

# Barbados Drug Information Network Report

**2020**



**Prepared by:**



The National Council on  
Substance Abuse

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Author:

Laura Lee Foster, Research and Information Officer, National Council on Substance Abuse

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Cnr. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Belleville & Pine Road, St. Michael, Barbados

Tel: (246) 535-6272

Email: [ncsa.info@barbados.gov.bb](mailto:ncsa.info@barbados.gov.bb)

Website: [www.ncsa.gov.bb](http://www.ncsa.gov.bb)

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## Foreword to NCSA's 2020 BARDIN Report

- **By Hadford S. Howell MBE JP, Chairman, National Council on Substance Abuse, Barbados**

I welcome this opportunity to share the findings of the 10<sup>th</sup> BARDIN Report since 2011. Released on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022, this Report paints a picture based on evidence-based, up-to-date research on the current state of substance use and abuse across Barbados. I commend its review to readers.

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is in its 27<sup>th</sup> year of service to Barbadians. Established in 1995 by Parliament through the National Council on Substance Act Cap 46, the Council is required *inter alia*, to “advise the Minister on measures for the eradication or the control of substance abuse.” The Act defines substance abuse as “the ingestion, inhalation, injection or application or administration by other means of a substance by an individual to his body to the detriment of the physical, mental, psychologically social or economic well-being of that individual, his family or society as a whole.” Specifically, Section 4 (d) of the Act enables the Council to “authorise, conduct and facilitate research or surveys on substance abuse.”

The BARDIN Reports have proudly answered that call and undertaken that responsibility. As a result, the Council has provided policy makers - that is Government, with a decade of valid, reliable information based on factual findings from both the demand reduction and supply control sectors. This allows them to make informed policy decisions (and implement legislative changes if warranted) for the benefit of all Barbadians. The Reports are produced after *collaboration and co-operation* with the Council's Network Members. In this tenth anniversary edition, the Council salutes the ten organisations listed below and shown on the 2020 BARDIN Report's cover: The Edna Nicholls Centre, The Psychiatric Hospital, The Substance Abuse Foundation, The Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives, The Barbados Police Service, The Barbados Prison Service, The Financial Intelligence Unit, The Government Industrial School, The Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, and of course the NCSA.

The 2020 BARDIN Report is based on the continuous monitoring by Network Members of drug use issues in Barbados. As a result, emerging drug problems and trends can be easily identified and flagged for the appropriate follow through actions.

Highlights of the 2020 BARDIN Report show that, as with previous Reports, marijuana and alcohol are the most used forms of substance abuse. The emergence of non-traditional substances such as ecstasy and methamphetamine, along with the mis-use of prescription drugs, are all on the rise. The latter can easily become highly addictive and adversely affect one's health. Our youth, from as early as aged 7 and 8 are aware of, have access to and are being presented with opportunities to use a variety of drugs. Individuals up to aged 40 is where substance use and abuse appears heaviest within our population.

Early recognition or detection of addiction is to be encouraged, with support from available clinical treatment being made available to victims afflicted by any form of substance use. In an ideal world,

substance use and/or its abuse would be curtailed, but this is not likely. Also, the perception that substance use or abuse is limited to individuals we often refer to as 'paros', is far from correct. One's looks, gender, profession or social standing does not guarantee that they will not be a substance user or abuser!

At the Council we offer: (i) general drug education and prevention tips; (ii) explanations on how to identify the signs and symptoms of substance use or abuse in the workplace; (iii) examples of the harm an individual who is in a workplace situation and is a substance user might cause to themselves, colleagues, relationships and their employer; (iv) explanations of how such can affect and cause potential financial loss and other problems inside the workplace if not recognised and dealt with promptly; (v) advice on appropriate and corrective substance abuse treatment services from social-support.

It is my hope that research such as this will result in preventative policy measures and that proactive publicity which is integral to our program outreach, will result in drug use avoidance and abuse reduction.

As you reflect on the findings of the 2020 BARDIN Report, I encourage you to reach out if you need help or if someone you know in your family, church, club or workplace may require our assistance.

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## 1. Key Findings

### 1.1 National Council on Substance Abuse: Drug Prevention Programming

- The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is the lead agency responsible for drug education across the island.
- During 2020, NCSA's programming reached persons between the ages of 3 and 65 years.
- The Primary School Programme accounted for the largest number of recorded persons reached by the NCSA, followed by the Community, Secondary School and Counselling Programmes respectively.
- The Counselling Programme involves the delivery of treatment services on an individual basis. As such, it had the smallest reach of all NCSA programmes in 2020.

### 1.2 Edna Nicholls Centre

- Males accounted for approximately three-quarters (78%) of the 83 students admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2020.
- The number of students admitted to the Centre in 2020 was notably lower than previous years due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in no admissions during the Trinity term of the 2019/2020 academic year.
- Twelve students (14.5%) tested positive for marijuana use.
- Most students testing positive for marijuana use were between the ages of 14 and 15.

### 1.3 Treatment

#### ***Psychiatric Hospital***

- Approximately one-third (36%) of persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020 received drug-related treatment.
- Approximately nine out of every 10 persons admitted for drug treatment were male.
- The percentage of persons seeking drug treatment generally increased with age, peaking in the 36 to 40 age group.
- Co-morbid diagnoses which included substance use disorders were more common among males.
- Twenty-nine persons received drug treatment from the Hospital's Day Programme in 2020, the majority of whom were males, 40 years of age and under.
- Three-quarters of those receiving treatment in the Day Programme were treated for poly drug use.
- Marijuana and alcohol were the most common primary drugs among Day Programme clients.
- Marijuana, crack cocaine, alcohol, fanta and ecstasy were the five substances used by Day Programme clients in the 12 months and 30 days preceding treatment entry.
- Fifty-three youth were admitted to the Thrive Family Centre in 2020. Males accounted for just over half (56.6%) of the Centre's admissions.
- Seven of the young persons admitted to the Thrive Family Centre received drug-related diagnoses, five of whom were male and between the ages of 14 and 17.

- Marijuana was the primary substance for which all persons with drug-related diagnoses were treated at the Thrive Family Centre in 2020.

### ***Substance Abuse Foundation***

- One hundred and ten persons were treated at the Substance Abuse Foundation (SAF) in 2020, 78% of whom were males.
- More than half (54.5%) of persons treated at the SAF were 40 years of age or younger.
- Most clients (88.2%) sought treatment for poly drug use.
- Crack cocaine was the most common primary drug for which treatment was sought at the SAF, distantly followed by marijuana, cocaine powder, alcohol, nicotine and ketamine.
- The majority of persons treated at SAF were either referred by the Psychiatric Hospital (46.4%) or the justice system/police department (35.4%).
- Alcohol, marijuana, cocaine (crack or powdered) and nicotine were the drugs most commonly used by clients during the 30 days preceding treatment entry.
- Reports of lifetime drug use mainly included traditional drugs such as alcohol, marijuana, crack cocaine, nicotine (tobacco) and cocaine powder.
- Lifetime use of non-traditional drugs such as speed, ecstasy, ketamine, mushrooms, and LSD was also reported, but was much less common.
- Males and persons in the 40 and under age category were more likely to report the use of non-traditional substances during their lifetime.

### ***Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives***

- Twelve persons were treated at the Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives (CASA) in 2020, all of whom were males.
- Most persons (8) were between the ages of 16 and 25.
- Encouragement from family and friends (7) and the criminal justice system/police department (4) were the two largest referral sources for CASA in 2020.
- Most clients (10) received treatment for single drug use.
- Marijuana (8) and alcohol (4) were the only primary drugs for which treatment was sought.

### ***National Council on Substance Abuse***

- Forty-five persons received counselling at the NCSA in 2020 – 34 for substance abuse and 11 for non-drug-related issues.
- Of the 34 persons receiving substance abuse treatment, the majority were males, 20 years of age and younger.
- The Edna Nicholls Centre and the justice system/police department were the main referral sources for persons receiving substance abuse treatment at NCSA in 2020.
- While most persons were treated for single drug use, there was a small percentage (8.8%) of clients who were treated for poly drug use.

- Marijuana was the most common primary drug for which treatment was sought, distantly followed by alcohol and ecstasy.
- Marijuana and alcohol were the drugs most commonly used by clients during the 30 days prior to entering treatment.

#### ***Inmate Drug Rehabilitation and Counselling Programme***

- Thirty-five persons were admitted to the Inmate Drug Rehabilitation and Counselling (IDRC) Programme at Dodds Prison in 2020, the majority of whom were males between the ages of 31 and 45.
- Approximately half (51.4%) of persons admitted for treatment were court-ordered.
- Approximately half (51%) of the inmates admitted to the IDRC programme were treated for poly drug use.
- Crack cocaine, marijuana and alcohol were the main primary drugs for which treatment was sought in the IDRC.
- Marijuana was the primary drug for which treatment was sought by inmates between the ages of 16 and 40 while crack cocaine was the main treatment motivator for those 41 and over.

#### **1.4 Supply Control**

##### ***Barbados Police Service***

- Drug offences accounted for 20% of all offences recorded by the Barbados Police Service (BPS) during 2020.
- Most persons charged with drug offences were males under the age of 35.
- Approximately nine out of every 10 persons (95.5%) charged with drug offences were Barbadian.
- The majority (89.5%) of drug offences were cannabis-related.
- The remaining drug offences involved cocaine (10.1%) and ecstasy/methamphetamine (0.4%).
- The most common cannabis-related offences were “Possession of Cannabis” (41.2%), “Trafficking Cannabis” (23.7%) and “Offering to Supply” (23.3%).
- Cannabis, in plant, compressed and loose forms, was the primary drug seized by the BPS.
- The majority of cannabis plant seizures took place in St. Philip, St. George and St. Andrew.
- Five of the nine deportees returned to Barbados in 2020 were deported for drug-related offences, all of whom were male.
- Three of the five drug-related deportees were deported from extra-regional countries, namely: Canada and the United Kingdom.
- The BPS recorded 18 arrests for money laundering in 2020, nine of which were drug-related.



### ***Barbados Prison Service (Incarcerations)***

- Drug offences accounted for 11% of the incarcerations at Dodds Prison in 2020.
- Most persons (93%) incarcerated for drug offences were male and between the ages of 20 and 49 years.
- “Drug Possession” was the most common drug-related offence for which persons were incarcerated.
- Persons were also incarcerated for “Possession of Drug Apparatus”, “Drug Cultivation”, “Drug Importation” and “Drug Trafficking”.
- Males and persons 44 years of age and younger accounted for the majority of those incarcerated for “Drug Possession”.
- “Drug Possession” was the only drug-related offence for which females were incarcerated in 2020.
- Only males were incarcerated for “Drug Trafficking”, “Possession of Drug Apparatus”, “Drug Importation” and “Drug Cultivation”.
- Persons incarcerated for “Possession of Drug Apparatus” were between the ages of 20 and 49.
- Most persons incarcerated for “Drug Trafficking” were under the age of 39.
- Twelve of the 14 persons incarcerated for “Drug Importation” were between 30 and 49 years of age.
- Only two males were incarcerated for “Drug Cultivation”, one of whom was in the 20-24 age category while the other was in the 40-44 age group.

### ***Government Industrial School***

- Of the 44 offences recorded by the Government Industrial School in 2020, five were drug-related. All five were for “Possession of a Controlled Substance”. In each case, the controlled substance was marijuana.
- “Wandering” was the most common offence among female wards.
- Male wards were more likely to be remanded or committed for serious offences including “Theft/Burglary”, “Assaults”, “Rape” and “Murder/Manslaughter”.
- Offences such as “Wandering”, “Assaults”, “Causing a Disturbance/Violent Disorder” and “Theft/Burglary” are often associated with drug use. The drug used is primarily marijuana.
- Drug test results from 2019 were used as a proxy for 2020 test results in this report. Twenty-five wards were drug-tested in 2019 and only one tested positive for drug use. The drug used was marijuana.

### ***Financial Intelligence Unit***

- Of the 230 Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) received, 4.3% were drug-related.

- A predicate offence<sup>1</sup> could not be easily identified for 40.9% of the STRs received and attention should be paid to these as law enforcement investigations may later reveal a drug-related link.

### 1.5 Trend Analysis

- Students testing positive for marijuana use at the Edna Nicholls Centre were consistently found to be male and between the ages of 14 and 15 years (2016-2020).
- More than one-third of the patients admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital between 2018 and 2020 received treatment for drug-related issues.
- Males accounted for nine out of every 10 persons receiving drug-related treatment at the Psychiatric Hospital between 2018 and 2020.
- Between one-fifth and one-third of patients admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during the period 2018-2020 received co-morbid diagnoses which included a substance use disorder.
- Males and persons 40 years and under accounted for the majority of persons seeking treatment at the SAF between 2017 and 2020.
- Crack cocaine was the most common primary drug motivating the need for treatment among SAF clients between 2017 and 2020.
- Males and persons under 20 were the primary persons receiving treatment within the NCSA Counselling Programme during the period 2017 through 2020.
- In each year (2017-2020), marijuana was the main primary drug for which persons sought treatment at the Council.
- While traditional drugs were the main motivators for treatment at the SAF and NCSA between 2017 and 2020, there were cases of persons seeking treatment for drugs such as ecstasy and ketamine in 2019 and 2020.
- Males between 20 and 39 years accounted for the majority of persons charged with drug offences between 2016 and 2020.
- Cannabis-related offences far outranked all other drug offences between 2016 and 2020.
- "Possession of Cannabis" was the single most common cannabis offence between 2016 and 2020, accounting for just under half of all cannabis offences each year.
- The five-year trend analysis revealed that marijuana and cocaine were the primary drugs seized by the Barbados Police Service between 2016 and 2020; however, there were seizures of non-traditional drugs such as ecstasy and methamphetamine from 2017 onwards.
- Drug-related Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) accounted for between 4.1% and 6.3% of the STRs recorded by the FIU between 2017 and 2020.
- STRs for which a predicate offence could not be easily identified accounted for between three and five out of every 10 STRs on record for the period 2017-2020.

### 1.6 Recommendations to Improve National Response to Drug Situation

1. The issue of emerging drugs requires a multi-faceted national response. To this end, drug prevention professionals should design programmes to address new drug trends, with an

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<sup>1</sup> A predicate offence is a crime that is a component of a more serious crime (Low, 2020).

emphasis on males and young persons given their increased likelihood of using such substances. There should also be efforts to revive the Early Warning System to allow for rapid information sharing and speedy responses to emerging drugs. Regular training sessions should be provided for persons working in the demand reduction, supply control and medical fields to ensure that they are kept abreast of any changing patterns of drug use. Law enforcement officials should be provided with the requisite tools and training to identify and detect new drugs.

2. Prevention professionals should continue to educate persons about marijuana, including its potential harms and the differences between medical and recreational marijuana. Males and young persons should be targeted as they are more likely to become problematic users of this substance.
3. Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programming should include a focus on persons age 40 and under – particularly males. Specialized programmes should be designed to meet their specific needs, in an attempt to address their high level of involvement in the local drug scene.
4. Substance abuse treatment centres should pay special attention to the issues of comorbid diagnoses and poly drug use. This includes training staff to ensure that they are adequately equipped to treat the affected clients/patients. Additionally, integrated treatment plans should be used to treat persons with comorbid diagnoses. To facilitate this, substance abuse treatment centres should hire mental health staff where feasible or partner with mental health facilities to develop and implement coordinated treatment plans that simultaneously address both types of disorders. Substance abuse treatment centres should also partner with other agencies to address resource deficits in an effort to effectively meet the complex medical, psychiatric and social needs of poly drug users.
5. Public education campaigns should be used to raise awareness of recent legislative changes i.e. the enactment of the Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control)(Amendment) Act, 2021 and the Liquor Licences Act, 2021.
6. In order to assess the impact of changing marijuana legislation and provide timely interventions at the macro and micro levels, provisions should be made to monitor marijuana consumption patterns, with a specific emphasis on youth and other vulnerable populations.
7. Additional resources should be allocated for the regular conduct of school surveys thereby allowing them to be conducted more frequently.

## 2. Introduction

The Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) is the mechanism used by the National Council on Substance Abuse to compile and share information on the local drug situation.

The objectives of BARDIN are as follows:

- To strengthen the capacity of Barbados to respond to changing drug use trends
- To provide current epidemiological and other information on substance abuse
- To regularly update this information
- To identify trends in drug consumption and offences related to illicit drugs
- To provide relevant information for the planning, evaluation and management of drug control programmes

BARDIN reports are prepared annually and are based on secondary<sup>2</sup> data provided by agencies within the demand reduction and supply control sectors. The current report covers the period January 1 to December 31, 2020 and includes contributions from: The National Council on Substance Abuse, the Edna Nicholls Centre, the Psychiatric Hospital, the Substance Abuse Foundation, the Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives, the Barbados Police Service, the Barbados Prison Service, the Government Industrial School and the Financial Intelligence Unit.

This report marks a milestone in BARDIN's history, as it is the 10<sup>th</sup> report to be published since BARDIN was relaunched in 2011. It is also unique as it is the first BARDIN report to cover a period during which the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting the island. The pandemic reached the shores of Barbados in March, 2020, bringing with it a series of national restrictions imposed by the Government in an effort to curb the spread of the virus. These restrictions, together with responses at the organizational level, significantly impacted the operations of most, if not all, contributing agencies. In many cases, organizational operations were reduced at various times. This is reflected in the smaller number of persons reached by agencies, particularly those in the prevention and treatment sectors. As such, this should be considered when reviewing the findings.

Like previous editions, this report is divided into three broad sections: Demand Reduction, Treatment and Rehabilitation, and Supply Control. Each section provides agency-specific data, which is primarily presented using percentages. However, in some instances, raw numbers are used due to the small numbers in reporting categories.

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<sup>2</sup> Secondary data is data that was collected by an individual or agency other than the user.

### 3. Demand Reduction

#### 3.1 National Council on Substance Abuse

##### *Drug Prevention Programming*

As the organization responsible for prevention programming in Barbados, the National Council on Substance Abuse conducted a range of interventions at the school and community levels between January 1 and December 31, 2020. In addition to its prevention efforts, the Council also continued its counselling programme during the year.

Table 1 presents the distribution of persons reached, with age and gender details where available. It should be noted that the totals presented for each programme do not include mass-based events given their ability to artificially inflate the number of persons taking part in the Council's programmes and interventions.

From the data presented, it can be seen that the Primary School Programme accounted for the majority of persons reached by the NCSA during the target period (See Table 1). This was distantly followed by the Community, Secondary School and Counselling programmes respectively (See Table 1). Special consideration should be given to the Counselling Programme which primarily involves the delivery of counselling services on an *individual* basis. This design contributed to its numbers being disproportionately lower than those of the other three programmes.

With regards to demographics, Table 1 reveals a similar target audience profile to that of previous years. More specifically, it shows that, in 2020, the NCSA reached persons across the lifespan, ranging in age from 3 to approximately 65 years. It also suggests that the number of males participating in the Council's interventions was larger than the number of females. This, however, should be interpreted with caution given the proportion of interventions and programmes for which gender-related data was not reported.

