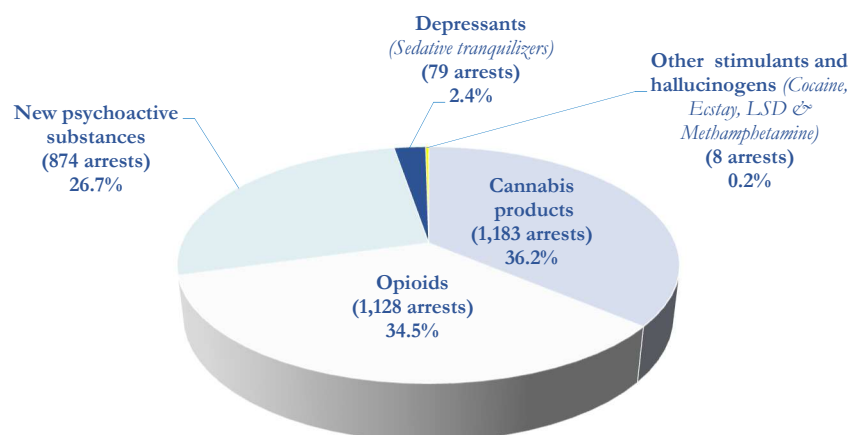


Table 24  
Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) 1  
Arrests for drug offences, in 2021  
By class of drug

Class of illicit substances	Number of arrests	Percent
<b>Cannabis products</b> (Mainly herbs and few hashish)	<b>1,183</b>	<b>36.2%</b>
<b>Opioids</b> (Mainly heroin and few methadone)	<b>1,128</b>	<b>34.5%</b>
<b>New psychoactive substances</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>26.7%</b>
<b>CNS Depressants</b> (Sedative /Tranquilizers)	<b>79</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>CNS stimulants &amp; hallucinogens</b> (Cocaine, Ecstasy, LSD & Methamphetamine)	<b>8</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,272</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Excluding 10 arrests for obstruction to Police and 2 arrests for money laundering

#### (d) Street values of drugs seized by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) in 2021

In 2021, the reported total street value of drugs seized by the ADSU, amounted to 4.8 billion Mauritian Rupees, out of which, 4.5 billion rupees (93.1%) were associated to seizures of **opioids** (essentially heroin). Street value of **cannabis products** involving herbs and hashish, represented 5% of the total street value seized, while **new psychoactive substances** stood at 1.6%, followed by **CNS stimulants**, such as cocaine and methamphetamines, 0.4%. **CNS depressants**, such as sedatives and tranquilizers, were less than one percent of the total street

value seized and finally **hallucinogens**, namely LSD and ecstasy, were also less than one percent of total street value seized in 2021 (See Table 25 below).

In 2021, the street value for heroin seized was, on average, roughly 15.0 million rupees per kilogram. Hashish (cannabis resin) was approximately 3.0 million rupees per kilogram, while cannabis herbs seized were on average around 0.6 million rupees per kilogram.

For the last nine years 2013-2021, the reported street values of drugs seized by the ADSU amounted to 13.7 billion rupees, out of which, an estimated street value of roughly 10.9 billion rupees (79.8%) were associated to seizures of heroin.

For the same last nine-year period, street value of cocaine was the second most important drug value seized, that is, 1.6 billion rupees (11.3%), while Cannabis herbs seized amounted to nearly 0.5 billion rupees (3.5%) and hashish 0.3 billion rupees (2.4%). Synthetic cannabinoids accounted for 0.3 billion rupees (2.5%) of the total street value seized between 2013 and 2021(See Table 26 below).

In terms of class of drugs, during the last nine years 2013-2021, **opioids** represented 79.8% of street value seized by ADSU, followed by **CNS stimulants**, 11.7%, **cannabis products**, 5.9%, **new psychoactive substances**, 2.5% and finally **CNS depressants** and **hallucinogens** were respectively less than one percent.

Table 25 - Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU)  
**Drug Seizures - 2021**  
*By street value, type and weight of drug*

Drug class	Illicit substance	Units	Weight (Kilograms)	Street value		Street value in billion rupees
				By specific illicit substance	By drug class	
				Value (Million Rupees)	Value (Million Rupees)	
<b>Opioids</b>	Heroin		297.6	4,463.4	4,463.4	4.5
<b>Cannabis products</b>	Cannabis		189.3	113.6	238.6	0.2
	Hashish		41.7	125.0		
<b>New psychoactive substances</b>	Synthetic cannabinoids		12.7	74.8	74.8	0.1
<b>CNS stimulants</b>	Cocaine		0.001	0.01	0.03	0.02
	Methamphetamine		0.1	0.0178		
<b>CNS depressants</b>	Sedatives / Tranquilizers tablets	5102		0.4	0.4	0.0004
<b>Hallucinogens</b>	LSD (Patch)	57		0.1	0.1	0.0001
	Ecstasy tablets	2		0.0		
<b>Total street value</b>				<b>4,777.3</b>	<b>4,777.3</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Figure 13  
Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU)  
Distribution of street values (Rupees) of drugs seized, 2021  
by class of drugs

