



CNB
For a Drug-Free Singapore

Topic 1: Understanding Singapore's DRUG POLICY

UNDERSTAND SINGAPORE'S DRUG POLICY

DARK HISTORY OF DRUG ADDICTION IN SINGAPORE



Sale of opium was a lucrative source of government revenue

1 out of 3 Chinese was an opium addict ⁽¹⁾

45 opium dens ⁽²⁾

1848

550 licensed opium dens ⁽³⁾

1906: Public outcry against opium⁽³⁾

1946: Opium finally **made illegal** after 40 years of campaigning ⁽¹⁾

1900s

65 people died in relation to drug abuse ⁽⁴⁾ :

Found dead on streets due to overdose

Hit by vehicles in a drug stupor

Set themselves alight and died from severe burns

Jumped to death

Drugs were freely sold in "black areas"

1969 - 1974

UNDERSTAND SINGAPORE'S DRUG POLICY

DARK HISTORY OF DRUG ADDICTION IN SINGAPORE



Subutex (buprenorphine) was introduced as a substitution treatment for opiate addiction.

Intended to reduce heroin cravings and facilitate social functioning improvement among addicts.

2000 - 2002

Abusers started abusing Subutex by **mixing it with other drugs and injecting the concoction.**

Complications from Subutex abuse included **severe infections** leading to a concerning rise in **fatalities**.⁽¹⁾

2002 - 2006

Singapore reclassified Subutex as a **Class A controlled drug** under the Misuse of Drugs Act in August 2006.⁽²⁾

Subutex Voluntary Rehabilitation Program (SVRP) provided medical detoxification and structured substance abuse counseling.

2006

“If drug abuse were to be allowed to grow unchecked, we would eventually be faced with a dangerous national security problem... Rampant drug addiction among our young men and women will also strike at the very foundation of our social fabric and undermine our economy.”



Former Minister of Home Affairs , Mr Chua Sian Chin, 20 Nov 1975

UNDERSTAND SINGAPORE'S DRUG POLICY



Harm Prevention

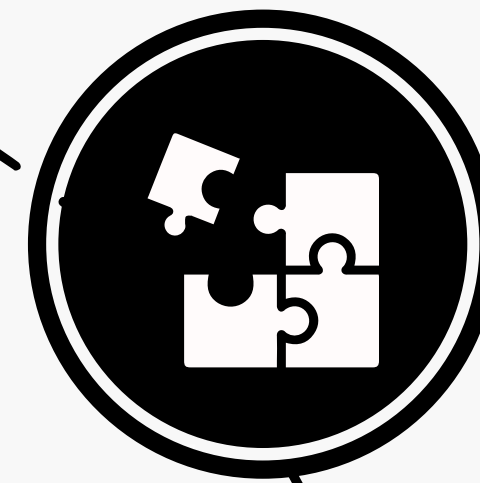
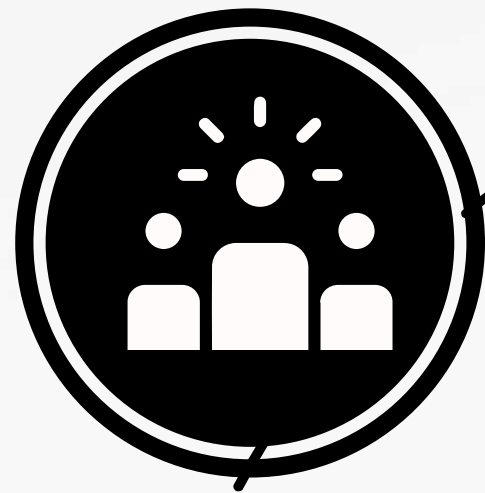
Prevention Drug Education

Aims to equip individuals with knowledge and skills to resist drug use by raising awareness of its risks and promoting drug-free lifestyles.



Tough Laws & Vigorous Enforcement

Strict legal penalties and rigorous policing to deter drug-related crimes and reduce drug abuse



Evidence-informed Rehabilitation & Aftercare

Provide tailored, research-based interventions and support to promote long-term recovery and prevent relapse.