**Table 1: Persons Targeted by NCSA's Programmes/Interventions during 2020 by Age and Gender**

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Age Range/ Population Targeted</b>	<b>No. of Males Targeted</b>	<b>No. of Females Targeted</b>	<b>Total no. of Persons Targeted</b>
<b><u>Primary School Programme</u></b>				
<b>Safe &amp; Unsafe</b>	<b>3-4 years</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Life Education Centre (LEC)</b>	<b>3-16 years</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>1163</b>
- Nursery	3-4 years	38	36	74
- Reception	4-5 years	67	67	134
- Infants A	5-6 years	64	71	135
- Infants B	6-7 years	82	59	141
- Class 1	7-8 years	104	85	189
- Class 2	8-9 years	73	92	165
- Class 3	9-10 years	82	74	156
- Class 4	10-11 years	89	70	159
<b>Cub Scouts</b>	<b>7-11 years</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>666</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>1295</b>
<b><u>Secondary School Programme</u></b>				
<b>Drugs &amp; Life Skills Awareness Programme</b>	<b>13-15 years</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Drug Education Workshop for Guidance Counsellors</b>	<b>Various ages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>95</b>
<b><u>Community Programme</u></b>				
<b>Edna Nicholls Centre<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>11-16 years</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Drug Education Workshop – Edna Nicholls Centre Staff</b>	<b>Various ages</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Project SOFT Transitional Camp</b>	<b>11 years</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Prevention 1<sup>st</sup> Club</b>	<b>11-12 years</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Drug Education Sessions</b>	<b>Various ages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Workplace Drug Interventions</b>	<b>21-65 years</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>SPORTS – Not Drugs Programme</b>	<b>21-65 years</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Mass-based Events (Health Fairs, Radio, TV, Social Media Interviews)</b>	<b>Various ages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>432</b>

<sup>3</sup> The aim of the Edna Nicholls Centre Out-of-School Programme is to provide rehabilitative programmes for secondary school students who have been suspended, referred or expelled from school.

Intervention	Age Range/ Population Targeted	No. of Males Targeted	No. of Females Targeted	Total no. of Persons Targeted
<u>Counselling Programme</u>				
Counselling	11-55 years	39	6	45
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>45</b>

*Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse*

### 3.2 Edna Nicholls Centre

Eighty-three students were admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre during the period January 1 to December 31, 2020. Table 2 presents student admission by term. Admissions to the Centre were hindered by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the associated national lockdowns and the implementation of online teaching. As such, there were no admissions to the Centre during the Trinity term (Term 3) of the 2019/2020 academic year.

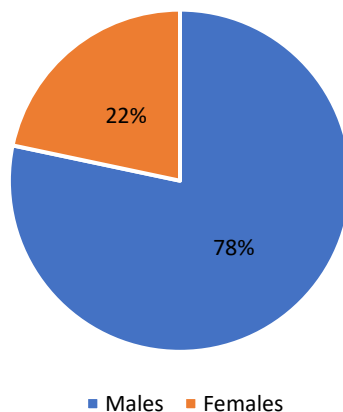
**Table 2: Admissions to the Edna Nicholls Centre between January 1 to December 31, 2020**

Term	Academic Year	Number of Students
<b>Term 2</b> (January – March 2020)	2019/2020	65
<b>Term 3</b> (May – July 2020)	2019/2020	-
<b>Term 1</b> (September to December 2020)	2020/2021	18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>83</b>

*Source: The Edna Nicholls Centre*

Figures 1 and 2 reveal that the majority of the students admitted to the Centre in 2020 were males between the ages of 13 and 15 years.

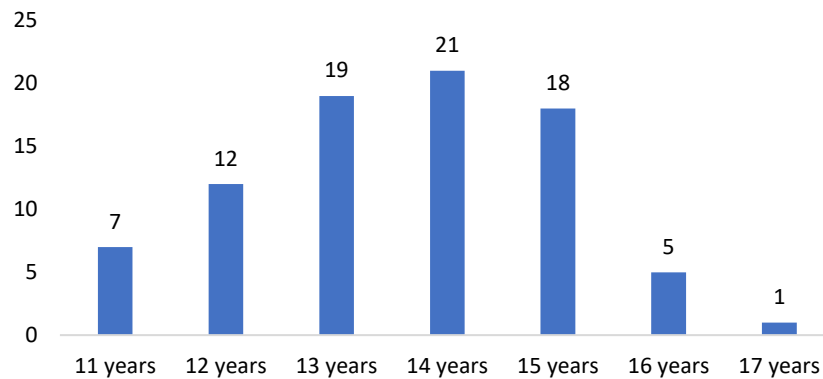
**Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2020**



*Source: The Edna Nicholls Centre*



Figure 2: Age Distribution of Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2020

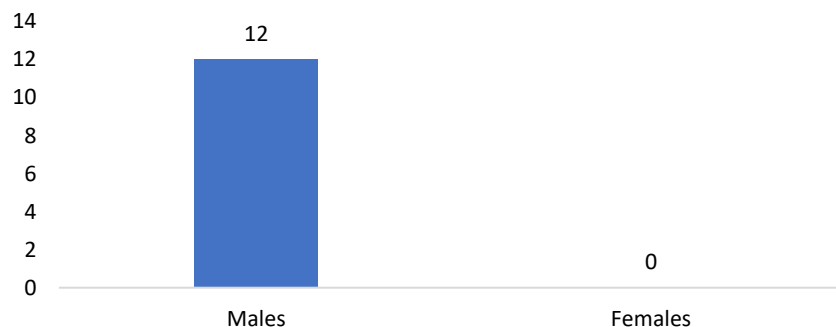


Source: The Edna Nicholls Centre

### Drug Testing

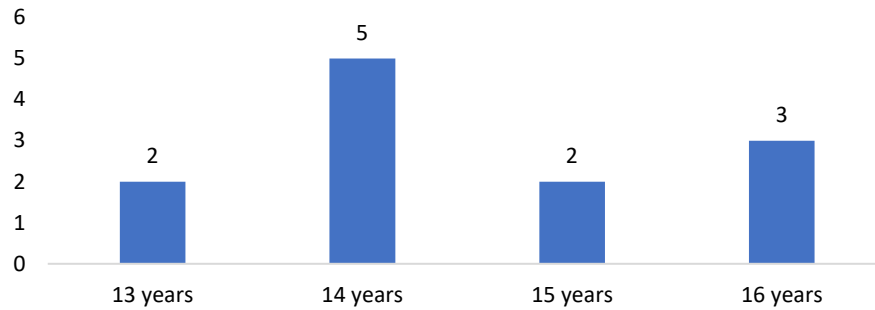
As is customary, all students entering the Centre during 2020 were tested for marijuana and cocaine use. A total of 12 students (14.5%) tested positive for marijuana use or were found to have traces of the drug within their systems. This percentage is lower than that uncovered in previous years and may be due to the smaller number of students admitted to the Centre or possible reductions in drug availability or recency of drug use due to the COVID-19 restrictions imposed at the national level. Those testing positive for marijuana use, or who had traces of the drug within their systems were primarily 14 to 15 year old males (See Figures 3 and 4). No students tested positive for cocaine use.

Figure 3: Gender Distribution of Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use or Having Traces of the Drug in their Systems



Source: The Edna Nicholls Centre

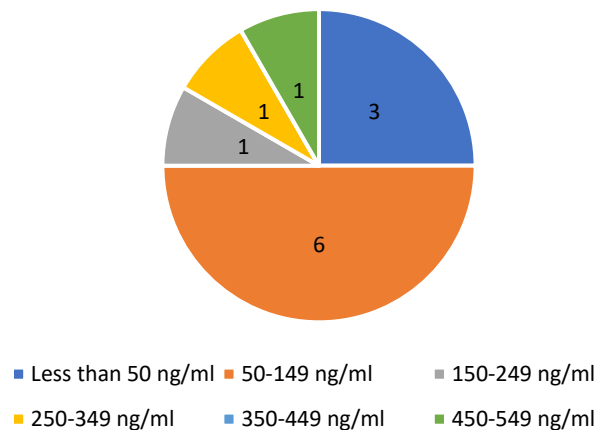
Figure 4: Age Distribution of Edna Nicholls' Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use or Having Trace Amounts of the Drug in their Systems



Source: The Edna Nicholls Centre

The marijuana tests results are presented in Figure 5. From the Chart, it can be seen that half of the students had results between 50-149 ng/ml, while one-third (3 students) had trace amounts of the drug within their system (less than 50 ng/ml). Very few had readings of 150 ng/ml or above. On average, these test results are lower than those recorded in previous years. This may also be due to the COVID-19 restrictions which may have affected access and recency of use prior to drug testing.

Figure 5: Marijuana Test Results for Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre during 2020



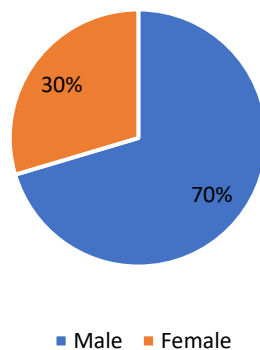
Source: The Edna Nicholls Centre

## 4. Treatment and Rehabilitation

### 4.1 Psychiatric Hospital

A total of 983 persons were admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital between January 1 to December 31, 2020, the majority (70%) of whom were male (See Figure 6).

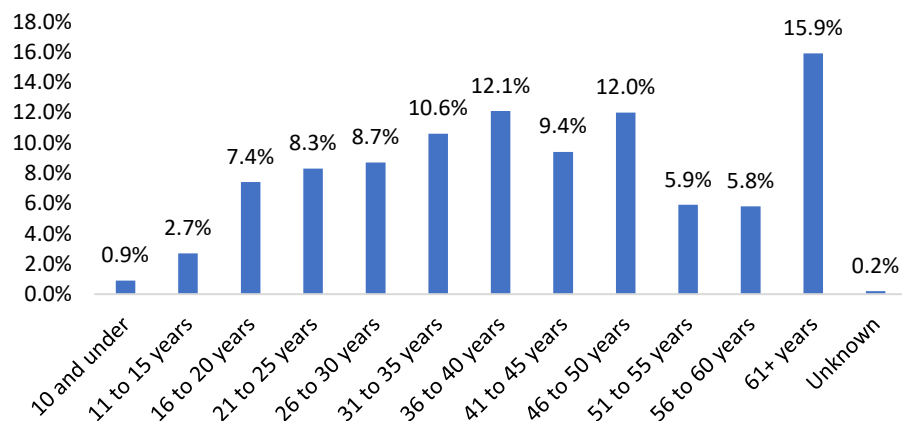
Figure 6: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 7 presents the age distribution for those admitted during the target period. From the Chart, it can be seen that patients ranged in age from under 10 to 61 and over. It also shows that there was a general trend whereby the percentage of persons seeking treatment increased as age increased, peaking in the 36 to 40 age category and declining thereafter. This finding corresponds with the age-related trends observed in 2019.

Figure 7: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during 2020

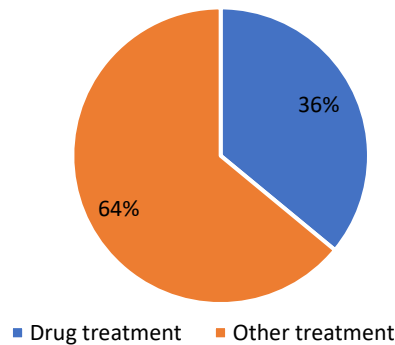


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

### ***Admissions Related to Drug Use***

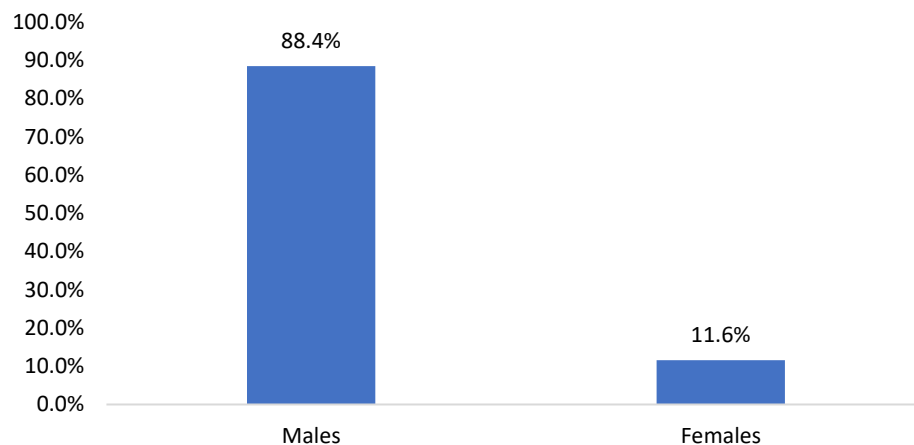
Just over one-third (36%) of persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020 sought drug-related treatment (See Figure 8). Figure 9 reveals that approximately nine out of every 10 persons seeking drug treatment were male.

Figure 8: Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for Drug Treatment vs. Other Treatment during 2020



*Source: The Psychiatric Hospital*

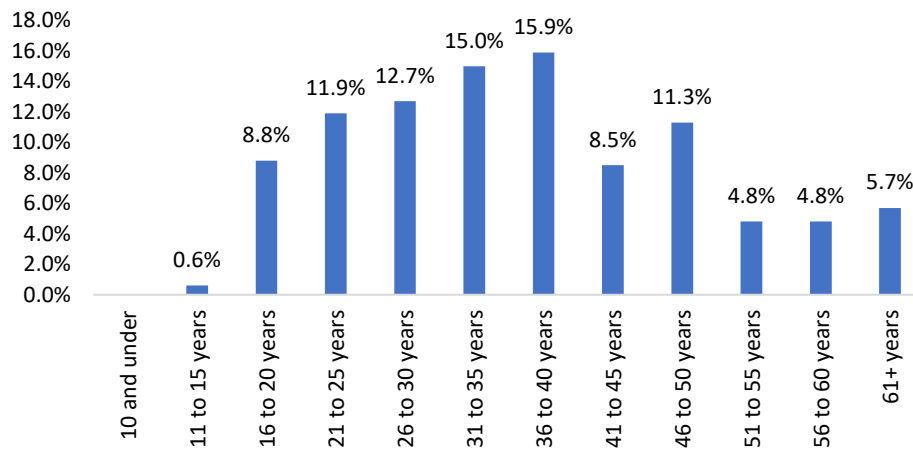
Figure 9: Gender Distribution of Persons Presenting for Drug Treatment at the Psychiatric Hospital during 2020



*Source: The Psychiatric Hospital*

With regards to age, Figure 10 reveals that the majority (64.9%) of persons seeking drug treatment were 40 years or younger. The Chart also shows that the percentage of persons seeking drug treatment increased with age, peaking in the 36 to 40 age group.

Figure 10: Age Distribution of Persons Presenting for Drug Treatment at the Psychiatric Hospital during 2020

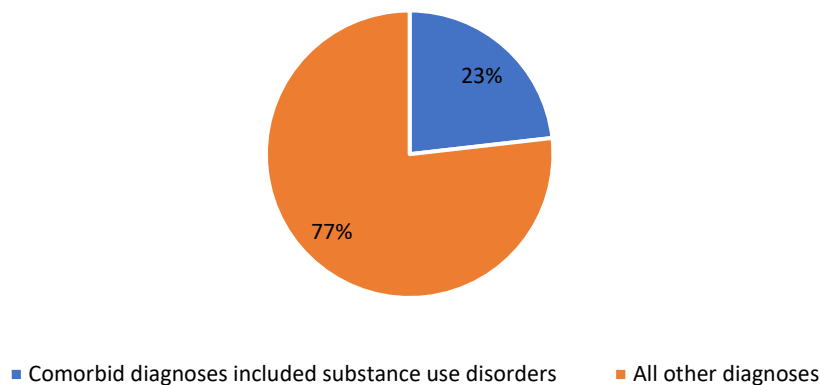


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

#### Comorbid Diagnoses Including Substance Use Disorders

Of the 983 persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020, just under one quarter (23%) had comorbid diagnoses<sup>4</sup> which included substance use disorders (See Figure 11). Figures 12 and 13 show that the gender and age distributions for persons with comorbid diagnoses were similar to those for the general hospital admissions as well as the drug treatment admissions: 1) approximately nine out of every 10 persons who had comorbid diagnoses were male; 2) the percentage of persons with comorbid diagnoses increased with age peaking in the 36 to 40 age group.

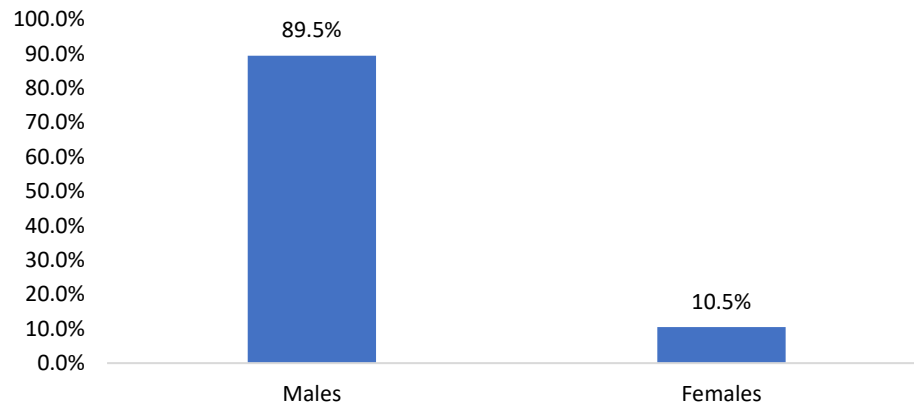
Figure 11: Distribution of Patients with Comorbid Diagnoses including Substance Use Disorders vs. All Other Diagnoses



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

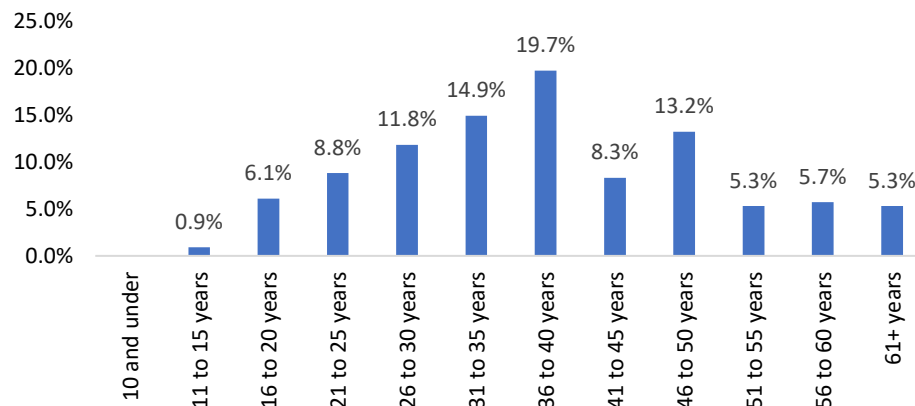
<sup>4</sup> Comorbid diagnoses refers to the occurrence of 2 or more disorders or illnesses in the same person (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2018).