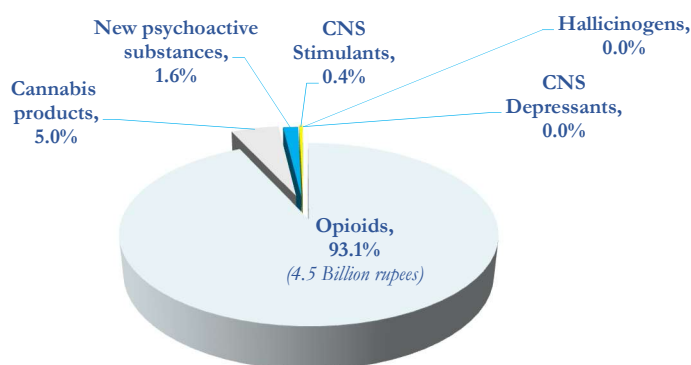


Table 26  
Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU)  
3-yearly trend of street values of drugs seized, 2013 - 2021  
by type of drug and classification of drugs

Drug class	Illicit substance	3-year periods									9-year Period 2013 - 2021		
		2013 - 2015			2016 - 2018			2019 - 2021			Value (Million Rs)	Percent by illicit drugs	Percent by drug class
		Value (Million Rs)	Percent by illicit drugs	Percent by drug class	Value (Million Rs)	Percent by illicit drugs	Percent by drug class	Value (Million Rs)	Percent by illicit drugs	Percent by drug class			
Opioids	Heroin	590.7	75.5%	77.0%	4,832.7	89.4%	90.0%	5,505.2	72.9%	72.9%	<b>10,928.6</b>	79.6%	<b>80.0%</b>
	Buprenorphine	11.4	1.5%		32.2	0.6%		5.9	0.07%		49.5	0.4%	
CNS stimulant	Methamphetamine	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	<b>41.1</b>	0.8%	3.4%	<b>3.4</b>	0.04%	18.7%	<b>44.6</b>	0.3%	<b>11.6%</b>
	Cocaine	0.2	0.0%		142.4	2.6%		1,413.5	18.7%		<b>1,556.1</b>	11.3%	
Cannabis product	Cannabis	148.0	18.9%	21.7%	162.0	3.0%	3.8%	171.4	2.3%	5.8%	481.4	3.5%	<b>5.9%</b>
	Hashish	22.0	2.8%		41.3	0.8%		266.5	3.5%		329.8	2.4%	
CNS depressant	Sedatives / Tranquilizers	1.2	0.2%	0.2%	2.2	0.0%	0.0%	2.3	0.03%	0.03%	5.6	0.04%	<b>0.04%</b>
New psychoactive substances	Synthetic cannabinoids	8.5	1.1%	1.1%	152.1	2.8%	2.8%	178.4	2.4%	2.4%	338.9	2.5%	<b>2.5%</b>
Hallucinogens	LSD	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	0.1	0.0%	0.0%	0.1	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
	Ecstasy	0.0	0.0%		2.4	0.0%		0.2	0.0%		2.6	0.0%	
<b>Total street value</b>		781.9	100.0%	100.0%	5,408.4	100.0%	100.0%	7,546.9	100.0%	100.0%	<b>13,737.2</b>	100.0%	<b>100.0%</b>

### (e) Cannabis plants uprooted by ADSU, 2015 – 2021

For the last seven-year 2015-2021, ADSU has reported the uprooting of 407,672 cannabis plants, giving an average of 58,239 plants uprooted per year, with uprooting ranging from a

minimum 42,278 to a maximum of 72, 300 plants annually during the same period 2015-2021. In 2021, 50,058 cannabis plants were uprooted.

### 3.1.6 Drug prevention activities by ADSU

The Education cell of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit conducted 86 drug prevention activities in terms of talks, exhibitions and live radio programme reportedly reaching out to 5123 people.

## 3.2 Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)

In 2021, 4,092 confirmed cases of illicit substances were reported by the FSL, that is, on average around a thousand cases every 3 months. For the whole year 2021, cannabis was the most popular substance confirmed, with 42.9% of cases. Heroin cases constituted 27.7%, followed by new psychoactive substances, 23.9% and the remaining 5.4% of cases were attributed to other unspecified drugs.