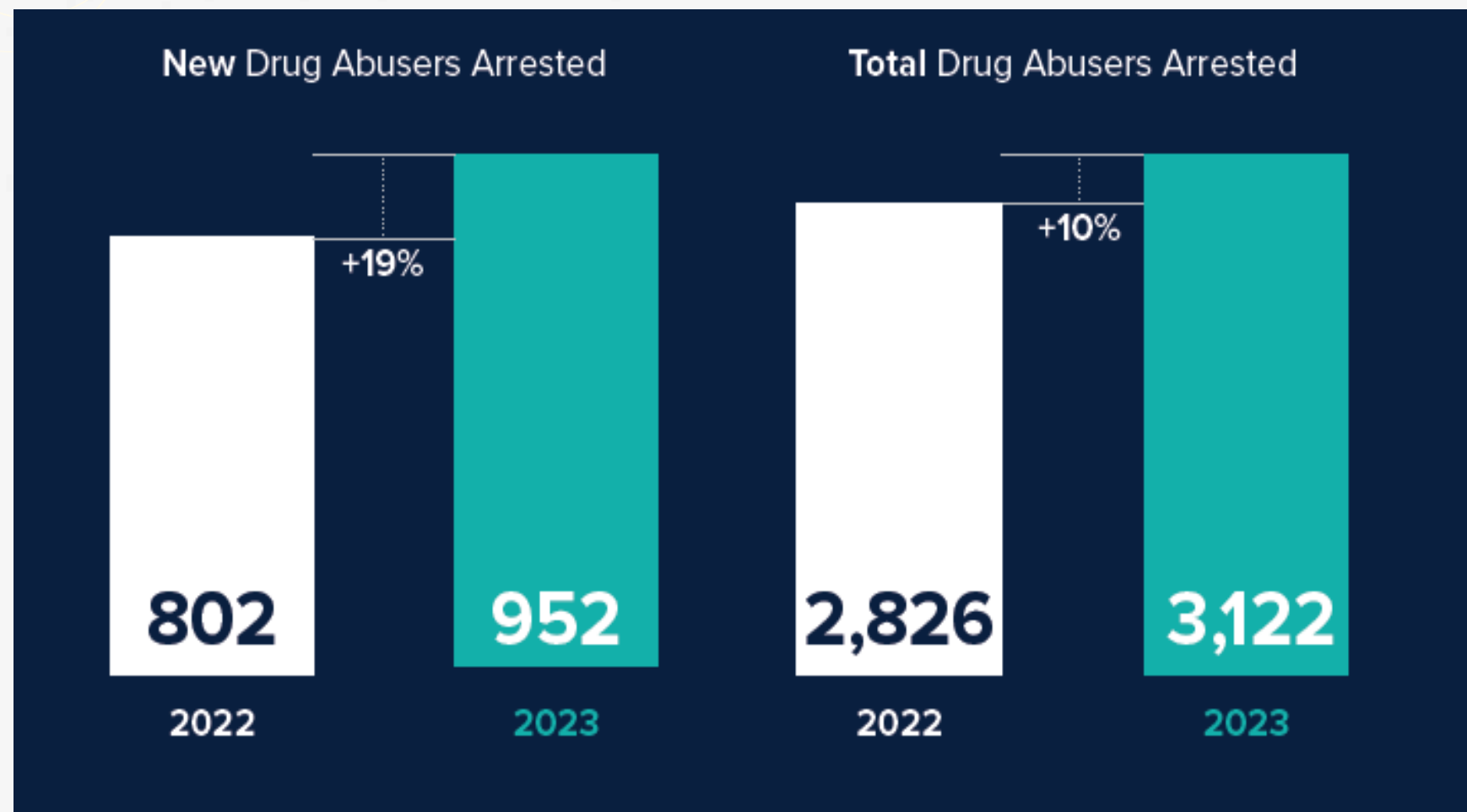
LOCAL DRUG SITUATION

	Weighted %	Unweighted Frequency
What was the first drug that you have used? *		
Cannabis	82.8%	70
Methamphetamine	4.5%	7
Ecstasy	4.0%	3
Which drug did you use most frequently? #		
Cannabis	68.0%	45
Methamphetamine	15.5%	14
Heroin	6.5%	10