Figure 12: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital with Comorbid Diagnoses that included Substance Use Disorders during 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 13: Age Distribution of Persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital with Comorbid Disorders that Included Substance Use Disorders during 2020

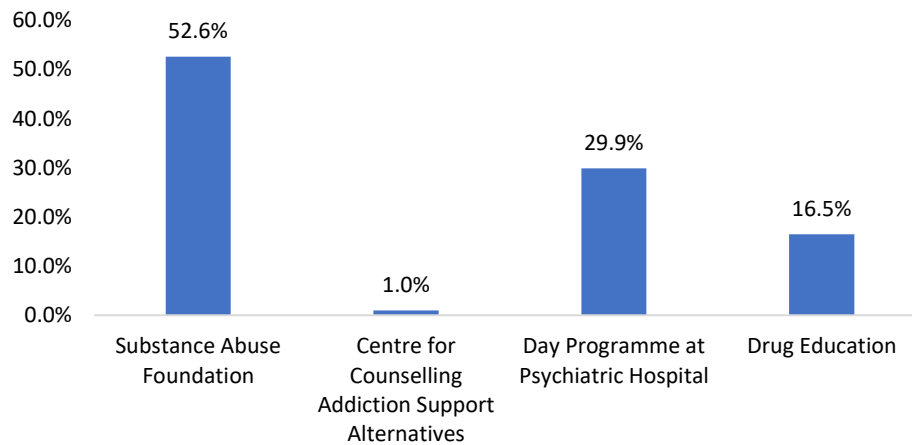


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

### **Drug Rehabilitation Unit**

One hundred and twenty-three persons were assessed by the Drug Rehabilitation Unit at the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020, the majority were referred to the Substance Abuse Foundation or to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit's Day Release Programme (See Figure 14).

Figure 14: Distribution of Referrals Made by the Drug Rehabilitation Unit following Assessment

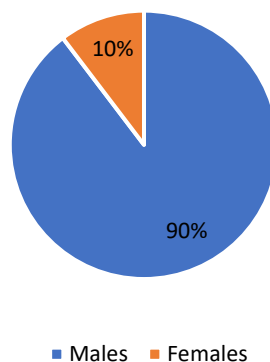


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

#### *Demographic Profile of Persons Receiving Drug Treatment*

A total of 29 persons were admitted<sup>5</sup> to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit's Day Release Programme, the majority of whom were males under the age of 40 (See Figures 15 and 16).

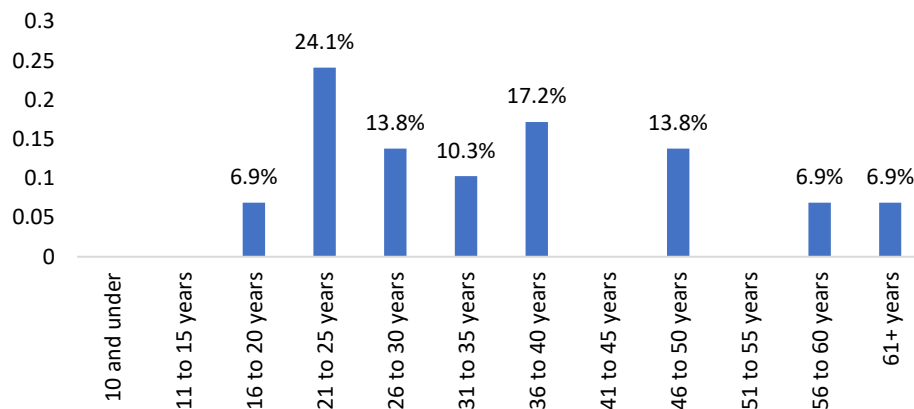
Figure 15: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit at the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

<sup>5</sup> For all treatment centres (residential and non-residential) highlighted in this Report, the term "admitted" refers to "being accepted into the substance abuse treatment programme and starting treatment".

Figure 16: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit at the Psychiatric Hospital during 2020

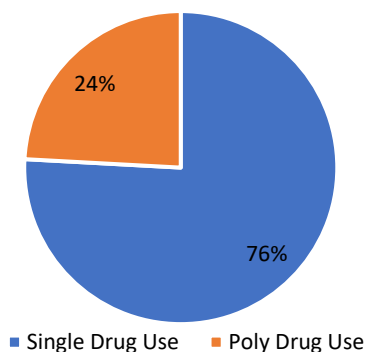


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

#### Drug Use Profile

Approximately three-quarters (76%) of those admitted to the Day Release Programme were treated for single-drug use (See Figure 17). The remaining 24% were treated for poly drug use (See Figure 17).

Figure 17: Persons Seeking Treatment for Single Drug Use vs Poly Drug Use from the Drug Rehabilitation Unit at the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020

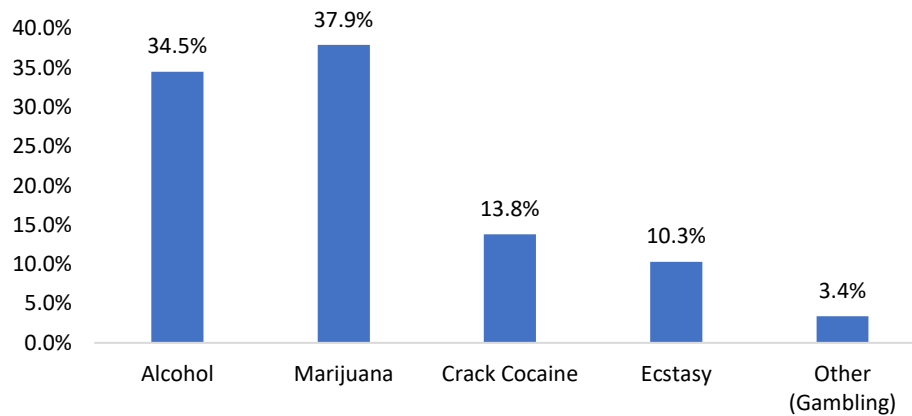


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

From Figure 18, it can be seen that marijuana was the most common drug motivating the need for treatment among persons admitted to the Day Release Programme. This was closely followed by alcohol. The other primary drugs were crack cocaine and ecstasy. The inclusion of ecstasy is of particular note as this is the first time it has been included in a BARDIN report as a primary drug for which persons sought treatment from the Drug Rehabilitation Unit. In this instance, three persons identified it as the primary drug for which they needed treatment. In addition to those seeking substance abuse treatment, there was also one individual who was treated for compulsive gambling disorder (See Figure 18).



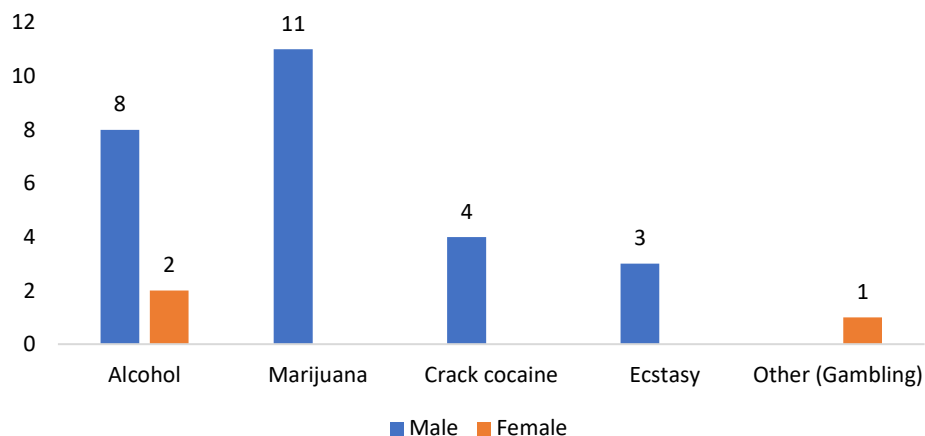
Figure 18: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought from the Drug Rehabilitation Unit at the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figures 19 and 20 present the primary drug data analysed by gender and age. From Figure 19, it can be seen that two females sought treatment for alcohol use while the remaining female was treated for compulsive gambling disorder. The chart also shows that males were treated for all four substances, with marijuana being most common.

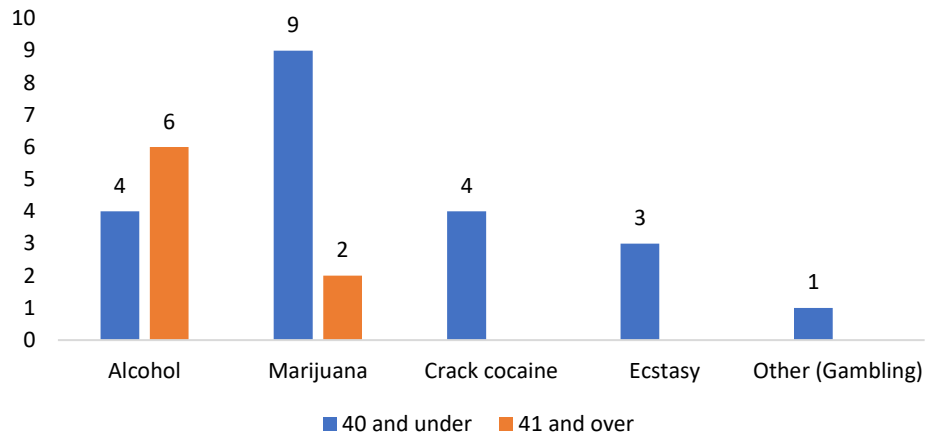
Figure 19: Primary Drug by Gender for Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

With regards to age, Figure 20 reveals that persons under the age of 40 sought treatment for all four substances, however, marijuana was the most common primary drug for this age group. In contrast, alcohol was the most common primary drug for those 41 years of age and over (See Figure 20). Also of note is the finding that crack cocaine and ecstasy were only reported as primary drugs by persons aged 40 and under.

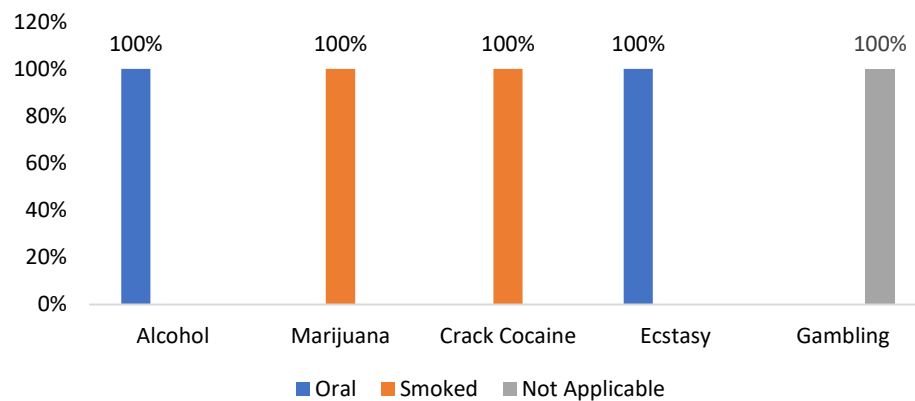
Figure 20: Primary Drug by Age for Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit during 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

All persons seeking treatment for marijuana and crack cocaine reported that they typically smoked these substances, while all persons seeking treatment for alcohol and ecstasy stated that they consumed them orally (See Figure 21).

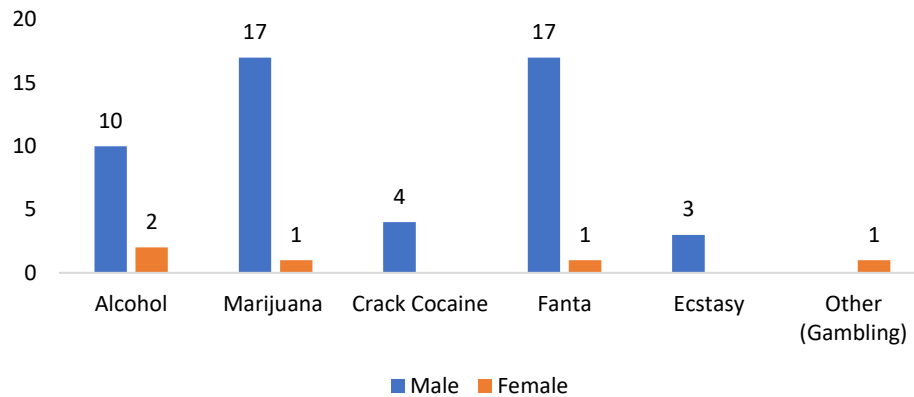
Figure 21: Most Frequent Method of Administration for Primary Drug Among Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

When persons were asked about their drug use in the 12 months leading up to treatment entry, marijuana and fanta were the drugs most commonly cited by males (See Figure 22). These were followed by alcohol, crack cocaine and ecstasy (See Figure 22). In contrast women only reported the use of alcohol, marijuana and fanta during the preceding year (See Figure 22).

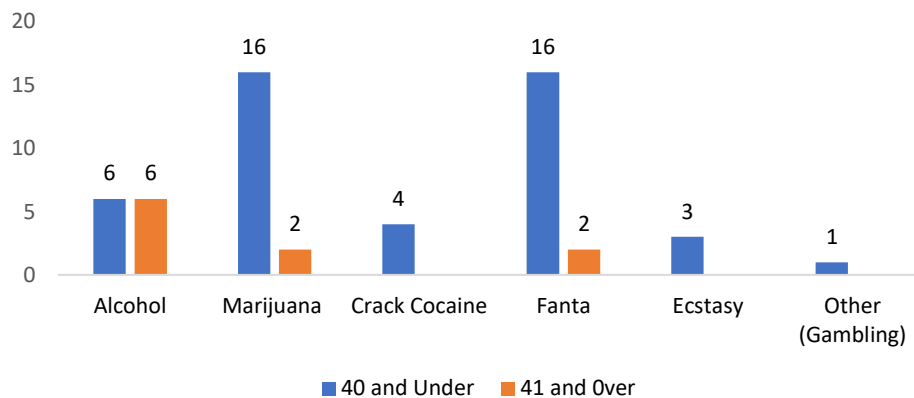
Figure 22: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

When past year drug use was analysed by age, Figure 23 shows that marijuana and fanta were the most common drugs for persons aged 40 and under while alcohol was most common for those 41 and over. The chart also shows that ecstasy and crack cocaine were only used by persons 40 and under during the 12-month period.

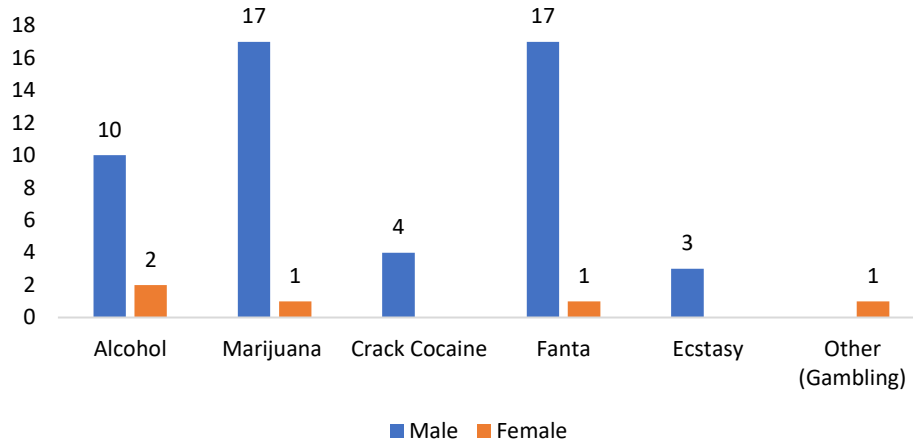
Figure 23: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

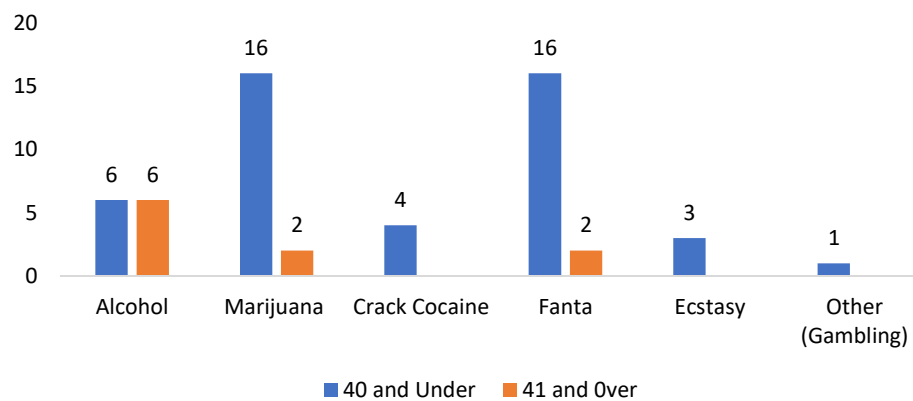
Figures 24 and 25 provide data regarding drug use in the 30 days prior to treatment entry. The data presented in these charts is identical to that for past year drug use.

Figure 24: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 25: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Unit in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

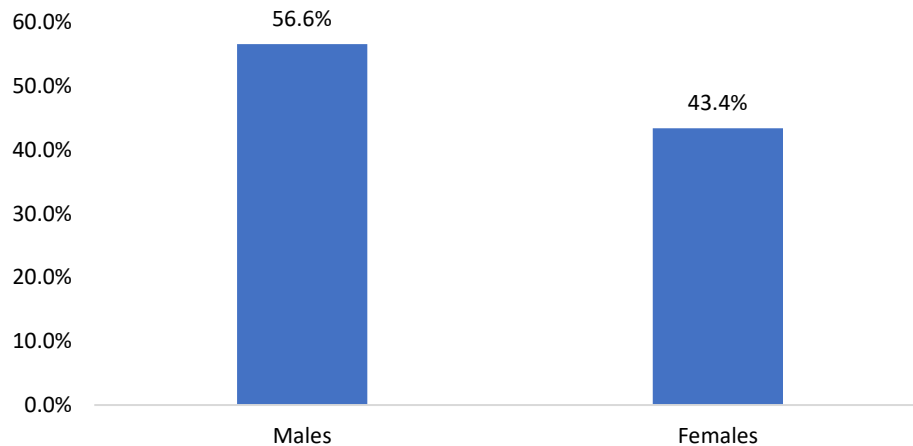
### Thrive Family Centre

A total of 53 persons were admitted to the Thrive Family Centre at the Psychiatric Hospital in 2020. The Centre provides a day release programme to children and adolescents between the ages of 7 and 17 who have behavioural problems that require early intervention. The duration of treatment is individualized and is based on each client's presentation.

Of the 53 persons admitted to the Centre, just over half (56.6%) were male (See Figure 26). With regards to age, Figure 27 reveals that the majority (55.6%) of persons were in the 14 to 17 age group. It should be noted that, while the Centre usually only caters to persons up to the age of 17, an 18-year-old was

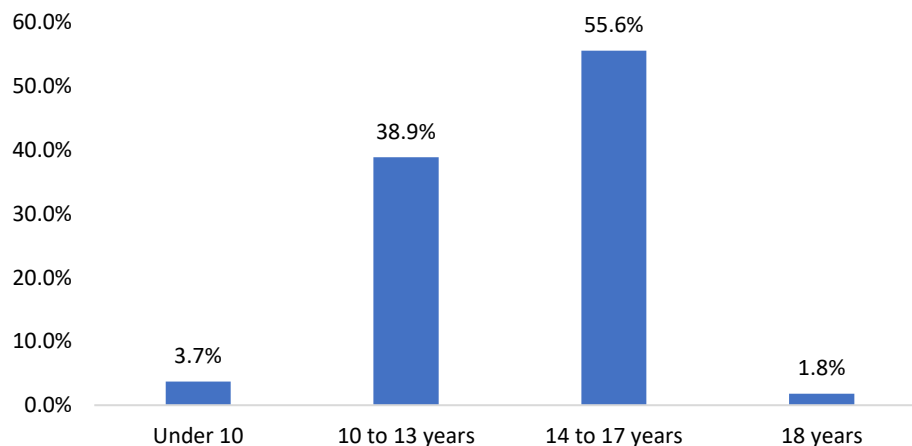
admitted during 2020 (See Figure 27). Figure 27 also shows that the percentage of admissions increased as age increased, peaking in the 14 to 17 age category.