Table 27  
Forensic Science Laboratory  
Confirmed cases of illicit substances  
Period January to December 2021

Illicit substances	Quarterly period								Year 2021	
	First		Second		Third		Fourth			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Cannabis</b>	412	42.7%	431	37.4%	425	45.5%	487	46.7%	<b>1,755</b>	<b>42.9%</b>
<b>Heroin</b>	256	26.6%	372	32.3%	268	28.6%	239	22.9%	<b>1,135</b>	<b>27.7%</b>
<b>New psychoactive substances</b>	239	24.8%	297	25.8%	204	21.8%	239	22.9%	<b>979</b>	<b>23.9%</b>
<b>Other drugs</b>	57	5.9%	52	4.5%	37	4.0%	77	7.4%	<b>223</b>	<b>5.4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,092</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 3.3 Drug seizures by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs

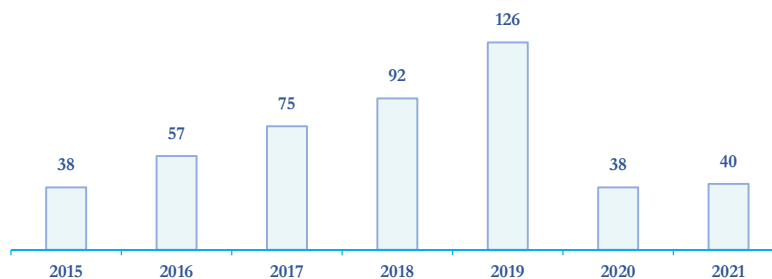
#### 3.3.1 Evolution of annual drug seizure cases by MRA Customs

For the last seven years from 2015 up to 2021, the MRA Customs has made 466 drug seizure cases. During the same period, the least annual number of seizure cases occurred in the year 2015 and in the year 2020 with an equal number of 38 cases for both years, while the peak annual seizure cases was reported in the year 2019 with 126 cases. In 2021, there were 40 seizure cases.

Thus, drug seizure cases by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs has been on a steady increasing trend from 2015 up to 2019, from 38 cases to 126 cases, that is a percentage increase of +231.6%. In 2020, a downward shift with respect to the increasing 2015-2019 trend was observed, such that, in 2020 only 38 cases were reported as compared to the 126 cases of the previous year, resulting in a percentage decrease of -69.8% between 2019 and 2020.

As it is known that the years 2020 and 2021 were marked by the impact of covid-19 restriction measures, an attempt to briefly analyze this impact on the drug seizure activities of the Mauritius Revenue Authority is given later in this report in section 3.2.5 and Table 33.

Figure 14  
Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs  
Annual number of illicit drug seizure cases  
2015 - 2021



For the last five years 2017-2021, Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs has performed 371 seizure cases, out of which 44.5% (165 seizure cases) were associated with **cannabis products** (*Seeds+herbs+hashish*) seizures. There were on average 33 seizure cases of cannabis products per year between 2017 and 2021.

For the last five years 2017-2021, seizures of **opioids** amounted to a cumulative total of 107 cases, that is, 28.8% of the 371 seizure cases (all drugs) reported by MRA Customs, for the period 2017-2021. During the same last 5-year period, on average there were 21 opioids-related seizure cases per year.

Between 2017 and 2021, MRA Customs has made 56 seizure cases of **new psychoactive substances**, giving an average of 11 seizure cases per year. New psychoactive substance seizure cases represented 15.1% of the total 371 seizure cases (all drugs) occurring during 2017-2021.

For the same last 5-year period 2017-2021, there were 22 seizure cases of **hallucinogens**, representing 5.9% of the total 371 seizure cases (all drugs). Seizure cases of hallucinogens were on average 4 seizure cases per year over the period 2017-2021. Finally, **CNS stimulants** seizure cases occurring between 2017 and 2021 totaled up to 6 cases (1.6%). On average, there was one seizure case of cocaine every year.

Table 28 - Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs  
**Number of yearly drug seizure cases, 2017 - 2021**  
*By class of drugs*

Class of drugs	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		5-year period 2017 - 2021		
	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%	cases	Percent seizure cases	Yearly average number of seizures
<b>Cannabis Products</b> (Seeds, herbs & resins)	30	40.0%	45	48.9%	52	41.3%	18	47.4%	20	50.0%	165	44.5%	33
<b>Opioids</b> (Narcotic analgesics)	20	26.7%	25	27.2%	48	<u>38.1%</u>	5	<u>13.2%</u>	9	22.5%	107	28.8%	21
<b>New Psychoactive Substances</b>	10	13.3%	10	10.9%	20	<u>15.9%</u>	10	<u>26.3%</u>	6	15.0%	56	15.1%	11
<b>Hallucinogens</b>	5	6.7%	5	5.4%	4	3.2%	3	7.9%	5	12.5%	22	5.9%	4
<b>CNS Stimulants</b>	1	1.3%	2	2.2%	1	0.8%	2	5.3%	0	0.0%	6	1.6%	1
<b>Other unspecified classes of drugs</b>	9	12.0%	5	5.4%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	15	4.0%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>74</b>

CNS Stimulants and Hallucinogens were essentially Cocaine and Ecstasy respectively  
 Opioids were Heroin seizures against one Buprenorphine seizure.

### 3.3.2 MRA Customs seizure cases, by type of illicit drugs, in 2021

In 2021, out of the 40 drug seizure cases made by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs, heroin cases were 22.5%, cannabis seeds seized, 20.0%, cannabis herbs, 17.5%, cannabis resin (*hashish*), 12.5%, new psychoactive substances, 15.0%, and finally, ecstasy tablets/MDMA, 12.5% (See Table 29 below).

In 2021, there was on average seven seizures for each of the six different class of drugs seized by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs.