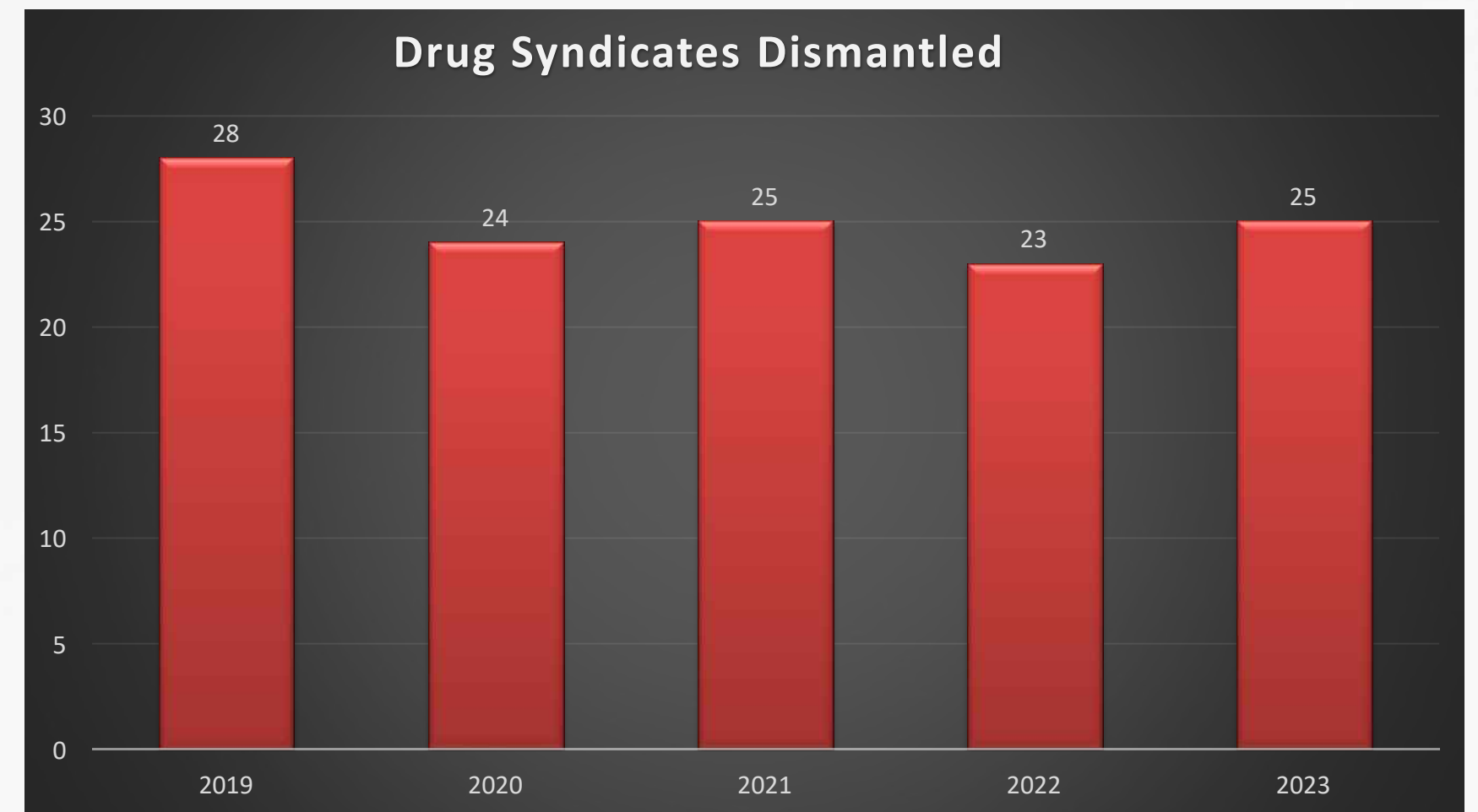
Results from the Singapore Health and Lifestyle Survey (conducted from April 2021 – July 2022) :

- 6509 Singapore residents (Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents) aged between 15 and 65 years were randomly selected for participation.
- Questionnaires were administered to assess the consumption of illicit drugs and collect information on correlates.
- The lifetime prevalence of consuming illegal drugs was **2.3%** (95% confidence interval [CI] 1.9–2.8) (n=180).
- Compared to individuals aged 15–34, those aged 50–65 (odds ratio [OR] 0.3, 95% CI 0.2–0.7) had lower odds of lifetime drug consumption.
- **Cannabis** remained the most consumed illicit drug among abusers.

LOCAL DRUG SITUATION 2023



In 2023, CNB arrested 3,122 drug abusers ⁽¹⁾, an **increase of 10%** from the 2,826 abusers arrested in 2022.