Figure 26: Gender Distributon of Persons Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre in 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

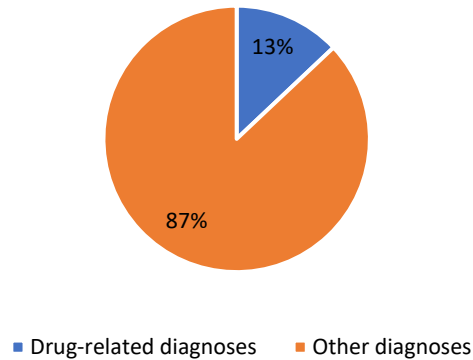
Figure 27: Age Distribution of the Persons Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre during 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 28 reveals that approximately one out of every 10 persons (13%) admitted to the Centre received a drug-related diagnosis. Five of these individuals were male and the remaining 2 were female (See Figure 29). Like the general admissions to the Centre, the majority of persons who received drug-related diagnoses were also in the 14 to 17 age category (See Figure 30). The lone 18-year-old admitted to the Centre in 2020 was treated for a drug-related diagnoses (See Figure 30). It should be noted that marijuana was the primary drug for all persons admitted to the Centre in 2020, regardless of age or gender.

Figure 28: Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre for Drug-related vs. Other Diagnoses in 2020



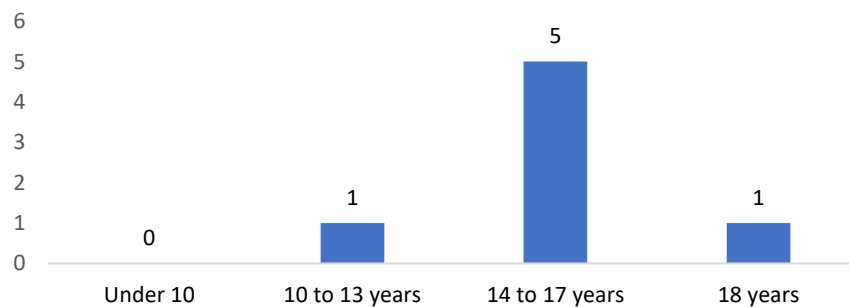
Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 29: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre for Drug-related Diagnoses during 2020



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 30: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre for Drug-related Diagnoses during 2020

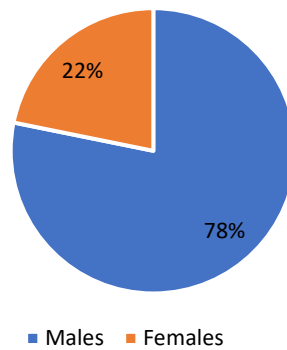


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

## 4.2 Substance Abuse Foundation

There were 110 treatment admissions at the Substance Abuse Foundation (SAF) <sup>6</sup>in 2020. Figure 31 reveals that male clients accounted for just over three quarters (78%) of the admissions during the year.

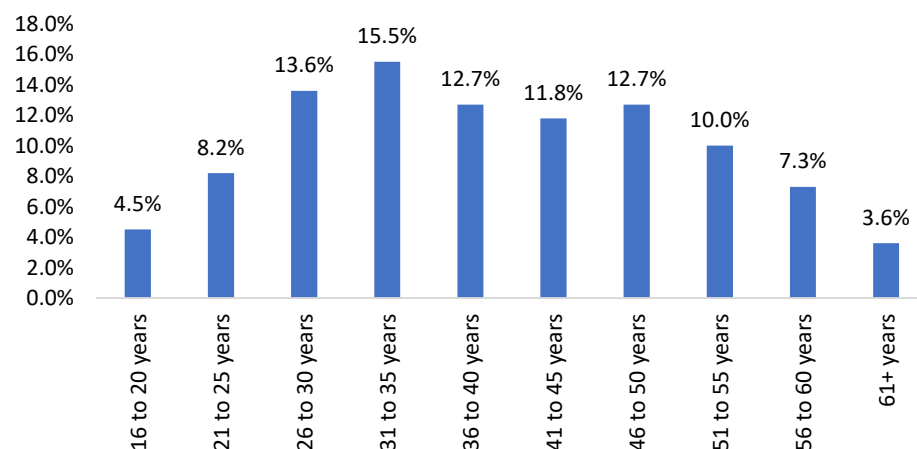
Figure 31: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to Substance Abuse Foundation in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 32 reveals that admissions increased with age, peaking in the 31 to 35 age category and generally declining thereafter. The chart also shows that persons age 40 and under accounted for just over half (54.5%) of the admissions during the year. This is in keeping with the findings from previous years.

Figure 32: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to SAF in 2020

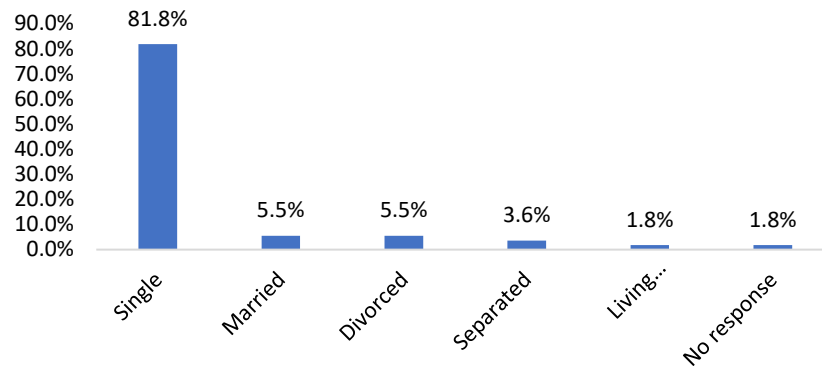


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

<sup>6</sup> The Substance Abuse Foundation Inc. comprises of 2 treatment facilities: Verdun House and Marina House. Verdun House caters to males 18 years of age and older while Marina House caters to females 18 years and over.

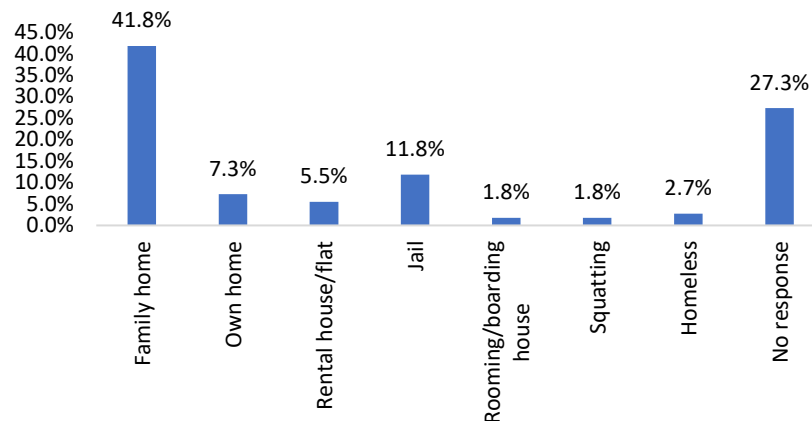
Figures 33 through 36 show that the majority of persons admitted to the SAF in 2020 were single, lived in their family home, had no dependents and had attained a secondary level education. With regards to employment, Figure 37 reveals that the majority of clients were either employed or unemployed and looking for work. While this is a typical finding, the marginal difference between the two percentages is noteworthy, as the unemployed usually account for a significantly larger percentage of the clientele during any given year.

Figure 33: Relationship Status of Persons Admitted to SAF during 2020



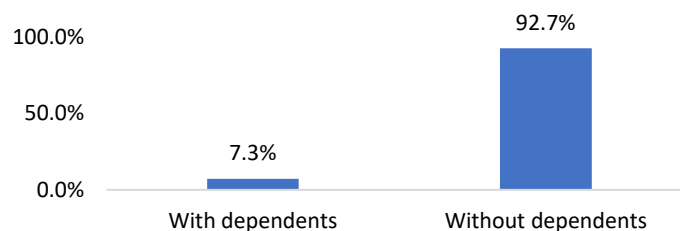
Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 34: Living Arrangements for Persons Admitted to SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

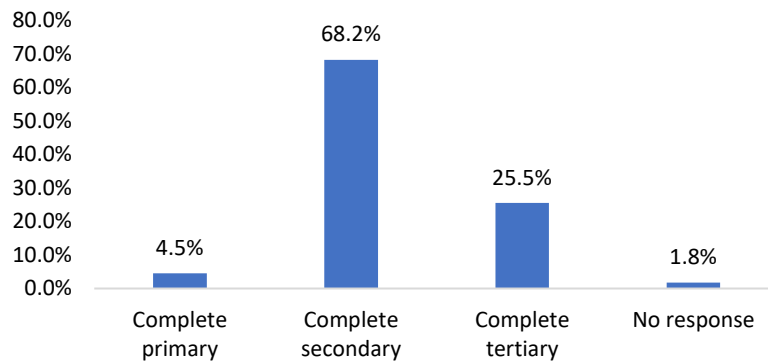
Figure 35: Distribution of Persons with and without Dependents Admitted to the SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

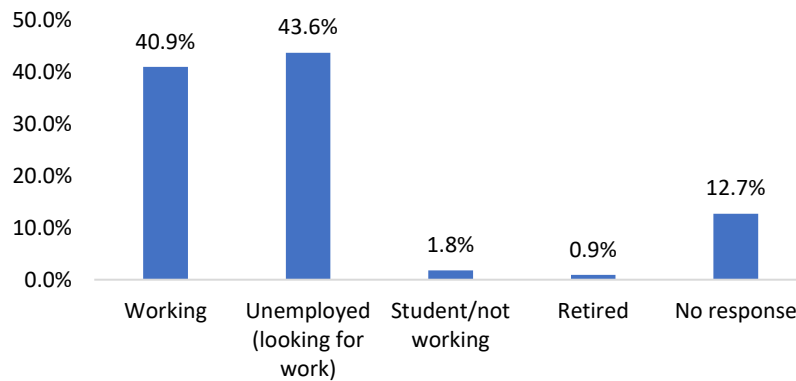


Figure 36: Highest Level of Education Attained by Persons Admitted to the SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 37: Employment Status of Persons Admitted to SAF in 2020

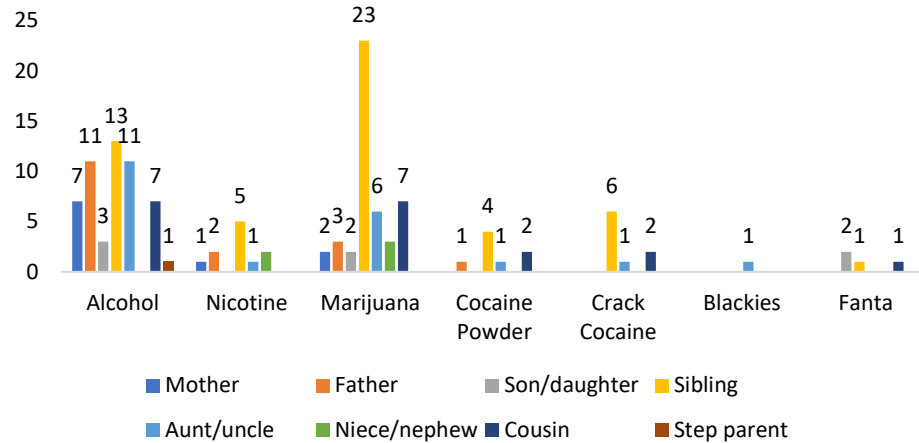


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Family History of Drug Use

Figure 38 reveals that alcohol and marijuana were the two substances most commonly used by family members. Other drugs included: cocaine (crack, powdered), nicotine, fanta and blackies (See Figure 38). The Chart also shows that the majority of reports were related to immediate family members e.g. parents, siblings, offspring (See Figure 38). However, it is possible that this may be due to a lack of knowledge about extended family members e.g. aunts, uncles, cousins. Also of note is the fact that clients were more likely to report drug use by siblings than by any other immediate family member, particularly in the case of marijuana where sibling reports far outnumbered all others (See Figure 38).

Figure 38: Family History of Drug Use Among Persons Admitted to the SAF in 2020

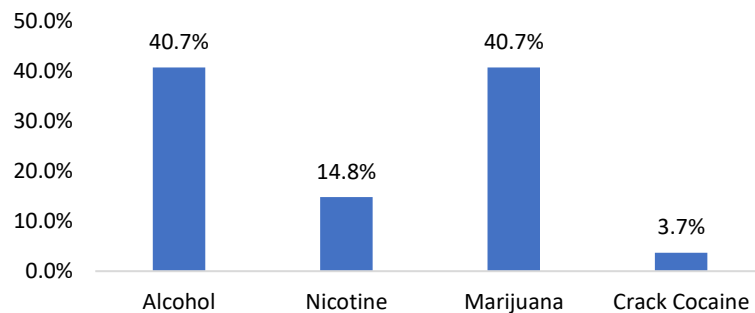


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Clients' Drug Use History

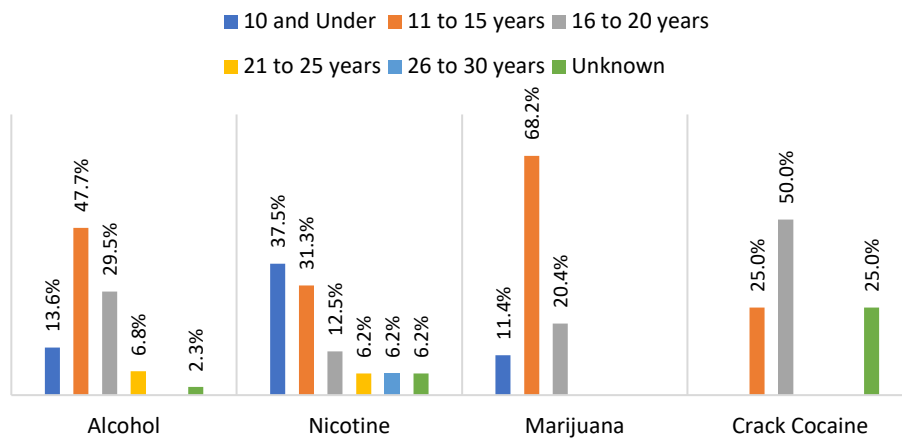
Alcohol and marijuana were the most common drugs of first use for persons treated at the SAF in 2020. From Figure 39, it can be seen that these two drugs were reported with equal frequency (40.7% each). Nicotine and crack cocaine were also identified as drugs of first use, but by notably fewer persons. When age was considered, Figure 40 reveals that most persons initiated alcohol, marijuana and nicotine use by the age of 15. For crack cocaine, persons who reported initiating the use of this drug did so between 11 and 20 years. Please note that caution should be exercised when interpreting the crack cocaine data as the percentages are based on the small number of persons (n=4) identifying this substance as their drug of first use.

Figure 39: First Drug Used in Lifetime by Persons Admitted to the SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 40: Age of First Drug Use by Drug Type for Persons Admitted to SAF in 2020

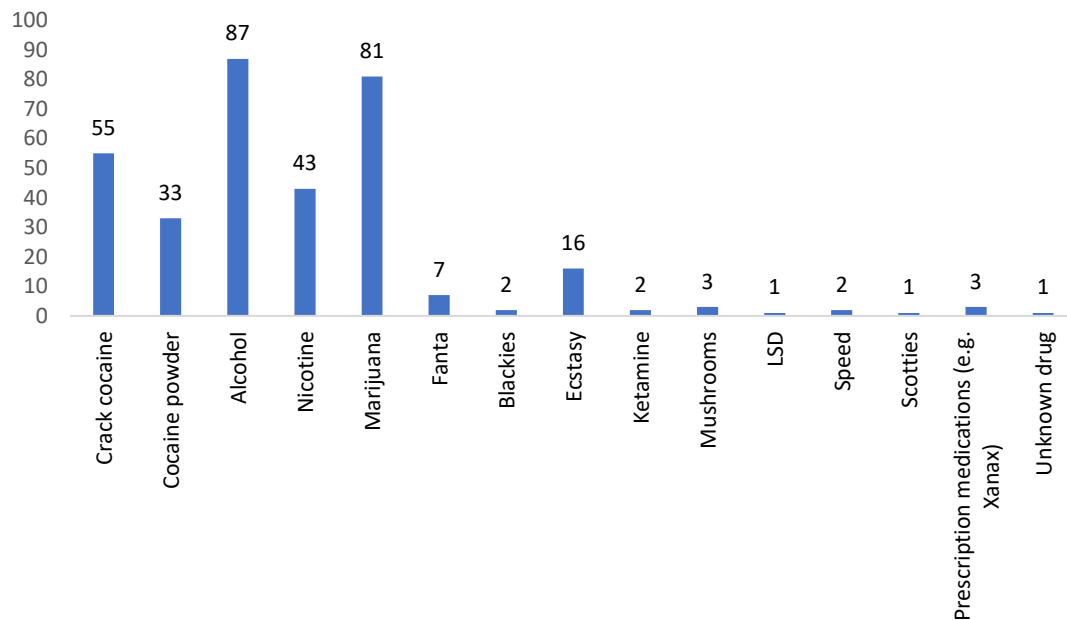


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 41 presents the drugs used by clients throughout their lifetime. While the traditional substances, such as: alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and nicotine were the most common, there were also reports of non-traditional substances. These include: ecstasy, ketamine, mushrooms, LSD, Speed, Scotties<sup>7</sup> and prescription drugs (mainly benzodiazepines, such as Xanax). The use of substances such as these highlight the continued diversification of our local drug situation.

<sup>7</sup> 'Scotties' are a mixture of Phencyclidine and cocaine. Phencyclidine, also known as PCP, is a synthetic compound derived from Piperidine and is used as a veterinary anesthetic or a hallucinogenic drug when misused. Phencyclidine is also sometimes referred to as 'angel dust'.

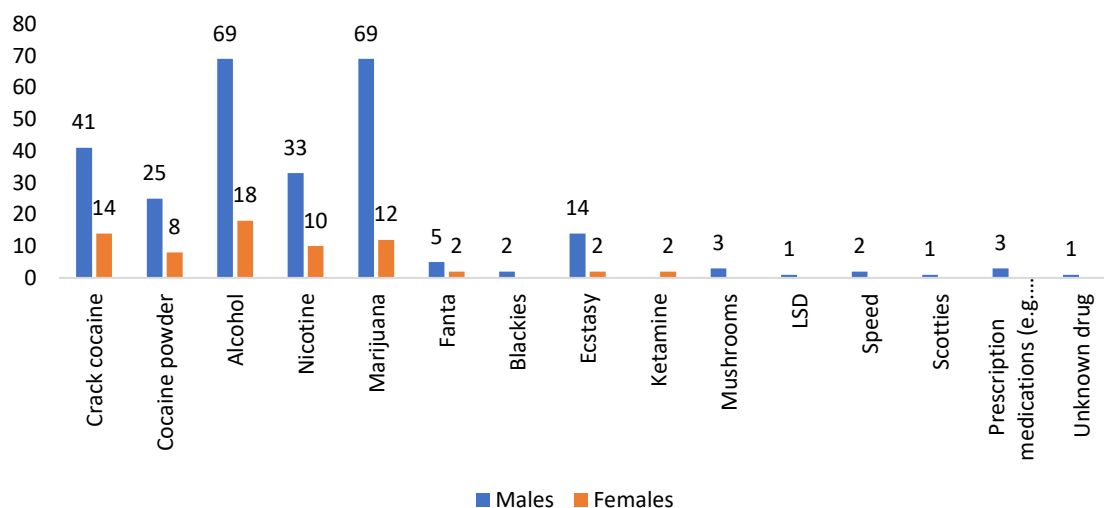
Figure 41: Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Admitted to the SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

When the data was analyzed by gender, it was found that traditional drugs (e.g. alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, cocaine) were the substances most commonly used by both males and females (See Figure 42). Additionally, males were more likely to use non-traditional substances, with the exception of Ketamine which was only used by females (See Figure 42).