### 3.3.3 Seizure cases, by values of seized drugs

In 2021, the total value of illicit drugs seized by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs amounted to 378.1 million Mauritian rupees. The distribution of the total market values of illicit drugs seized showed that heroin seizure cases accounted for 65.6% (*248.1 million*), followed by values of new psychoactive substances, 29.1% (*110.0 million*), of the total value of drug seized. Hashish, cannabis herbs, and ecstasy were respectively at 3.6% (*13.4 million*), 1.0% (*3.7 million*) and 0.7% (*2.8 million*).

In 2021, the market value of heroin seized by the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs was, on average, estimated at around 15.0 million rupees per kilogram, while cannabis herbs seized were on average approximately 0.6 million rupees per kilogram. Hashish seized were roughly 3.0 million rupees per kilogram. New psychoactive substances seizures indicated an average of 15.0 million rupees per kilogram. Cannabis seeds were estimated at Rs 100.0 rupees per unit seed.

Table 29  
Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs  
**Drugs seizure cases in 2021**  
*by type of illicit substance and market value*

ILLCIT SUBSTANCE	Seizure cases	Percent seizure cases	Units	Kilograms	Market value (Million Rs)	Percent market value (Rs)
Heroin	9	22.5%	-	16.5	248.13	65.6%
Cannabis Seeds	8	20.0%	255		0.03	0.0%
Cannabis (Herbs)	7	17.5%		6.2	3.73	1.0%
New psychoactive substances	6	15.0%	-	7.3	110.03	29.1%
Cannabis resin ( <i>Hashish</i> )	5	12.5%	-	4.5	13.44	3.6%
MDMA*	5	12.5%	-	0.18	2.77	0.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0%</b>			<b>378.13</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* suspected to be MDMA, pending FSL confirmation



Table 30 - MRA Customs drug seizures selected indicators – 2021

Different types of drugs seized	6
Average number of seizures per type of drug	7
Average drug value per type of substance seized (Rs M)	63.0
Average value per seizure (Rs M), all drugs	9.5

Table 31  
Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs  
Drugs seizure cases in 2021  
*by class of drugs*

Class of drugs	Seizure cases	Percent	Market value (Million Rs)	Percent	Average value per seizure (Million Rs)
Cannabis products ( <i>Seeds, herbs and resins</i> )	20	50.0%	17.2	4.5%	0.9
Opioids (Narcotic analgesics)	9	22.5%	248.1	65.6%	27.6
New psychoactive substances	6	15.0%	110.0	29.1%	18.3
Hallucinogens	5	12.5%	2.8	0.7%	0.6
TOTAL	40	100.0%	378.1	100.0%	9.5

### 3.3.4 MRA Customs seizure cases, by quantity of drugs seized in the last five years 2017-2021

For the last five years from 2017 up to 2021, the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs has seized 169.1 kilograms of cannabis herbs, giving an average seizure quantity of 33.8 kilograms per year. For the same period, cannabis seeds seized amounted to 1,026 units, that is, an average of 205 seeds per year even though no cases of cannabis seeds were reported in 2020. 51.1 kilograms of hashish seized between 2017 and 2021 represented an average seizure of 10.2 kilograms of hashish per year (See Table 32 below).

During the same period 2017-2021, it was observed that an average of 215+ tablets of ecstasy was seized annually. Furthermore, a total of 3.9 kilograms of cocaine was seized between 2017 and 2021, with an annual average of 0.8 kilograms between 2017 and 2020.

As regards seizure cases of heroin, a total of 278.6 kilograms of this illicit substance were reported for the period 2017-2021, giving an average quantity of 55.7 kilograms seized per year. New psychoactive substances seized between 2017 and 2021 amounted to a 5-year total of 26.9 kilograms, which is equivalent to an annual average quantity of 5.4 kilograms seized per year.

On the other hand, for the same 5-year period, 3,098 tablets of psychotropic substances were seized, that is an average of 620 tablets per year, even if no seizure cases for this substance were reported recently both in 2020 and 2021.

Buprenorphine presents a particular pattern with respect to other seized drugs in the sense that, during the period 2017-2021, there were seizures for this drug only in 2019. In fact, in 2019, 2,310 tablets of buprenorphine were seized.

Table 32  
Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs  
**Drug seizures, 2017 - 2021**  
*By quantity of drugs seized*

Illicit substances	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-year period 2017 - 2021	
							Total quantity	Yearly Average
Cannabis herbs	<i>Kg</i>	64.6	49.0	7.0	42.2	6.2	169.1 kg	33.8 kg
Cannabis seeds	<i>Units</i>	151	281	339	0	255	1,026 units	205 units
Hashish	<i>Kg</i>	3.1	7.2	35.9	0.4	4.5	51.1	10.2 kg
Ecstasy tablets	<i>Tablets</i>	55	730 + 50g	70 + 32.6g	37 + 9 patches	185	1077 tablets+82.6g + 9 patches	215+ tablets
Cocaine	<i>Kg</i>	0.05	3.4	0.0002	0.5	0.0	3.9 kg	0.8 kg
Heroin	<i>Kg</i>	186.5	31.3	38.5	5.8	16.5	278.6 kg	55.7 kg
New psychoactive substances	<i>Kg</i>	8.3	4.7	4.5	2.1	7.3	26.9 kg	5.4 kg
Buprenorphine	<i>Tablets</i>	0	0	2,310	0	0	2,310 tablets	462 tablets
Psychotropic substances	<i>Tablets</i>	1,854	1,180	64	0	0	3,098 tablets	620 tablets