Number of drug syndicates apprehended also saw a **significant increase** in 2023.

LOCAL DRUG SITUATION 2023

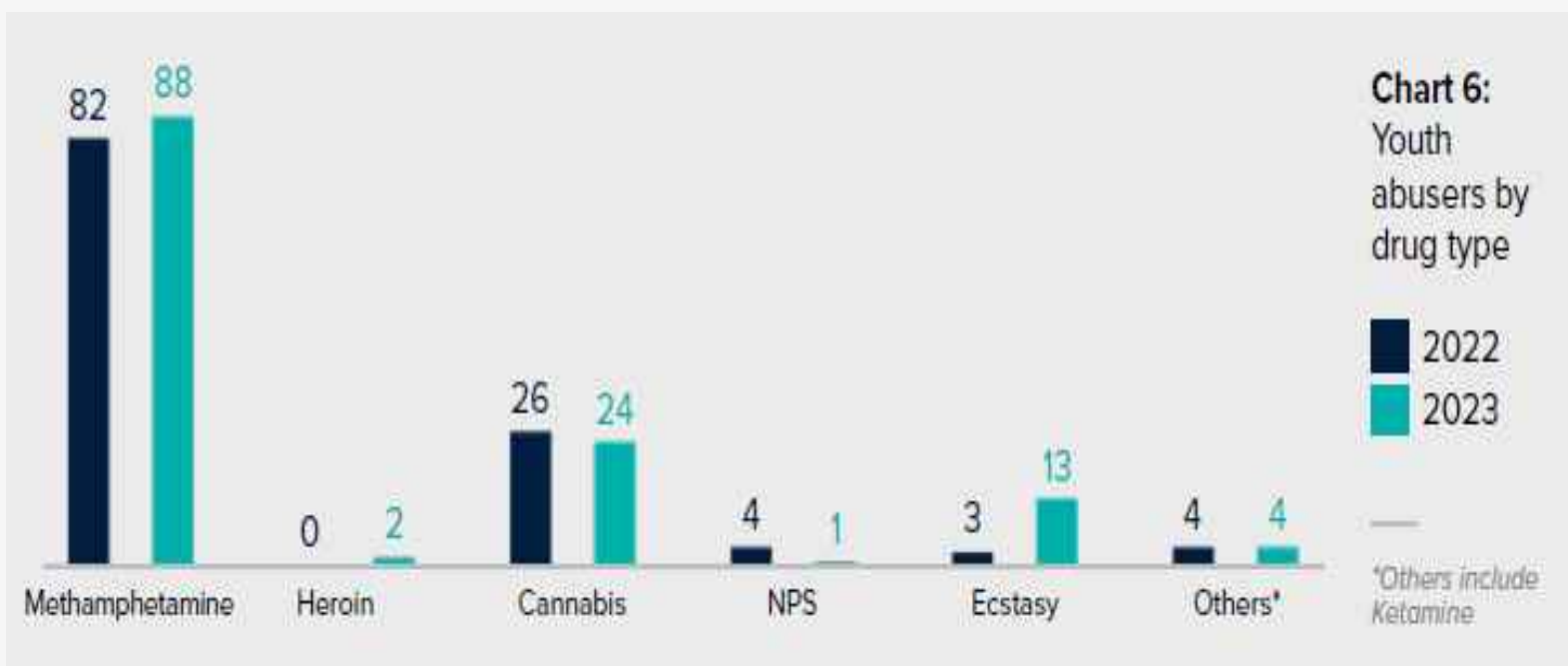


Local Drug Abusers – By Age

859 (28%) of all drug abusers arrested were **below 30 years old**. The number of youth abusers arrested (i.e., aged below 20 years old) **increased by 11%** from 119 in 2022 to 132 in 2023.

488 (51%) of all new abusers arrested were aged **below 30 years old**. The number of new youth abusers arrested (i.e., aged below 20 years old) **increased by 17%** from 83 in 2022 to 97 in 2023.