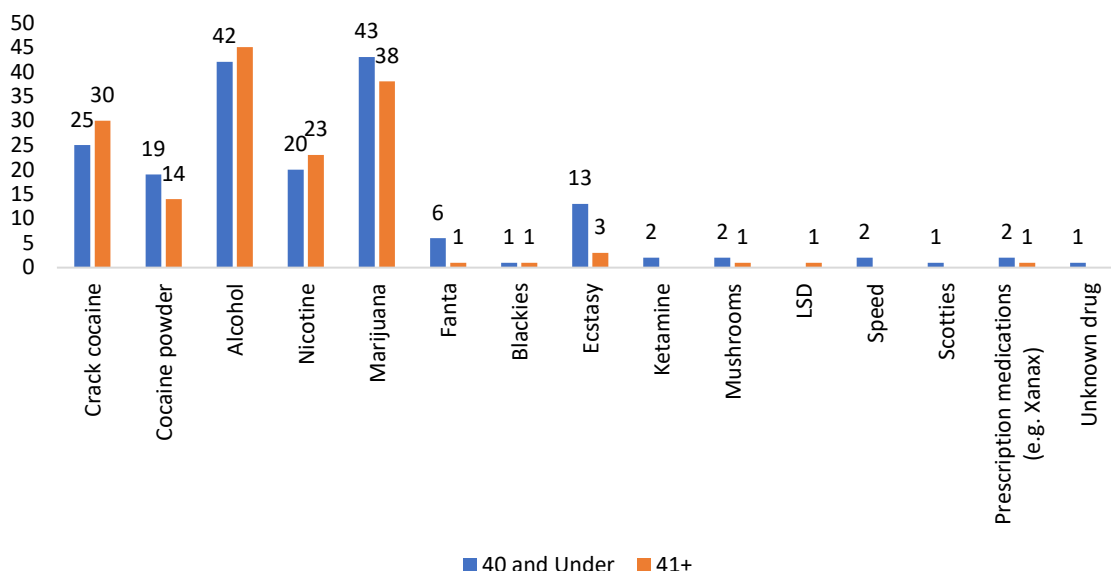
Figure 42: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Admitted to the SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Age-related analysis revealed a similar picture, whereby traditional substances were the ones most commonly used by both age groups (See Figure 43). However, persons in the 40 and under age category were more likely to report the use of non-traditional drugs (See Figure 43).

Figure 43: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Admitted to the SAF in 2020



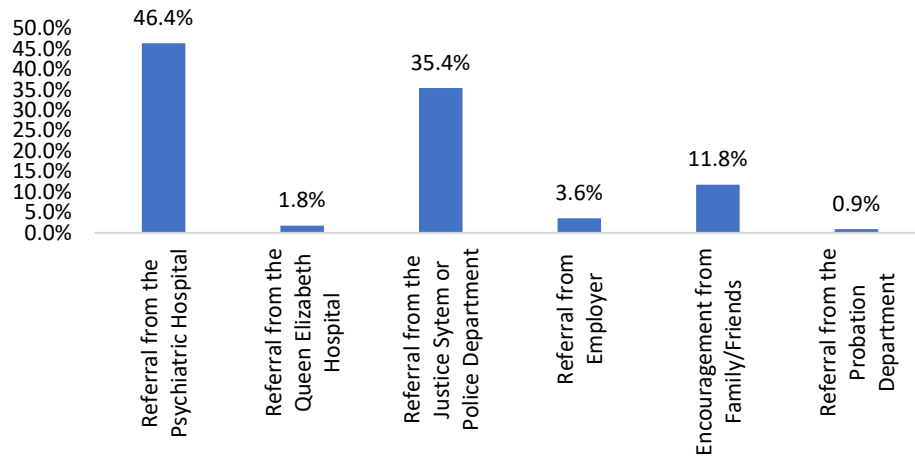
Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Treatment Referral

The Psychiatric Hospital and the justice system/police department were the most common sources of referral for persons seeking treatment at the SAF in 2020 (See Figure 44). Together these accounted for 81.8% of admissions during the year. Encouragement from family and friends, employers, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Probation Department were other, less common, referral sources (See Figure 44).

It should be noted that the data presented in Figure 44 represents the *original* sources of referral for persons treated at the SAF during 2020. Most persons seeking treatment at the SAF do so through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SAF and the Psychiatric Hospital. This MOU allows persons who are assessed at, and referred by, the Psychiatric Hospital to have their treatment at the SAF sponsored by the Government of Barbados. As a result, most SAF clients can be seen as having been *referred* by the Psychiatric Hospital. However, this generalization prevents a true understanding of how this group came to be in treatment. To avoid this shortcoming, a decision was taken to present the original sources of referral in this report.

Figure 44: Sources of Referral for Persons Seeking Treatment at the SAF in 2020

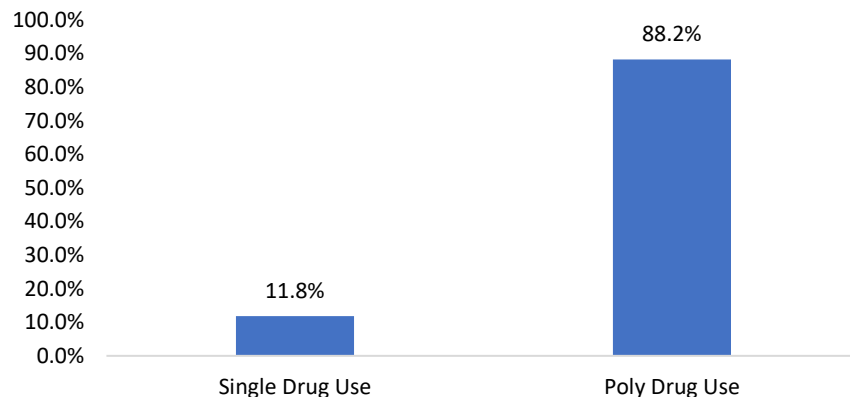


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Drug Treatment Profile

In 2020, approximately eight out of every 10 persons sought treatment for poly drug use (See Figure 45). This is in sharp contrast to the data from 2019 which showed that most persons were treated for single drug use during that year.

Figure 45: Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment for Poly Drug Vs. Single Drug Use at the SAF in 2020

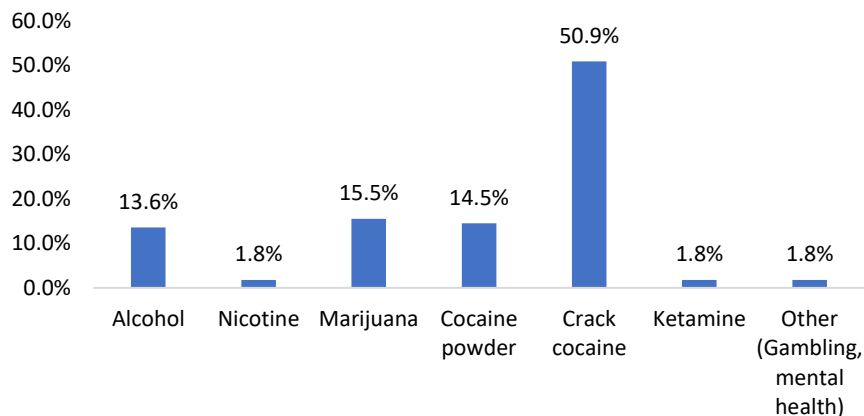


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Regardless of whether they were treated for single or poly drug use, all persons were asked to identify the primary drug motivating their need for treatment. The results presented in Figure 46 show that crack cocaine was reported by half of all clients, thereby making it the most common primary drug during the period. Also cited were marijuana, cocaine powder, alcohol, nicotine and Ketamine, respectively. The inclusion of Ketamine is particularly noteworthy as this is the first time it has appeared

in a BARDIN report. Figure 46 also highlights the fact that two individuals sought treatment for gambling and mental health.

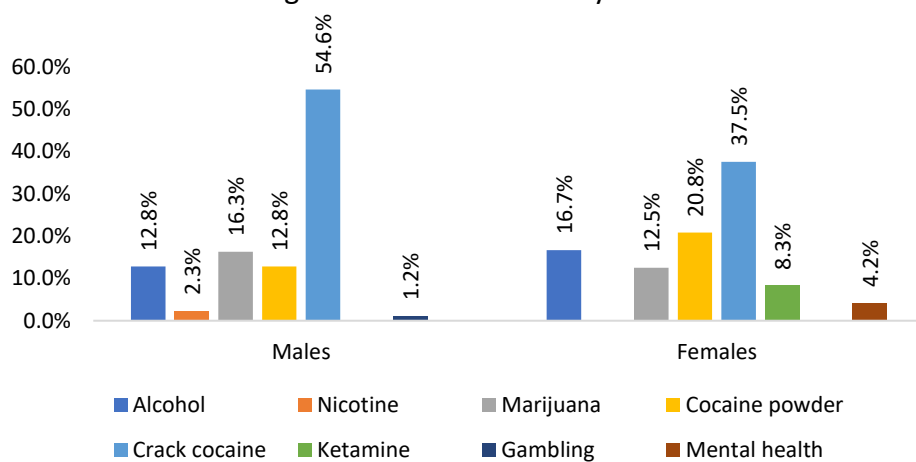
Figure 46: Primary Drug for which Persons Sought Treatment at the SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

When gender was considered, it was found that crack cocaine remained the most common primary drug for both males and females (See Figure 47). Males and females were also both treated for cocaine powder, marijuana and alcohol. However, the percentage of females treated for cocaine powder and alcohol was higher than the corresponding percentage for males (See Figure 47). Similarly, the percentage of males treated for marijuana was higher than that for females (See Figure 47). Also noteworthy is the fact that only males sought treatment for nicotine while only females sought treatment for Ketamine (See Figure 47).

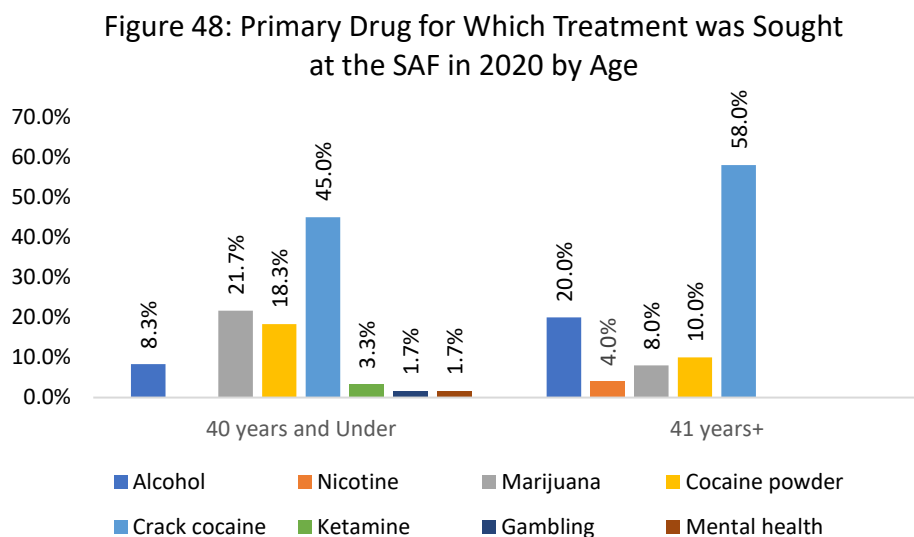
Figure 47: Primary Drugs for Which Treatment was Sought at the SAF in 2020 by Gender



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

When the data was analyzed by age, crack cocaine was found to be the most common primary drug for persons in the 40 and under age group as well as those in the 41 and over age category (See Figure 48). However, treatment for marijuana and cocaine powder was more common among those aged 40 and under while treatment for alcohol was more common for those 41 and over (See Figure 48). This particular finding corresponds with the data from previous years.

With regards to the less common primary drugs, treatment for nicotine was only sought by those 41 and over, while treatment for Ketamine was only sought by younger persons, namely those in the 40 and under age group (See Figure 48).

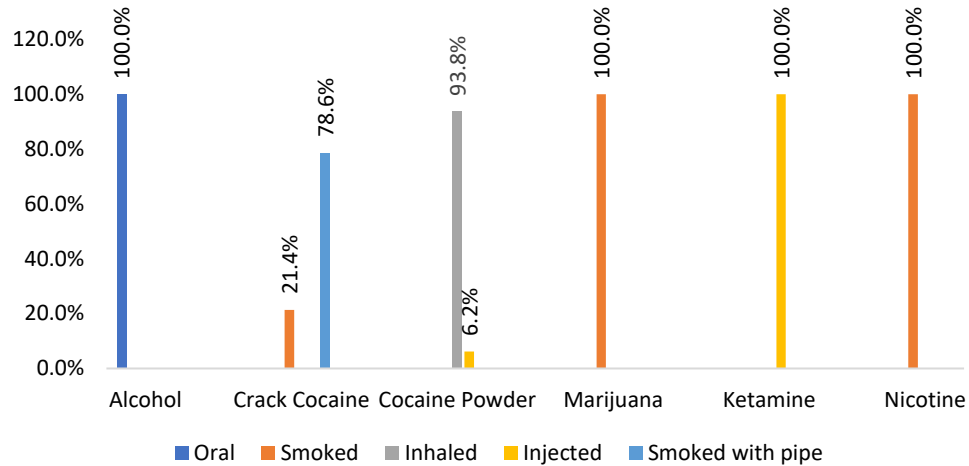


*Source: Substance Abuse Foundation*

Persons were asked to indicate the most frequent method of administration for their primary drug. Figure 49 shows that all persons consumed alcohol orally, while “smoked” was the only method used for marijuana and nicotine. With regards to Ketamine, this drug was only administered via injection (See Figure 49). The majority of persons inhaled cocaine powder but there was also a small percentage who reported injecting this substance (See Figure 49). Crack cocaine was predominately smoked using a crack pipe; however, approximately one out of every five persons reported smoking the substance without the aid of a pipe (See Figure 49).



Figure 49: Most Frequent Method of Administration for Primary Drug among Persons Admitted to the SAF in 2020

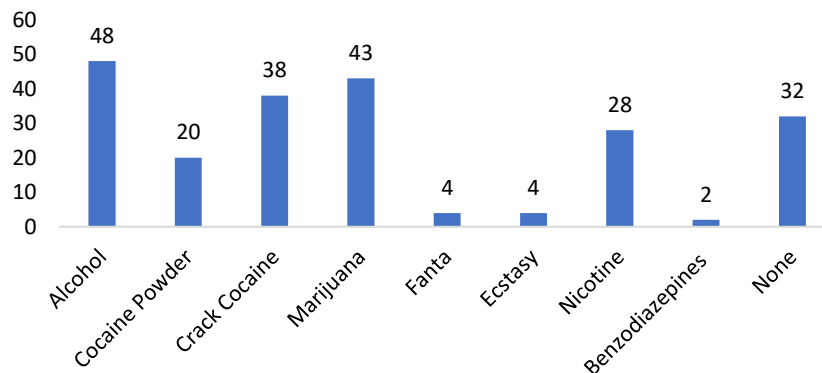


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 50 presents the drugs used by clients in the 30 days before treatment entry. Alcohol, marijuana, cocaine (crack and powdered) and tobacco cigarettes were the main substances used during this period (See Figure 50). Nevertheless, a small number of persons also reported using ecstasy, fanta and benzodiazepines (See Figure 50). It should be noted that, while most persons reported drug use during the preceding 30 days, there was also a segment of the client population that reported no drug use during that time (See Figure 50).

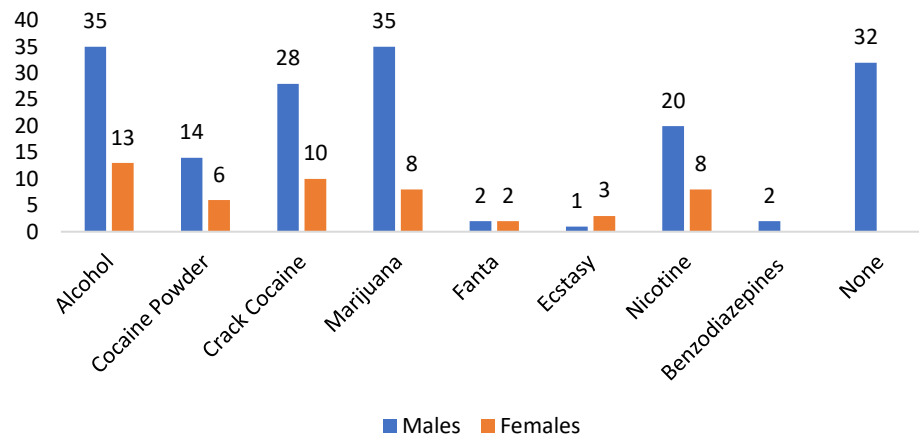
When the data was analyzed by age and gender, a similar picture emerged whereby the traditional substances remained the most common drugs used by males and females as well as by those in the 40 and under and 41 and over age categories (See Figures 51 and 52). This is due to the fact that very few persons reported the use of non-traditional substances during the 30 day lead up. Figures 51 and 52 also reveal that males under the age of 40 were the only persons who reported no drug use during the preceding 30 days (See Figures 51 and 52).

Figure 50: Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Treatment at SAF in 2020



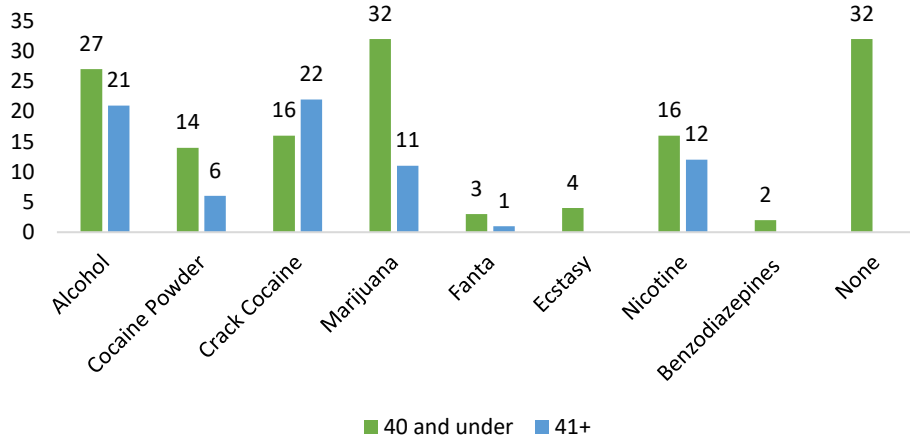
Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 51: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Treatment at SAF in 2020



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 52: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Treatment at SAF in 2020

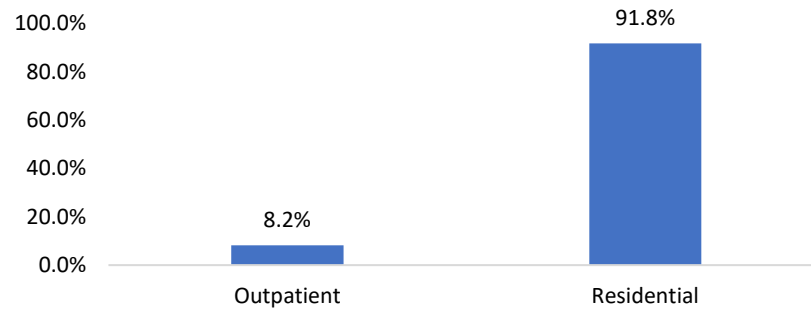


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Most Recent Treatment Prior to Admission

All persons admitted to the SAF in 2020 had been treated previously. With regards to the most recent type of treatment received, Figure 53 shows that “residential” was most common. This type of treatment was cited by approximately nine out every 10 persons. Notably fewer persons cited “outpatient” treatment as the most recent form of treatment received (See Figure 53).