### 3.3.5 Impact of the 2020-2021 Covid-19 restriction measures on the MRA Customs seizure activities

An analysis by change in the number of seizures cases, showed that, when comparing the biannual period 2018-2019 to the biannual period 2020-2021, it is observed that the indirect covid-19 restriction measures (local and/or international) had its highest impact on the number of heroin seizures cases by MRA Customs. The yearly average of 36 seizure cases of heroin registered in 2018-2019 went down to 7 yearly average cases in 2020-2021, indicating a percentage decrease of 80.6%. Furthermore, average seizure cases of cannabis herbs correspondingly decreased by 66.7%, hashish by -60.0%, new psychoactive cases by -46.7% and finally cannabis seeds cases averagely declined by 33.3%.

Comparing the change in quantity seized between the two biannual periods, that is, 2018-2019 against 2020-2021, it was observed that averagely the quantity of hashish seized decreased by 88.8% from (2018-2019) to (2020-2021). Correspondingly, the quantity of heroin seized averagely decreased by 68.2%, cannabis seeds by -58.7% and cannabis herbs by -13.6%.

However, even if from (2018-2019) to (2020-2021) seizures cases of new psychoactive substances declined by 46.7%, its quantity seized still went slightly up by +2.1%, that is averagely from 4.6 kg for (2018-2019) period against 4.7 kg for (2020-2021) period (See Table 33 below).

Table 33  
Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs  
**Indirect impact of Covid-19 restriction measures on the MRA Customs seizure activities**  
Yearly average number of selected drug seizures and quantity of drugs  
2018-2019 compared to 2020-2021

Class of drugs	Yearly average seizure cases		Yearly average quantity seized			% change (Period 2020-2021) over (Period 2018-2019)	
	Covid-19 period			Covid-19 period		Seizure cases	Quantity
	(2018-2019)	(2020-2021)		(2018-2019)	(2020-2021)		
Cannabis herbs	27	9	kg	28.0	24.2	-66.7%	-13.6%
Cannabis seeds	6	4	Units	310	128	-33.3%	-58.7%
Hashish	15	6	kg	21.5	2.4	-60.0%	-88.8%
Heroin	36	7	kg	34.9	11.1	-80.6%	-68.2%
New Psychoactive Substances	15	8	kg	4.6	4.7	-46.7%	+2.1%

### 3.3.6 Drug seizures by MRA Customs' surveillance (all drugs), 2017-2021

Overall, from January 2017 up to December 2021, that is, for a period of 60 months MRA Customs has made seizures in 54 months, representing a high drug regularity-detection rate of 90%. Table 34 below gives more worked out details on surveillance indicators, by examining the MRA Customs monthly and yearly seizure trend of different types of drugs seized between 2017 and 2021.

Table 34  
Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs  
**Illicit drug surveillance indicators, 2017 - 2021,**  
*by type of drug seized*

Illicit substance	Seizure performance	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-year period 2017 - 2021
	Number of months with seizures	12	12	12	7	11	54 months
	Percentage months with seizures	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	58.3%	91.7%	90.0%
Heroin	Quantity of heroin seized (kg)	186.5	31.3	38.5	5.8	16.5	278.6 kg
	Number of months involving heroin seizures	9	11	11	3	7	41
	Percentage months involving heroin seizures	75.0%	91.7%	91.7%	25.0%	58.3%	68.3%
	Yearly average quantity of heroin seized						55.7 kg per year
Cannabis herbs	Quantity of cannabis herbs seized (kg)	64.6	49.0	7.0	42.2	6.2	169.1 kg
	Number of months involving cannabis herbs seizures	10	11	11	5	5	42
	Percentage months involving cannabis herbs seizures	83.30%	91.7%	91.7%	41.7%	41.7%	70.0%
	Yearly average quantity of cannabis herbs seized						33.8 kg per year
Cannabis resins (Hashish)	Quantity of cannabis resins seized (kg)	3.1	7.2	35.9	0.4	4.5	51.1 kg
	Number of months involving cannabis resins seizures	5	7	11	3	5	31
	Percentage months involving cannabis resins seizures	41.7%	58.3%	91.7%	25.0%	41.7%	51.7%
	Yearly average quantity of cannabis resins seized						10.2 kg per year
Cannabis seeds	Quantity of cannabis seeds seized (units)	151	281	339	0	255	1026 units
	Number of months involving cannabis seeds seizures	5	6	4	0	5	20
	Percentage months involving cannabis seeds seizures	41.7%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	41.7%	33.3%
	Yearly average quantity of cannabis seeds seized						205 per year
New psychoactive substances	Quantity of new psychoactive substances seized (kg)	8.3	4.7	4.5	2.1	7.3	26.9
	Number of months involving new psychoactive substances seizures	5	4	8	4	5	26
	Percentage months involving new psychoactive substances seizures	41.7%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	41.7%	43.3%
	Yearly average quantity of new psychoactive substances seized						5.4 kg per year
Ecstasy Tablets	Quantity of ecstasy tablets seized	55	730+	70+	37+	185	1077+
	Number of months involving ecstasy tablets seizures	5	4	2	3	5	19
	Percentage months involving ecstasy tablets seizures	41.7%	33.3%	16.7%	25.0%	41.7%	31.7%
	Yearly average quantity of ecstasy tablets seized						215 tablets + per year
Cocaine	Quantity of cocaine seized (kg)	0.05	3.4	0.0002	0.5	0.0	3.9 kg
	Number of months involving cocaine seizures	1	2	1	1	0	5
	Percentage months involving cocaine seizures	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%
	Yearly average quantity of cocaine seized						0.8 kg per year