LOCAL DRUG SITUATION 2023



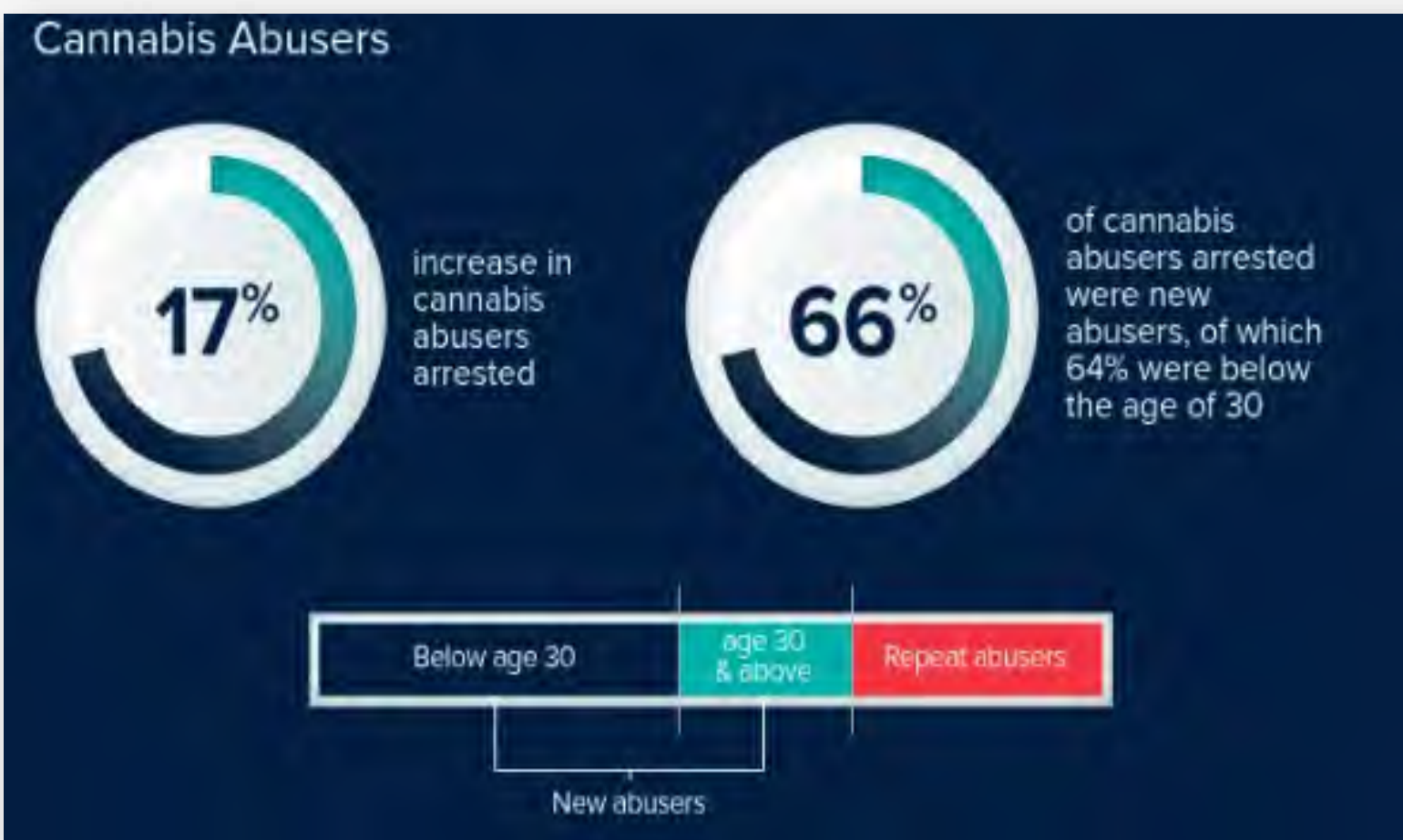
Local Youth Drug Abusers – By Drug Type

The number of youths (i.e., aged below 20 years old) who abused methamphetamine continued to form the bulk (67%) of the youth abusers arrested.

The number of youth abusers arrested who abused cannabis decreased from 26 in 2022 to 24 in 2023.

Youth 'Ecstasy' abusers arrested increased from 3 in 2022 to 13 in 2023.⁽¹⁾

LOCAL DRUG SITUATION 2023



Increase in Drug Abusers (under 30 years old)

- Many of these abusers are young and are new drug abusers
- Mean age of onset of drug abuse was **below 16 years old**. ⁽¹⁾

Rise in Cannabis Abusers Arrested

- Number of cannabis abusers arrested reached a 10-year high in 2023. ⁽²⁾
- Likely exacerbated by the **ongoing global shift in attitudes towards cannabis**, as many countries are loosening their legislative and enforcement measures against cannabis despite clear scientific evidence of its harms on the abuser and society at large.