Figure 53: Most Recent Treatment Prior to Enrollment Among Persons Treated at the SAF in 2020

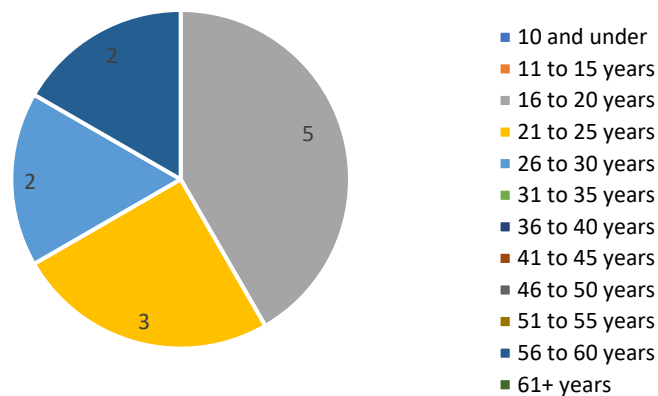


*Source: Substance Abuse Foundation*

### 4.3 Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Twelve persons, all of whom were male, sought substance abuse treatment from the Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives (CASA) during the period January 1 to December 31, 2020. Figure 54 shows that the majority of individuals (8 out of 12) were between the ages of 16 and 25.

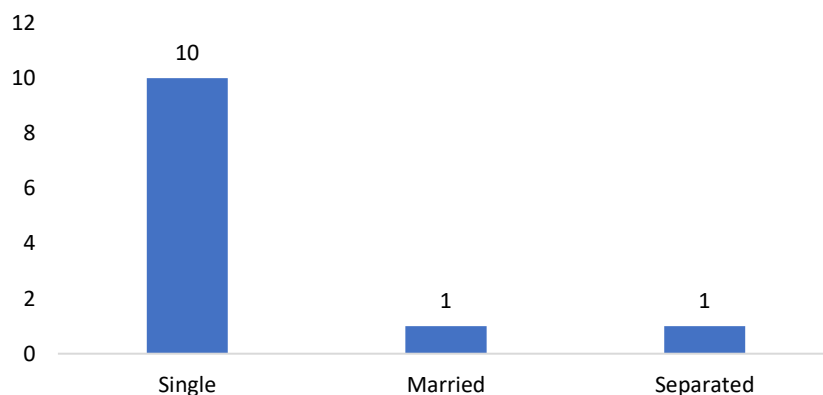
Figure 54: Age Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

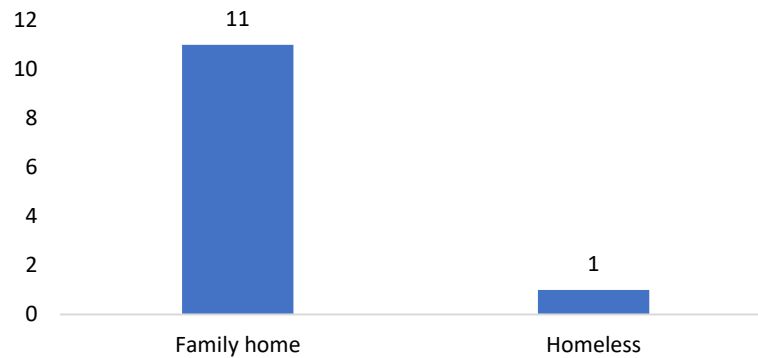
Figures 55 through 59 present additional demographic data on those treated at CASA in 2020. From the Charts it can be seen that, during the target period, most clients were single, lived in their family home and had no dependents. With regards to employment and highest level education attained, Figures 58 and 59 show that most persons were working at the time of admission and had completed secondary school.

Figure 55: Relationship Status of Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020



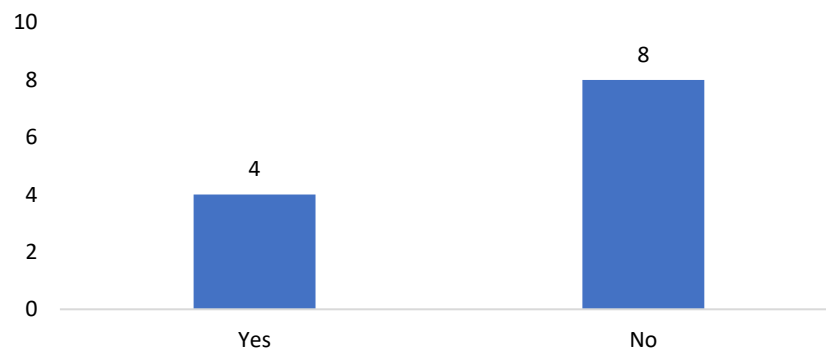
Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 56: Living Arrangements of Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020



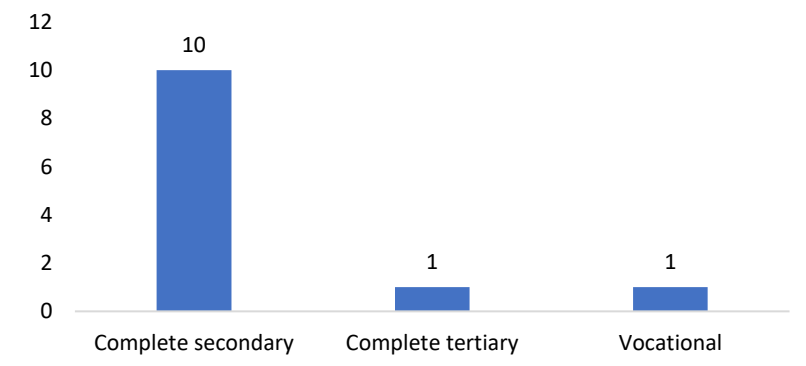
Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 57: Distribution of Persons with and without Dependents Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020



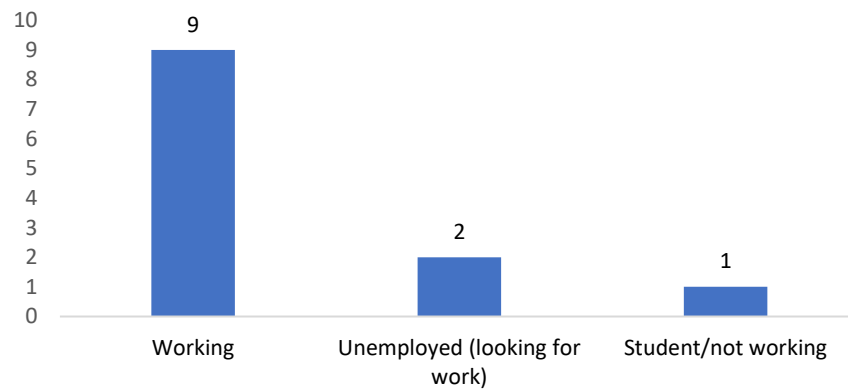
Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 58: Highest Level of Education Attained by Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 59: Employment Status of Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020

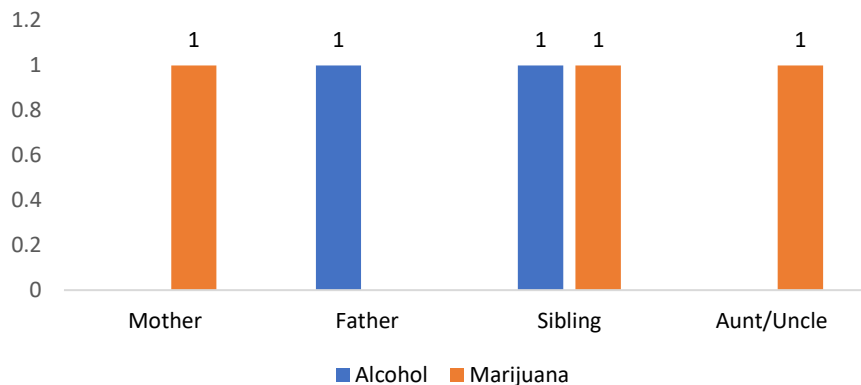


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

### Family History of Drug Use

Just under half (5 out of 12) of the 2020 clients reported a family history of drug use, with marijuana and alcohol being the only two drugs identified (See Figure 60). Figure 60 reveals that persons were more likely to report drug use by immediate family members (parents, siblings).

Figure 60: Family History of Drug Use for those Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020

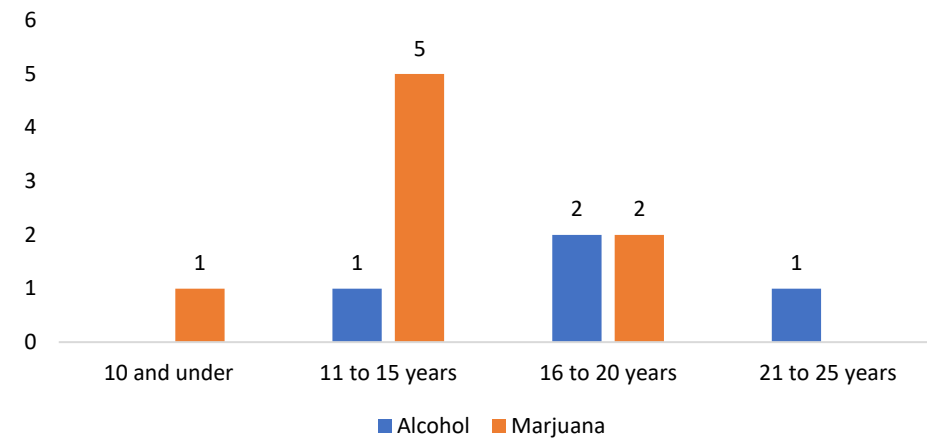


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

### Client History of Drug Use

Figure 61 reveals that alcohol and marijuana were the first drugs ever used by persons seeking treatment at CASA in 2020. Of these, marijuana was most common. The Chart also shows that most persons initiated drug use during adolescence, that is, between the ages of 11 and 20. Half stated that their first drug use was between 11 and 15 years.

Figure 61: Age of First Drug Use by Drug Type for Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020

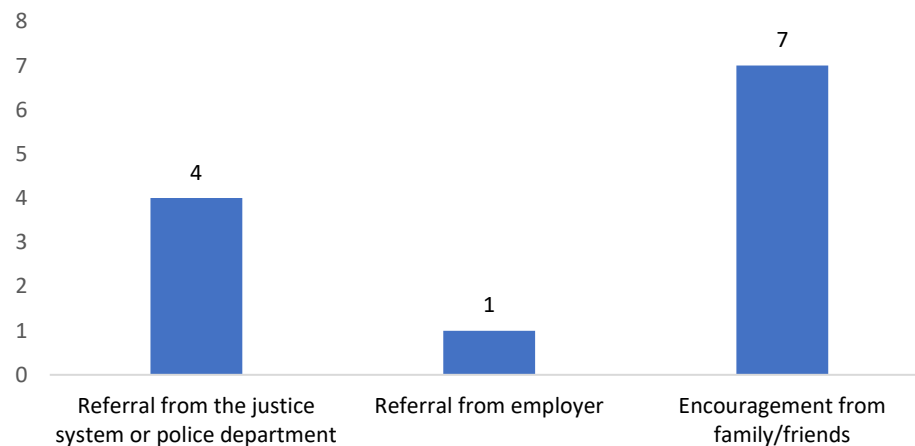


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

### Treatment Referral

Figure 62 presents the referral sources for persons treated at CASA in 2020. From the Chart it can be seen that most persons entered treatment due to encouragement from family and friends. One third (4) were referred by the justice system/police and one individual was referred by their employer (See Figure 62).

Figure 62: Sources of Referral for Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020

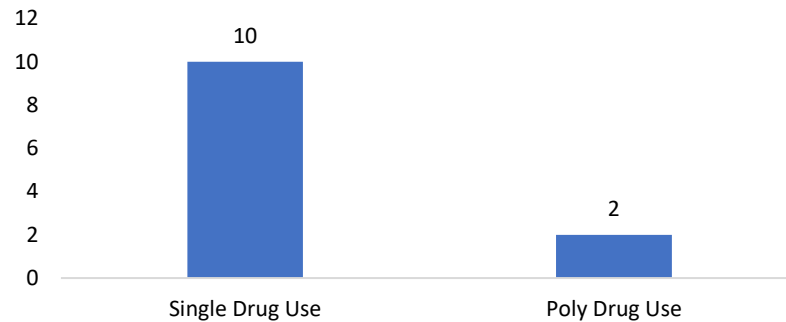


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

### ***Drug Treatment Profile***

Ten out of the 12 persons treated at CASA in 2020 were treated for single drug use (See Figure 63).

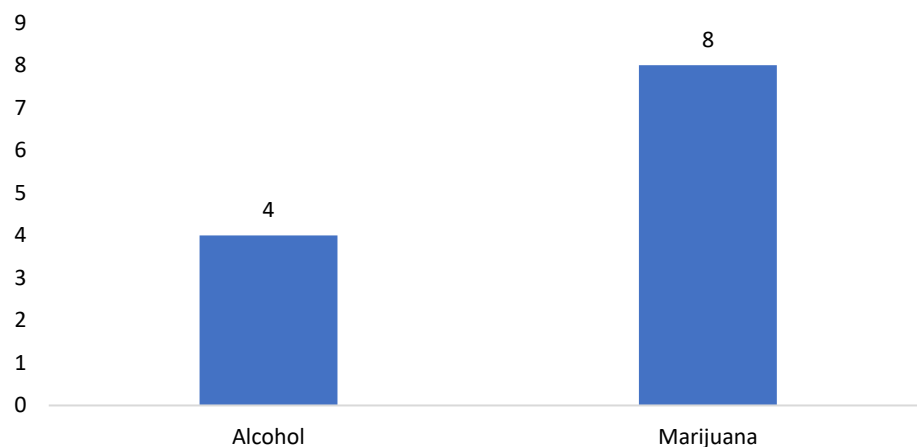
Figure 63: Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment of Single Drug Use vs Poly Drug Use at CASA in 2020



*Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives*

Marijuana and alcohol were the only primary substances for which persons received substance abuse treatment at CASA in 2020. Of these, marijuana was most common, with approximately two-thirds of the clients seeking treatment for this substance.

Figure 64: Primary Drug for which Persons Sought Treatment at CASA in 2020



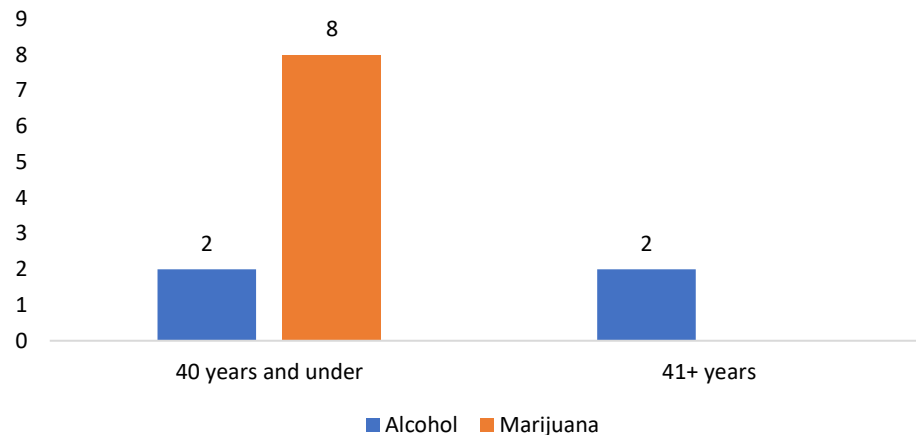
*Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives*

When age was considered, Figure 65 shows that marijuana was the most common primary drug for persons 40 years of age and under. The Chart also reveals that no-one over the age of 40 sought treatment for this drug. With regards to alcohol, persons seeking treatment for this substance were



equally divided – two persons were in the 40 and under age category and two in the 41 and over age group (See Figure 65).

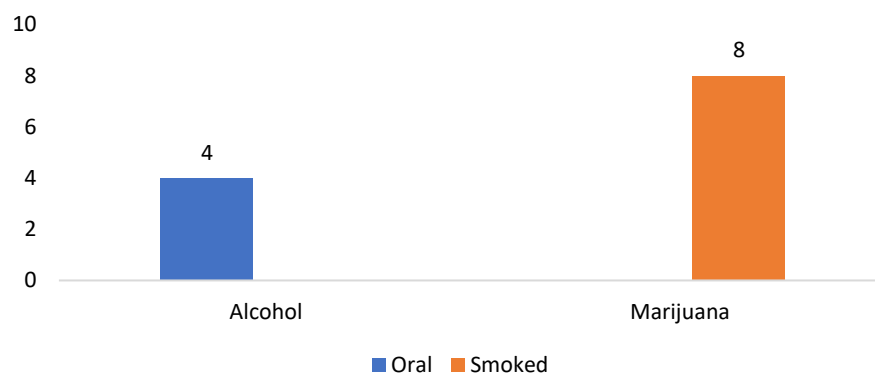
Figure 65: Primary Drug for which Treatment was Sought at CASA in 2020 by Age



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Persons were asked to indicate the most frequent method of administration used for their primary substance. “Oral” was the only method of administration cited for alcohol while “smoked” was the only method of administration identified for marijuana (See Figure 66).

Figure 66: Most Frequent Method of Administration for Primary Drug among Persons Seeking Treatment at CASA in 2020



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

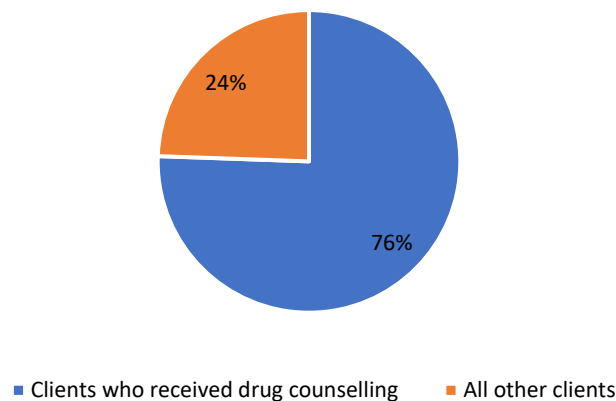
### ***Most Recent Treatment Prior to Admission***

None of clients treated at CASA in 2020 had received previous substance abuse treatment.

#### 4.4 National Council on Substance Abuse

Forty-five persons utilized the counselling services offered by the NCSA in 2020. Approximately three quarters of the clients (76%) were treated for substance abuse (See Figure 67). The remaining 24% sought counselling for anger management, family issues and feelings of depression/sadness. This category also included a number of young people who were brought for counselling due to their being found with marijuana or marijuana paraphernalia in their possession, associating with persons who use marijuana, and hiding marijuana.