## Chapter 4 The Judiciary and convicted drug offences

In 2021, sentences were put into effect for 50,052 convicted offences of all types (*non-drug offences + drug offences*). Fines accounted for 89.0% of these 50,052 offences, against 7.2% for imprisonment, while the remaining 3.8% were either committed to community service works or were issued with probation orders, or discharged either conditionally or absolutely.

### 4.1 Convicted drug offences

In 2021, the number of convicted drug offences was 1,817 against 1,574 in 2020, that is, an increase of 15.4%. In 2021, 86.7% of convicted drug offences were sentenced with fines, against 13.1% imprisonment. 0.2% was attributed conditional and absolute discharges.

#### 4.1.1 Type of sentence for drug offences

Considering figures for the 2-year period 2015-2016 compared to the 2-year period 2019-2020, it also confirms that for these particular times, the large majority (*above 80%*) of convicted drug offences were sentenced with fines as compared to low proportions of sentences to prisons (*less than 15%*) (See Table 35 below). In 2019 and 2020, there were respectively 2,231 and 1,574 reported convicted drug offences, by the Judiciary of the Republic of Mauritius. In 2020, 84.5% were given fines, as compared to 85.2% in 2019, while 13.0% were sentenced to prison in 2020 as compared to 12.6% in 2019. In 2015 and 2016, out of all convicted drug offences, imprisonment accounted for 8.2% (193 cases) and 10.0% (222 cases) respectively, while fines were inflicted to 90.2% and 87.4% of convicted drug offences respectively.

In 2021, sentences to probation, community service and conditional and absolute discharges, altogether stood at 0.2% percent of all convicted drug offences. Correspondingly, they represented 2.2% in 2019 and 2.5% in 2020.

Table 35  
Judiciary of the Republic of Mauritius  
**Drug offences convicted,**  
*by type of sentence,*

(Period 2015-2016 compared to Period 2019-2020) & 2021

Sentence	Period 2015-2016				Period 2019-2020				Year 2021	
	2015	Percent	2016	Percent	2019	Percent	2020	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Imprisonment</b>	193	8.2%	222	10.0%	282	12.6%	204	13.0%	*238	13.1%
<b>Fines</b>	2,131	90.2%	1,943	87.4%	1,900	85.2%	1,330	84.5%	1,575	86.7%
<b>Probation</b>	3	0.1%	19	0.9%	20	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Community service</b>	21	0.9%	23	1.0%	25	1.1%	38	2.4%	0	0.0%
<b>Conditional and absolute discharges</b>	15	0.6%	15	0.7%	4	0.2%	2	0.1%	4	0.2%
<b>Total convicted drug offences</b>	<b>2,363</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,231</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,574</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,817</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Include 1 from another institution

#### 4.1 2 Type of drug offences among drug offences convicted

In 2021, out of the 1,817 convicted drug offences reported by the Judiciary, 83.0% were associated to possession of drugs, 6.5% to dealing of drugs, 5.6% to consumption of drugs, 4.4% to cultivation of cannabis and 0.4% to importation of drugs (See Table 36 below). The distribution of convicted offences by type of drugs was as follows, 43.8% of convicted drug offences were associated with cannabis, against 23.7% for heroin, while 32.5% of convicted drug offences were related to other unspecified drugs (See Table 37 below).