GLOBAL LANDSCAPE



Cannabis remains the most used illicit drug globally. The UNODC reported that approximately 200 million people used cannabis in 2019 ⁽¹⁾, reflecting its broad acceptance and use across various regions.

Cannabis Consumption



An estimated 600,000 deaths were attributed to drug use in 2019, with drug overdoses accounting for a quarter of these deaths. ⁽²⁾

Global Drug-Related Mortality



Synthetic opioids, especially fentanyl, have led to a dramatic increase in overdose deaths, resulting in a surge in opioid-related fatalities in the United States and Canada. ⁽³⁾

Opioid Crisis and Overdose Epidemic

GLOBAL LANDSCAPE -

Thailand – Cannabis Regulation Crisis

❑ Surge in Addiction Cases / Widespread Infusion

- Hundreds of cannabis dispensaries opened nationwide, leading to a surge in addiction cases, with monthly cases quadrupling from **72 to 282**.⁽¹⁾
- **Rise in severe incidents**, including teenagers hallucinating and toddlers hospitalised after ingesting cannabis cookies.

❑ Policy Response

- **Sept 2023**: PM Srettha Thavasin calls for a rewrite of cannabis laws, emphasising no middle ground for recreational use.
- **Feb 2024**: Thai government moves urgently to pass a bill banning recreational cannabis use.

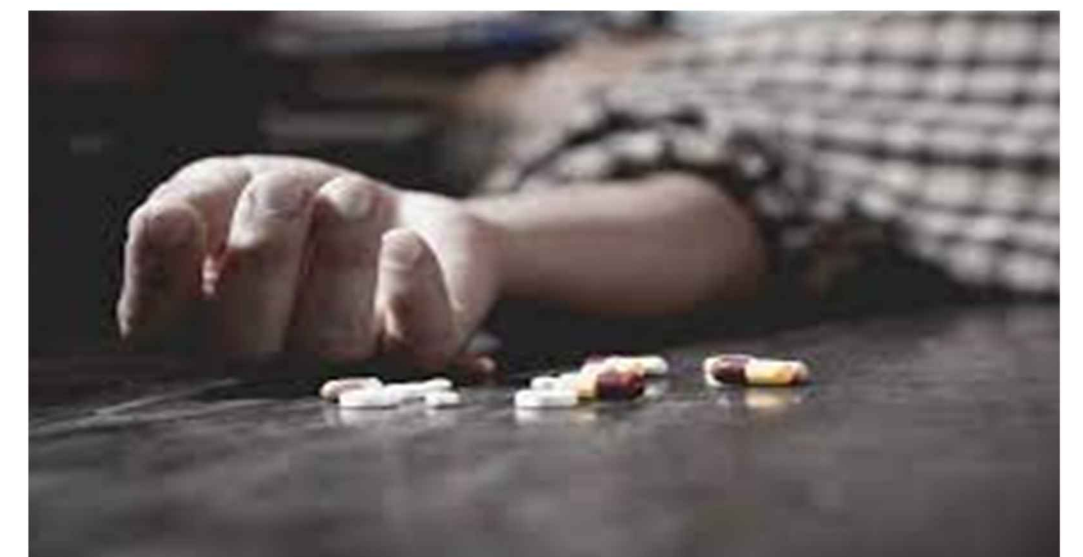


GLOBAL LANDSCAPE -

Global Drug-Related Mortality

□ UNODC World Drug Report 2023

- **Estimated 500,00 deaths** globally were attributed to drug use in 2019. ⁽¹⁾
- Drug overdoses accounted for approximately **25%** of these deaths; which translates to about **150,000** overdose-related deaths. ⁽¹⁾
- The remaining deaths are due to various complications associated with drug use, such as:
 - **Chronic Health Conditions:** Diseases related to long-term drug use (e.g., liver disease, cardiovascular issues).
 - **Drug-Related Accidents:** Accidents and injuries occurring under the influence of drugs.
 - **HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis:** Often linked to intravenous drug use.
- The impact of drug-related deaths varies by region, with higher rates often observed in regions with significant drug trafficking and substance abuse issues.