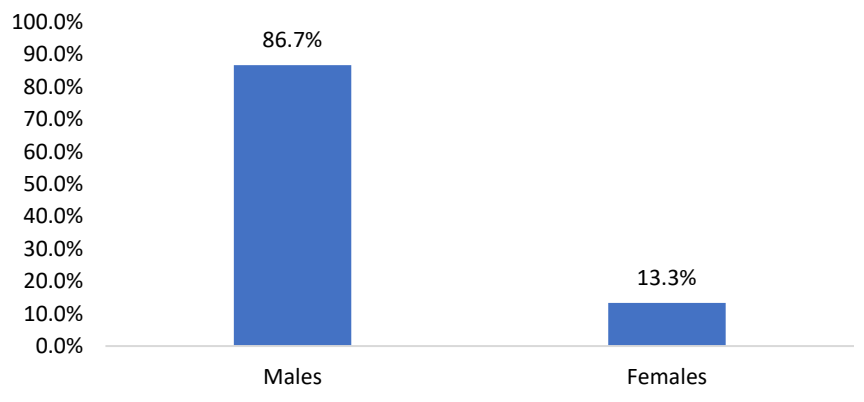
Figure 67: Distribution of NCSA Counselling Clients in 2020 by Nature of Presenting Issue



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

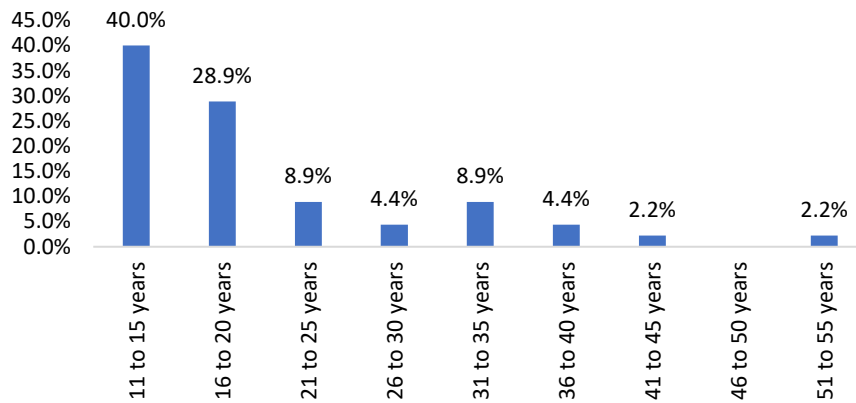
Figures 68 and 69 show that males and persons 20 years and under accounted for the majority of clients seeking counselling at the NCSA in 2020.

Figure 68: Gender Distribution of All Clients Accessing Counselling Services at the NCSA in 2020



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 69: Age Distribution of All Clients Accessing Counselling Services at NCSA in 2020



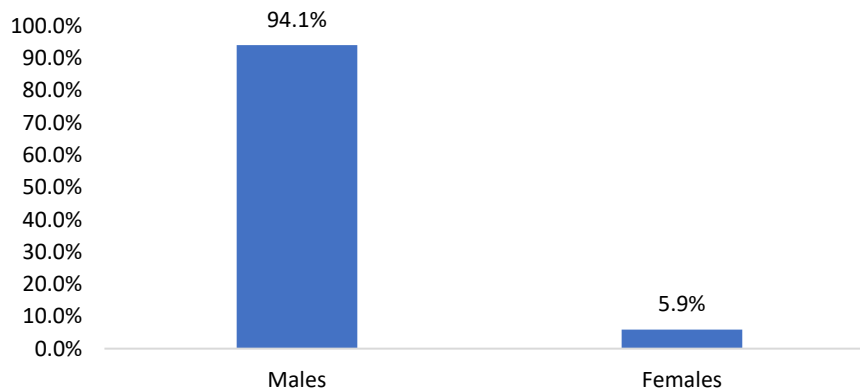
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

### Demographic Profile of Drug Treatment Clients

The profile of clients seeking substance abuse treatment was similar to that of the wider treatment clientele, whereby most persons were also males and in the 20 and under age category (See Figures 70 and 71). Of particular note is the fact that approximately four out of every 10 persons were between the ages of 11 and 15 (See Figure 71).

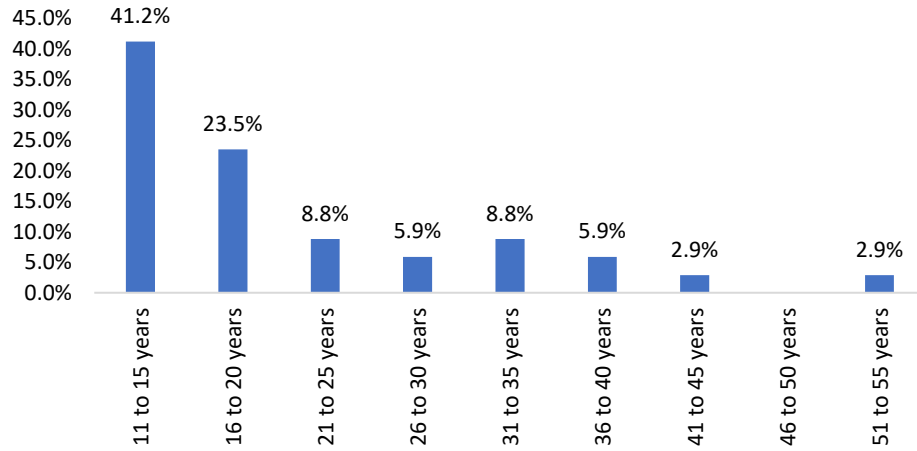
Additionally, Figures 72, 73, 74 and 76 show that most clients receiving substance abuse treatment were single, had no dependents, lived in their family home and were students. With regards to education, 82.3% of persons identified “complete primary” as the highest level of education attained at the time of intake (See Figure 75). This may be due in large part to the age of clients, many of whom were still enrolled in secondary school.

Figure 70: Gender Distribution of Clients Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



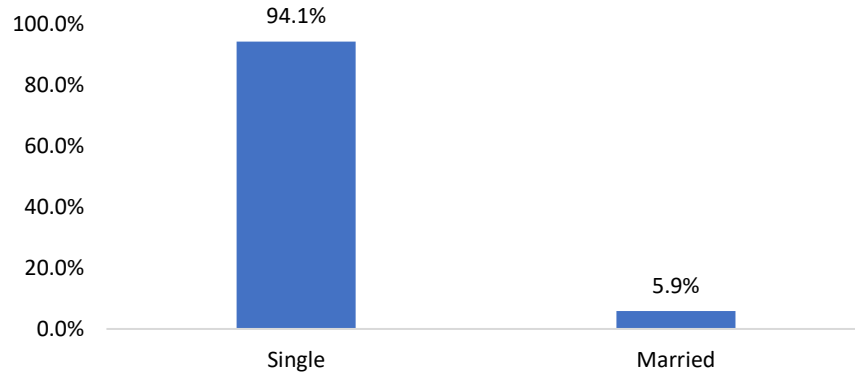
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 71: Age Distribution of Clients Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment NCSA in 2020



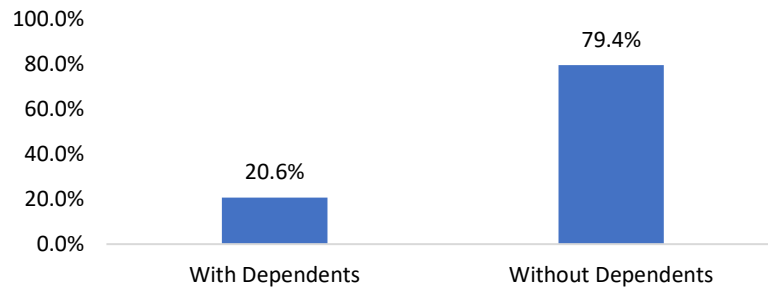
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 72: Relationship Status of Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



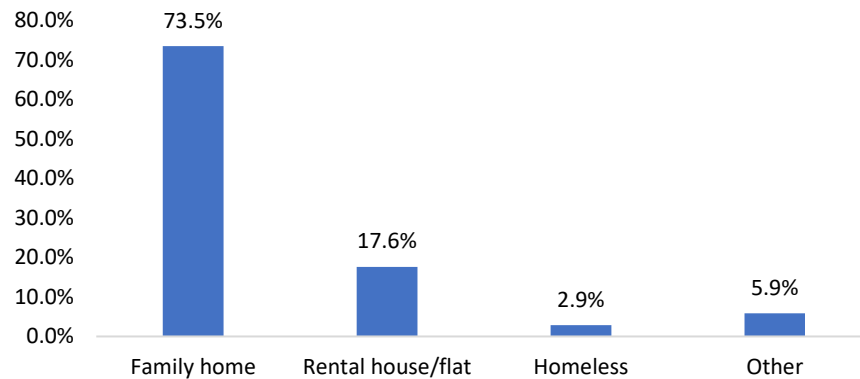
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 73: Distribution of Persons With vs. Without Dependents Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



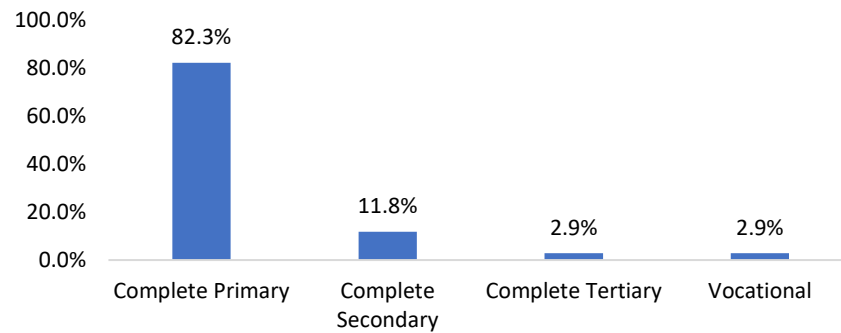
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 74: Living Arrangements for Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at the NCSA in 2020



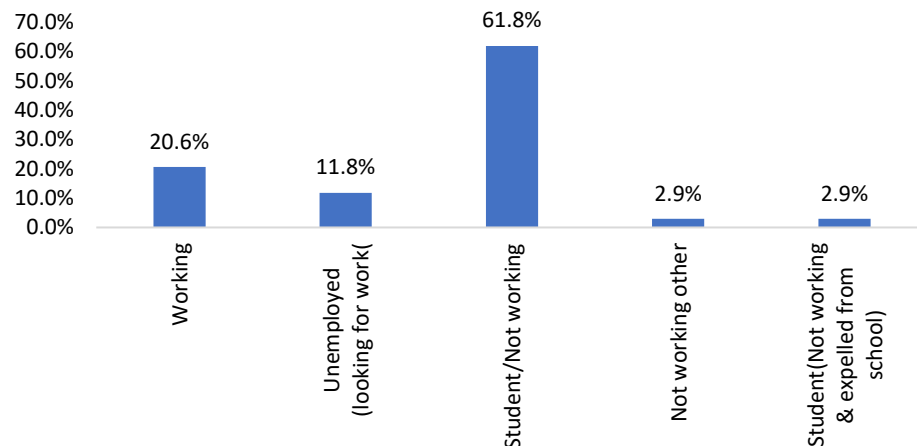
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 75: Highest Level of Education Attained by Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 76: Employment Status of Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020

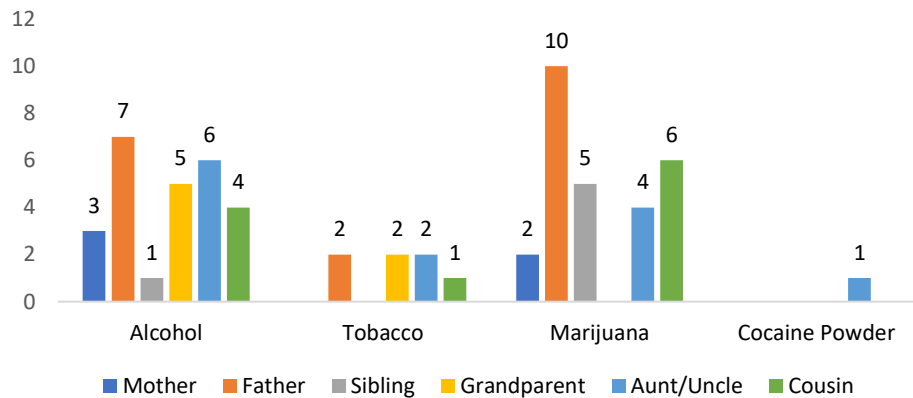


Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

### Family History of Drug Use

When asked about family history, clients revealed the use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and cocaine powder by various relatives. Of these, alcohol and marijuana were the most common (See Figure 77). Persons were more likely to report marijuana use by immediate family members (parents, siblings) than by extended family members (See Figure 77). Conversely, the reported use of alcohol, tobacco and cocaine powder, was higher among extended family members (See Figure 77).

Figure 77: Family History of Drug Use by Drug Type  
Among Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at  
NCSA in 2020

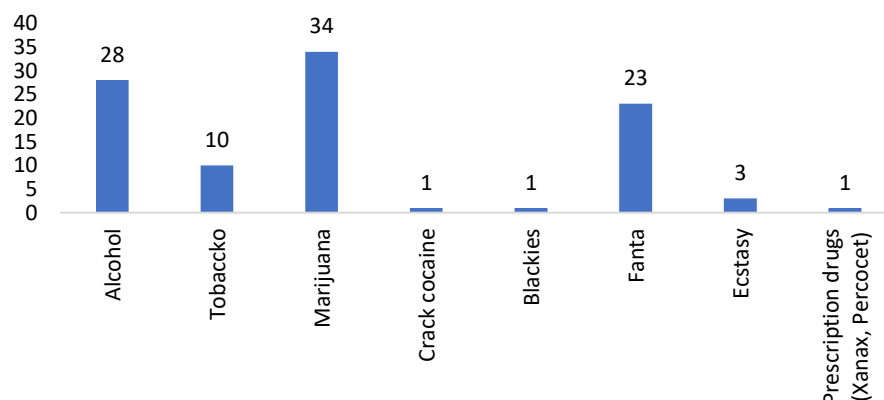


Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

### Clients' Drug Use History

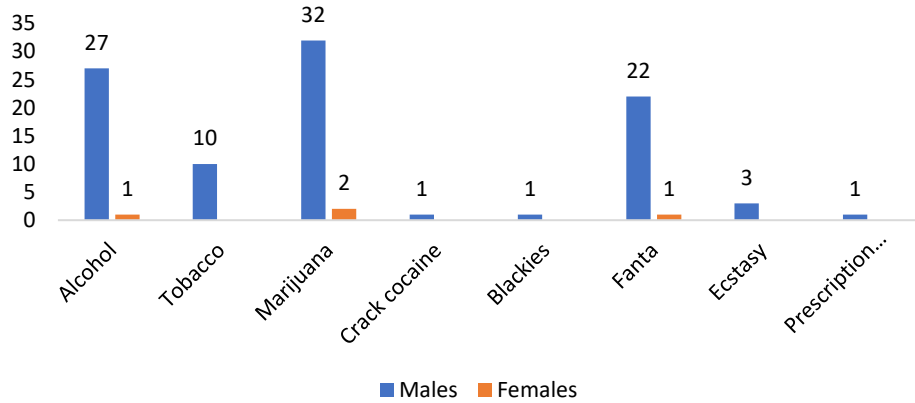
When asked about lifetime drug use, clients identified: marijuana, alcohol, fanta, tobacco, ecstasy, crack cocaine, blackies and prescription drugs (Xanax, Percocet) respectively (See Figure 78). The use of marijuana, alcohol and fanta was notably higher than the use of the other substances (See Figure 78). When age and gender were considered, the analysis revealed that marijuana, alcohol and fanta remained the top three most commonly used substances by males and females as well as those in the 20 and under, 21 to 40 and 41 and over age categories (See Figures 79 and 80).

Figure 78: Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Seeking  
Substance Abuse Treatment at the NCSA in 2020



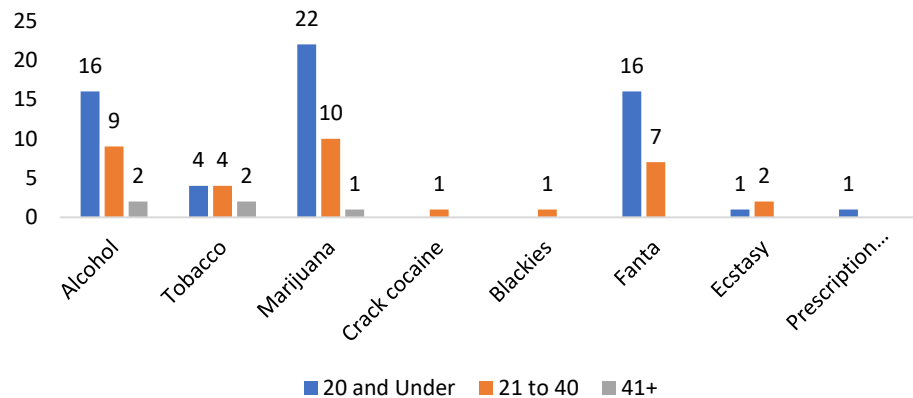
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 79: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 80: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020

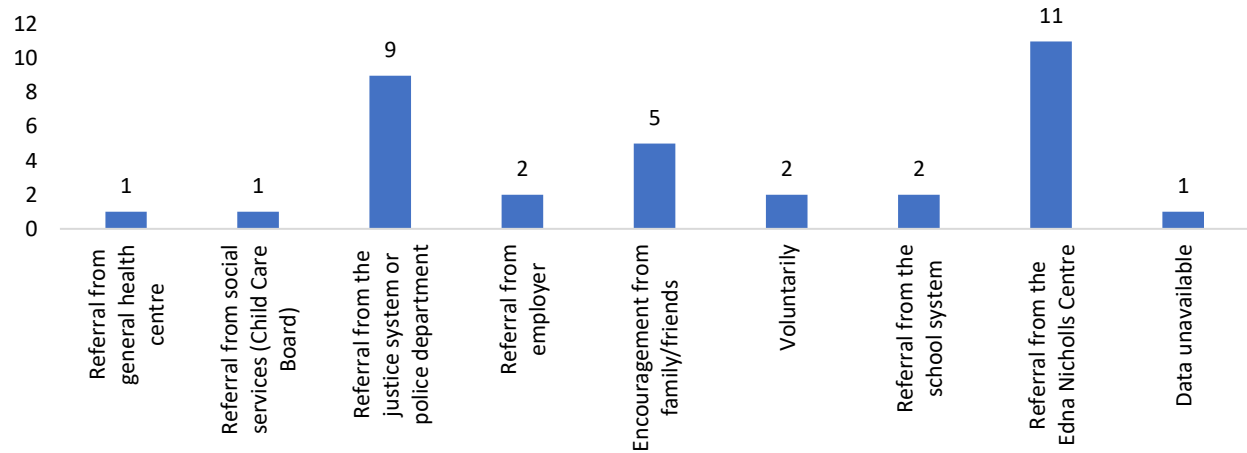


Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

### Treatment Referral

Figure 81 presents the sources of referral for clients seeking substance abuse treatment at the NCSA in 2020. From the Chart it can be seen that the Edna Nicholls Centre and the justice system/police were the two most common referral sources during the target period.