Table 36  
Judiciary of the Republic of Mauritius  
**Drug offences convicted, by type of offence**  
(2015-16), (2019-2020) & 2021

Type of convicted drug offence	2015	Percent	2016	Percent	2019	Percent	2020	Percent	2021	Percent
Possession	1,515	64.1%	1,608	72.4%	1810	81.1%	1217	77.3%	1,509	<b>83.0%</b>
Dealing	216	9.1%	112	5.0%	71	3.2%	70	4.4%	118	6.5%
Consumption	305	12.9%	299	13.5%	249	11.2%	187	11.9%	102	5.6%
Cultivation of cannabis	129	5.5%	168	7.6%	81	3.6%	89	5.7%	80	4.4%
Importation	34	1.4%	9	0.4%	20	0.9%	11	0.7%	8	0.4%
Other	164	6.9%	26	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total convicted drug offences</b>	<b>2,363</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,231</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,574</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,817</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 37  
Judiciary of the Republic of Mauritius  
**Drug offences convicted, by type of drug**  
(2015-16), (2019-2020) & 2021

Drug	Type of offence	2015	Percent	2016	Percent	2019	Percent	2020	Percent	2021	Percent
<b>Heroin</b>	Importation	6		4		9		1		6	
	Dealing	15		8		9		7		20	
	Possession(+articles)	407		497		469		316		385	
	Consumption	50		43		33		23		20	
	Other	8		9		0		0		0	
	<b>Sub-total: Heroin</b>		<b>486</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>431</b>
<b>Cannabis</b>	Importation	22		4		10		5		2	
	Cultivation	129		168		81		89		80	
	Dealing	87		33		45		40		60	
	Possession(+articles)	656		873		701		513		577	
	Consumption	187		239		195		153		76	
	Other	48		3		0		0		0	
<b>Sub-total: Cannabis</b>		<b>1,129</b>	<b>47.8%</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>59.4%</b>	<b>1032</b>	<b>46.3%</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>50.8%</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>43.8%</b>
<b>Other drugs</b>	Importation	6		1		1		5		0	
	Dealing	114		71		17		23		38	
	Possession(+articles)	452		238		640		388		547	
	Consumption	68		17		21		11		6	
	Other	108		14		0		0		0	
<b>Sub-total :Other drugs</b>		<b>748</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>32.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL (All drug offences)</b>		<b>2,363</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,231</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,574</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,817</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 4.1.3 Trend of convicted drug offences, by type of drugs

#### (i) Convicted drug offences due to heroin

The evolution of drug convicted offences with respect to the type of drugs involved, showed that the percentage of convicted heroin offences has moved from 43.3% in 2002 to its lowest proportion of 7.1% in 2010 due to drastic increase in other illicit substances offences. As from 2010 it then started to increase to reach 29.9% in 2018. In 2021 heroin convicted offences stood at 23.7% of the distribution of convicted drug offences.

#### (ii) Convicted drug offences due to cannabis

The trend of drug convicted offences related to cannabis, showed that the percentage of convicted cannabis-offences, which was 24.7% in 2002, went down to 14.8% in 2010, a year when convicted heroin-offences were as low as 7.1% and other illicit drugs offences, were very high representing 78.1% of the distribution of drug offences. As from 2010, convicted cannabis-

offences have steadily increased to reach a peak of 59.4% of convicted drug offences distribution in 2016. It then decreased to 43.8% in 2021, staying as the highest proportion of convicted drug-type offence since 2015.

(iii) Convicted drug offences due to other illicit substances

As depicted in the previous paragraphs, the relatively low percentage of heroin and cannabis percentage convicted offences in 2010 was influenced by high convicted offences related to other drugs, 78.1%. Past data indicates that during this period there were high level of dealing and use of buprenorphine. On the other hand, as from 2013, Mauritius started to experience increasing circulation of new psychoactive substances among drug users. In 2021, drug convicted offences due to other drugs, excluding heroin and cannabis, stood at 32.5%.