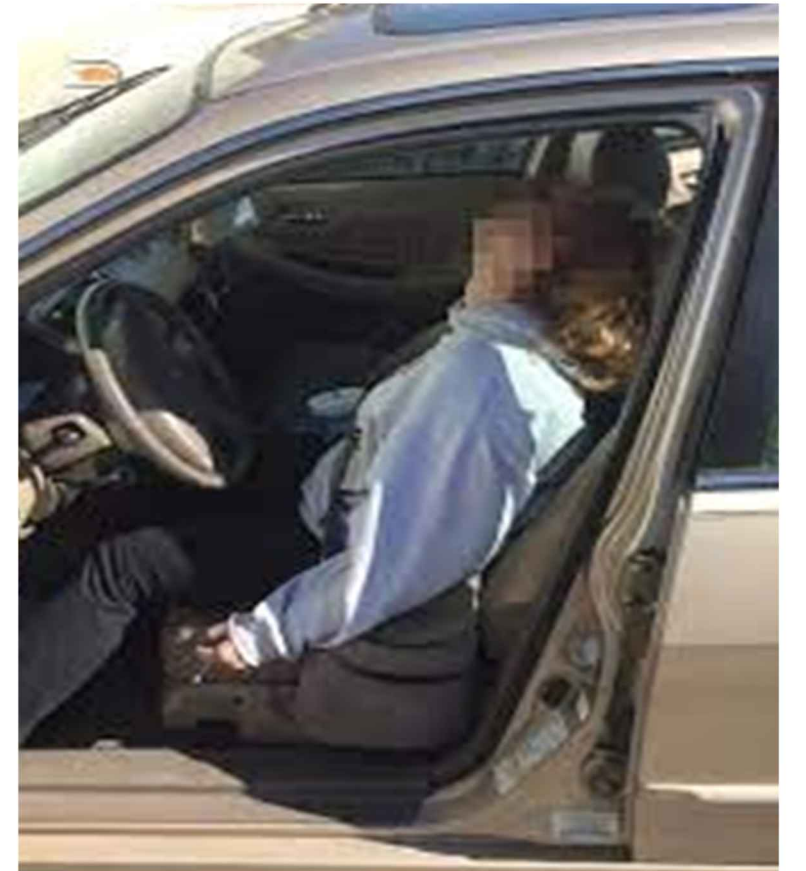


GLOBAL LANDSCAPE -

Opioid Crisis and Overdose Epidemic

❑ United States [Opioid Crisis]

- More than **110,000** deaths from drug overdose in 12-month period ended Apr 2023 ⁽¹⁾
- **>300** Americans died each day due to drug overdose ⁽²⁾
- From 2015-2017, US saw the longest period of sustained **decline in life expectancy** since WWI, largely due to opioid crisis ⁽³⁾
- **Opioid epidemic** : shaved 1 year off life expectancy for boys born in the US ⁽⁴⁾



GLOBAL LANDSCAPE -

Cannabis Legalisation



Several countries and U.S. states have legalised cannabis for recreational use.

Recreational Use



Many countries, including the U.K., Australia, and Germany, have legalised cannabis for medicinal use, enabling treatments for conditions like chronic pain and epilepsy.

Medicinal Use



Countries like Portugal and the Netherlands have decriminalised small amounts of cannabis for personal use, though it remains illegal.

Decriminalisation



GLOBAL LANDSCAPE - Cannabis Legalisation

Countries advocate for drug legalisation for several reasons:

☐ Public Health Improvement

- Reduced overdose deaths by increasing access to safe consumption spaces and medical support.
- Removes the stigma associated with drug use, making it easier for individuals to seek help and access treatment for substance use disorders.

☐ Criminal Justice Reform

- Reduce incarceration for minor drug offenses, which can alleviate overcrowded prison systems and reduce criminal records.
- Law enforcement resources can be redirected from minor drug offenses to more serious crimes, improving overall public safety.



RESOURCES

for information



CNB's website



Drugs and Inhalants



Misuse of Drugs Act 1973

to watch



CNB's YouTube



*PDE Video: Down the
Rabbit Hole*



PDE Video: Last Days

RESOURCES

for parents, educators, counsellors



Smart Parenting articles



PDE toolkits



PDE message cards



Information booklet on Cannabis



*Information booklet on New
Psychoactive Substances (NPS)*

THANK YOU

We hope you find this set of resources useful.
Let's work together towards a drug-free society!