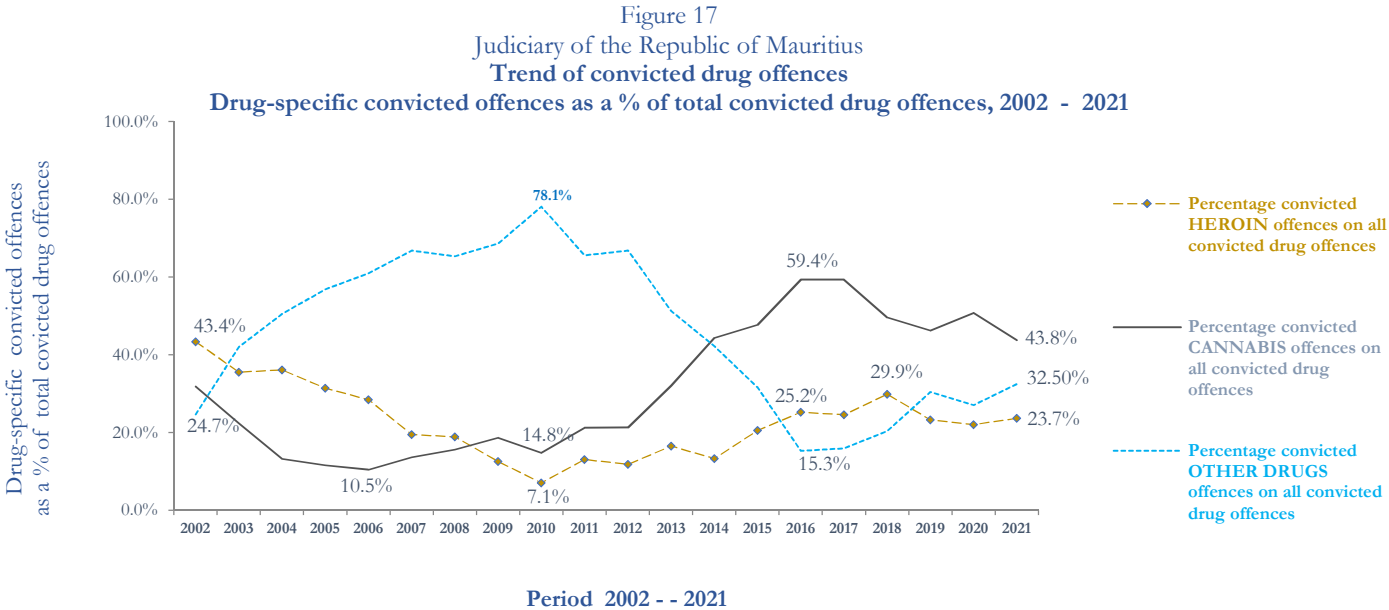
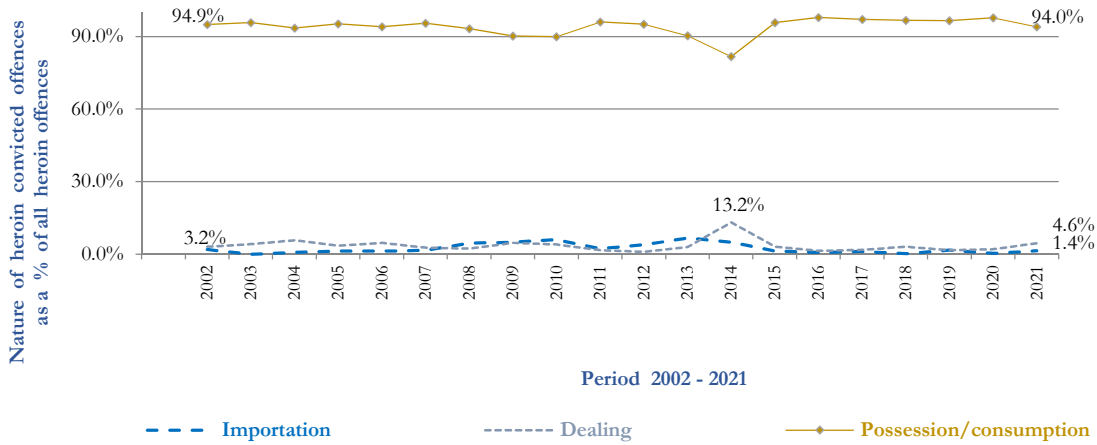


Figure 18 below, gives an indication that during the past twenty years, possession of drugs have been the main type of drug offences reported among the heroin convicted offences with at least 90% of heroin convicted offences for nearly all the years.



Figure 18  
 Judiciary of the Republic of Mauritius  
**Trend of convicted heroin offences - 2002 - 2021**  
 (% Importation, dealing and possession/consumption)



## 4.2 Imprisonment and drug offences

Table 38 provides data with regard to the number of admissions on convictions to prisons for the past 6 years, 2016-2021.

Table 38  
**Number of admissions on convictions to prisons, 2016 - 2021**  
*By drug offences and other non-drug offences*

Offences	2016	%	2017	%	2018	%	2019	%	2020	%	2021	%
<b>Drug</b>	334	9.0%	295	6.9%	327	8.9%	326	8.3%	249	7.4%	312	9.4%
<b>other</b>	3,364	91.0%	3,977	93.1%	3,327	91.1%	3,587	91.7%	3,096	92.6%	3,007	90.6%
<b>All offences</b>	3,698	100.0%	4,272	100.0%	3,654	100.0%	3,913	100.0%	3,345	100.0%	3,319	100.0%

While the number of convicted detainees (all offences) decreased by 0.8% from 3,345 in 2020 to 3,319 in 2021, on the other hand, convicted detainees for drug offences as a proportion of all convicted detainees, increased from 7.4% in 2020 to 9.4% in 2021. In fact, admissions to prisons for drug offences increased from 248 in 2020 to 312 in 2021.

During the last five years 2017-2021, the annual proportion of drug-offence detainees with respect to all detainees, has ranged between 6.9% in 2017 and 9.4% in 2021. For the same 5-year period, on average, each year 8.2% of annual number of detainees was associated with drug offences.

In 2021, among the 312 convicted detainees for drug offences, 36.9% were related to synthetic cannabinioids offences, 28.2% to heroin offences, 25.0% to cannabis and finally 9.9% to other drugs offences.

## Reference:

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- Digest of Crime and Justice Reports, Statistics Mauritius.
- Integrated Biological & Behavioral Study (IBBS) Reports, Ministry of Health and Wellness
- World Drug Report 2021
- Human Development Report 2021
- UNODC World Drug Report 2022
- Mauritius Prison Services Website