Figure 81: Sources of Referral for Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020

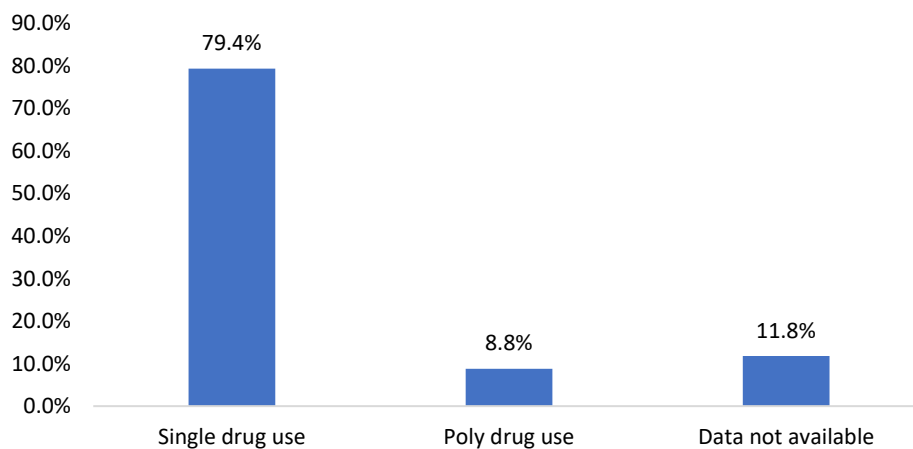


Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

### Drug Treatment Profile

Approximately eight out of every 10 persons receiving substance abuse treatment at NCSA in 2020 were treated for single drug use (See Figure 82). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that 8.8% (3 persons) were treated for poly drug use (See Figure 82). This is significant as persons seeking substance abuse treatment at the NCSA have traditionally been treated for single drug use.

Figure 82: Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment for Single Drug vs. Poly Drug Use at NCSA in 2020



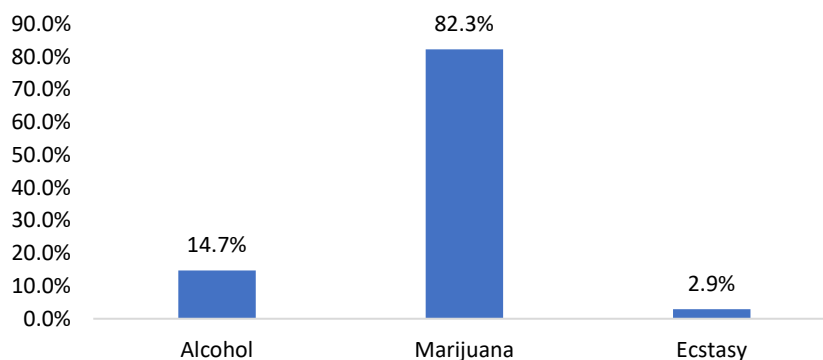
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

For the majority of clients, marijuana was the primary drug motivating the need for treatment (See Figure 83). This was distantly followed by alcohol and ecstasy (See Figure 83). When the data was analyzed by gender and age, marijuana remained the most common primary drug for males and females



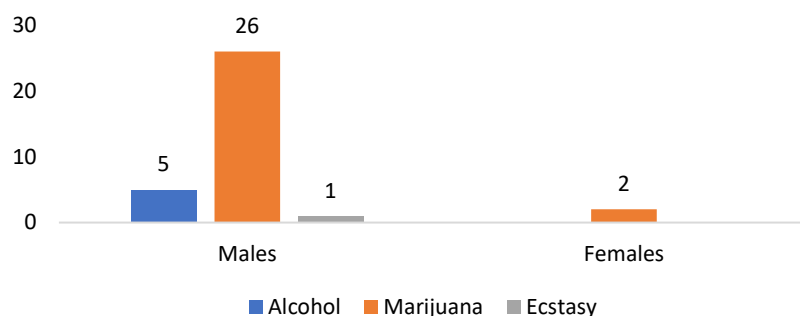
as well as those in the 20 and under and 21 to 40 age categories (See Figures 84 and 85). In contrast, alcohol was the lone primary drug for those 41 and over (2 persons) (See Figure 85).

Figure 83: Primary Drugs for which Substance Abuse Treatment was sought at the NCSA in 2020



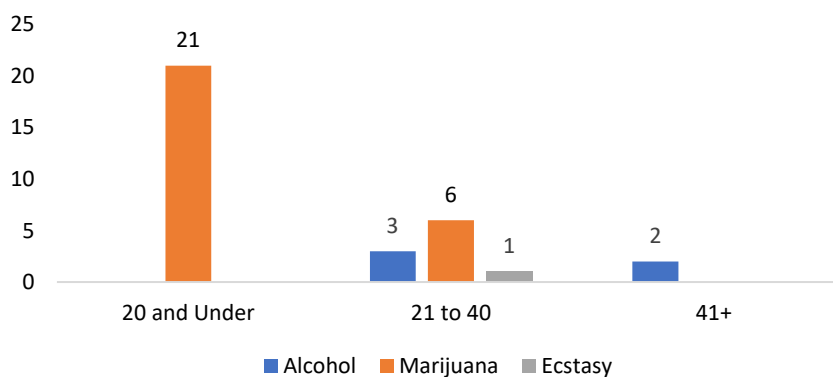
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 84: Primary Drugs for which Substance Abuse Treatment was Sought at the NCSA in 2020 by Gender



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

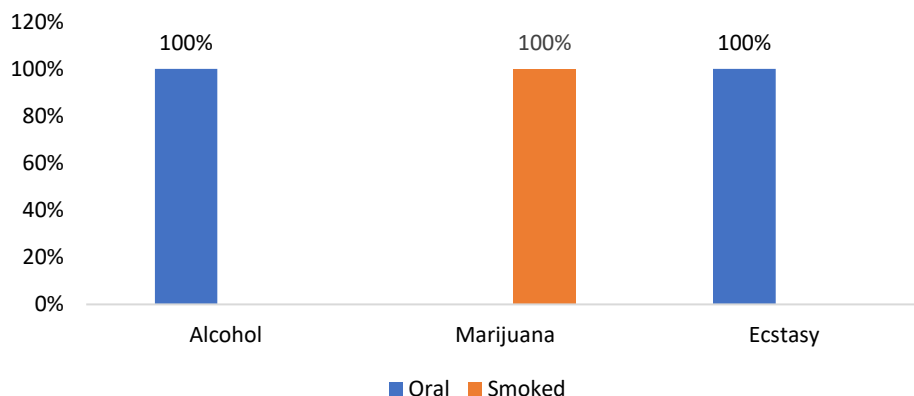
Figure 85: Primary Drugs for Which Substance Abuse Treatment was Sought at the NCSA in 2020 by Age



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

When asked about the most frequent method of administration for their primary drug, all persons receiving treatment for alcohol and ecstasy indicated that they consumed these substances orally (See Figure 86). Likewise, all persons being treated for marijuana reported smoking this drug (See Figure 86).

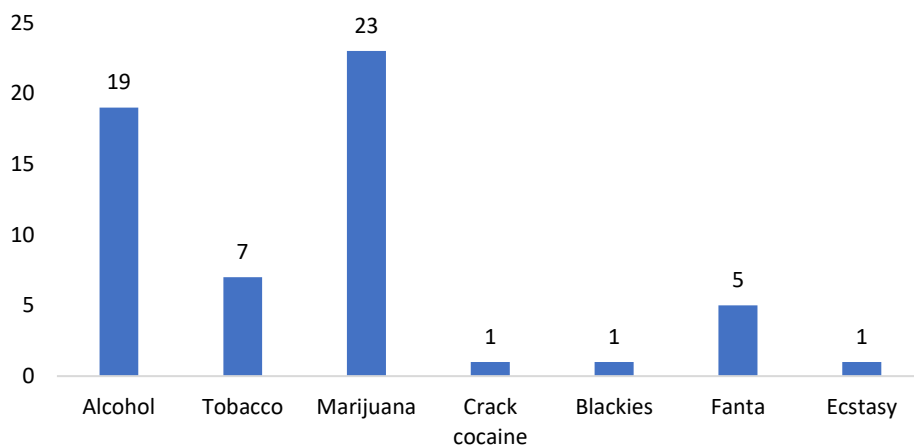
Figure 86: Most Frequent Method of Administration for Primary Drug Among Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at the NCSA in 2020



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

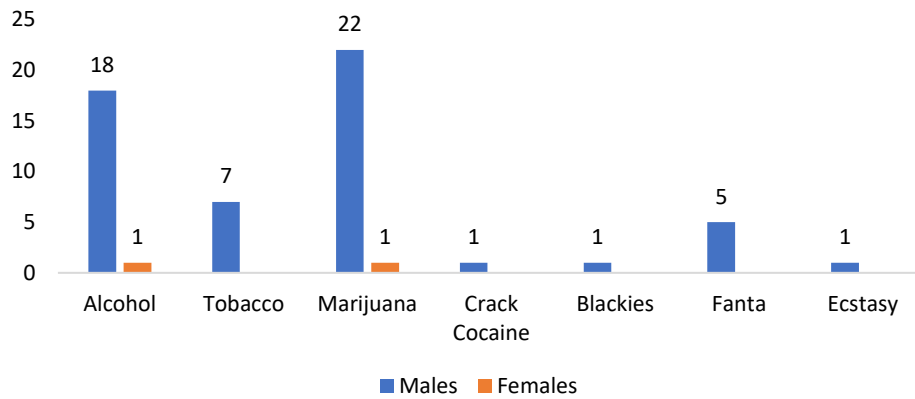
Figures 87 through 89 present data regarding the drugs used by clients in the 30 days preceding treatment entry. Figure 87 reveals that marijuana, alcohol and tobacco were the top three substances used by clients during the 30-day lead up. This finding remained true for males and females as well as those in the 20 and under, 21 to 40 and 41 and over age groups (See Figures 88 and 89).

Figure 87: Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



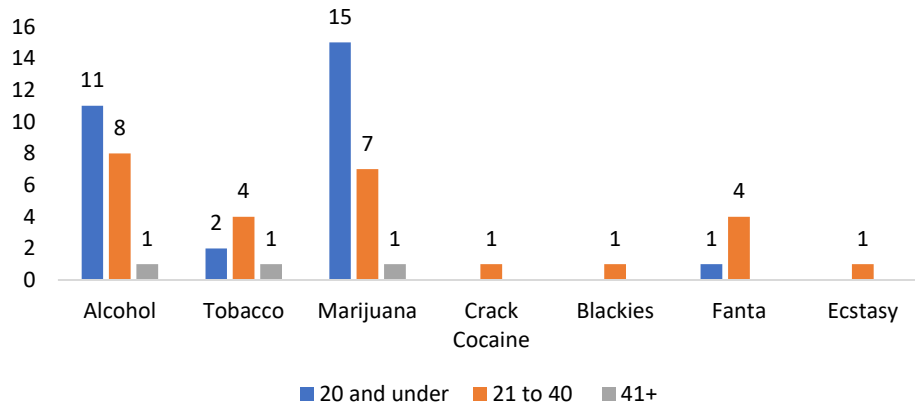
Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 88: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 89: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA in 2020



Source: National Council on Substance Abuse

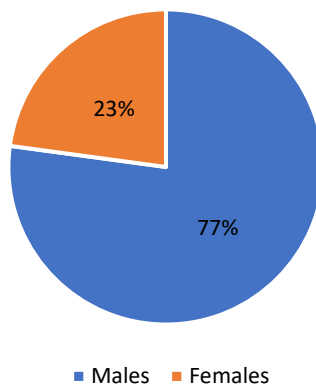
### **Most Recent Treatment Prior to Admission**

Only three out of the 34 clients reported previous substance abuse treatment. All three reported that they had most recently received “outpatient” treatment.

## 4.5 Inmate Drug Rehabilitation and Counselling Programme

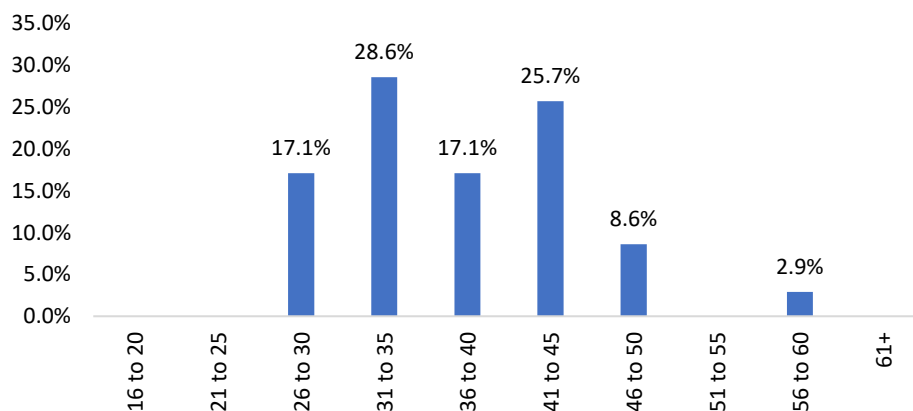
Thirty-five inmates were admitted to the Inmate Drug Rehabilitation and Counselling Programme (IDRC) during 2020, the majority of whom were males (See Figure 90). Figure 91 reveals that just over two-thirds (68.4%) of the inmates admitted to the Programme were between the ages of 31 and 45 years.

Figure 90: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Inmate Drug Rehabilitation and Counselling Programme in 2020



Source: Barbados Prison Service

Figure 91: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Inmate Drug Rehabilitation and Counselling Programme in 2020

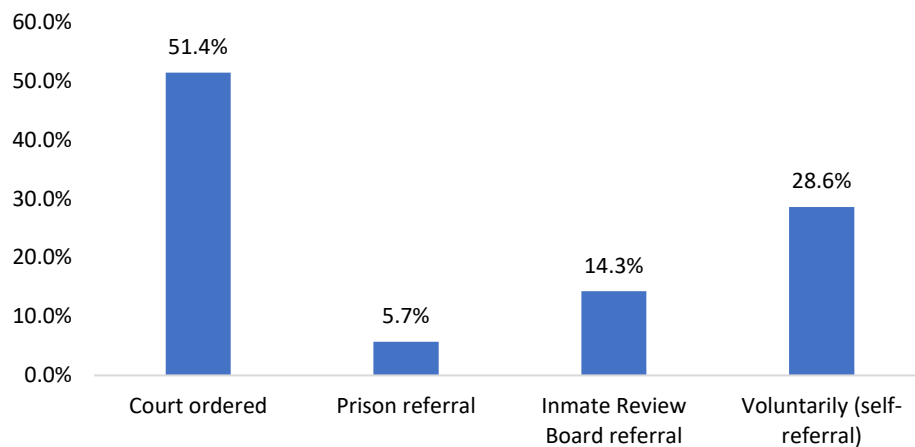


Source: Barbados Prison Service

### ***Treatment Referral***

From Figure 92 it can be seen that court-ordered referrals were the most common, accounting for just over half of the inmates admitted to the IDRC programme during 2020.

Figure 92: Sources of Referral for Persons Admitted to the IDRC Programme in 2020

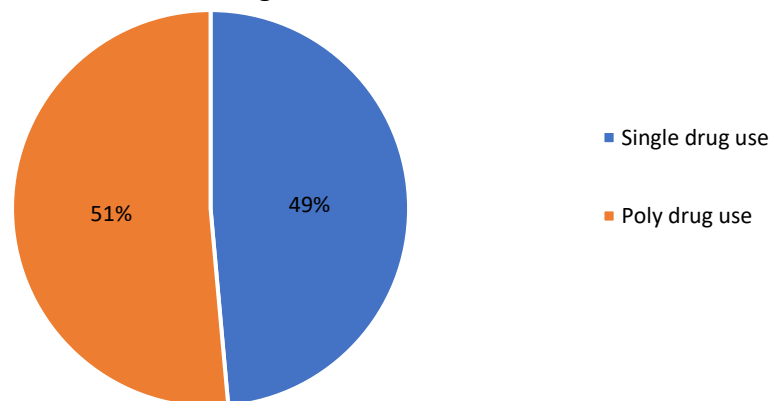


*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

### ***Drug Treatment Profile***

During 2020, there was a near equal distribution of inmates being treated for either single or poly drug use (See Figure 93).

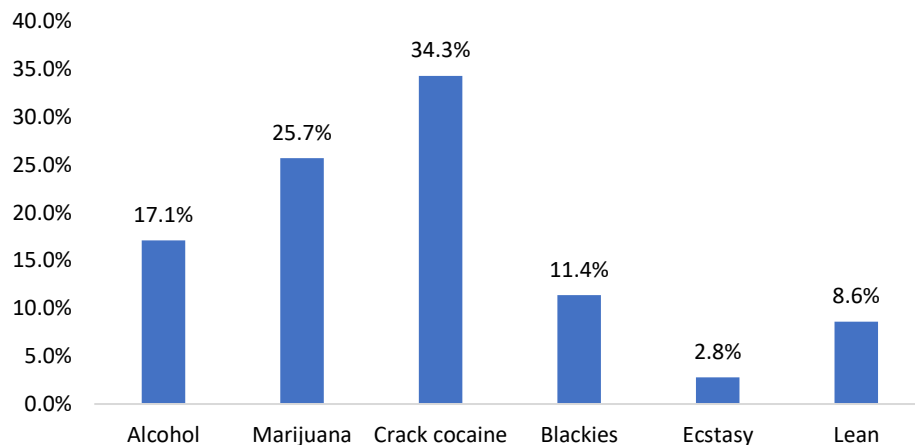
Figure 93: Persons Seeking Treatment for Single Drug and Single Drug Use from the IDRC Programme in 2020



*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

Figure 94 presents the primary drugs for which treatment was sought from the IDRC programme during 2020. From the Chart it can be seen that crack cocaine was the most common, accounting for approximately one-third of inmates receiving drug treatment. This was followed by marijuana and alcohol respectively. Fewer persons sought treatment for blackies, lean<sup>8</sup> and ecstasy.

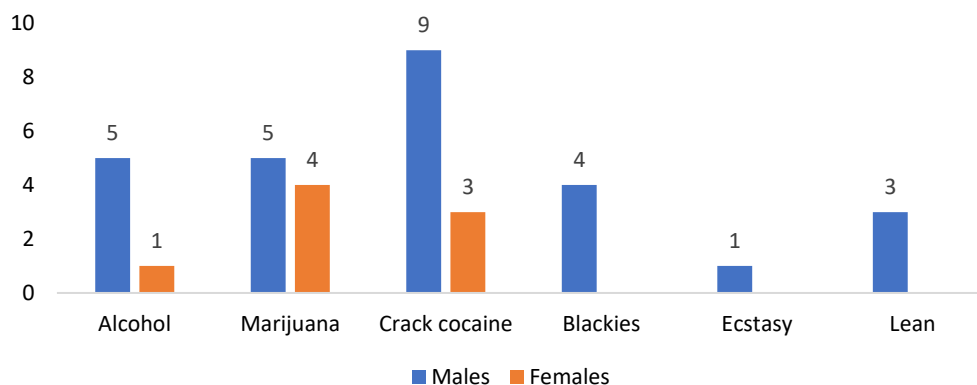
Figure 94: Primary Drugs for Which Treatment was Sought in the IDRC Programme in 2020



Source: Barbados Prison Service

When the primary drug data was considered by gender, the findings presented in Figure 95 reveal that crack cocaine was the most common drug motivating the need for treatment among males. For women, marijuana was most common. For both genders, crack cocaine, marijuana and alcohol were the top three primary substances.

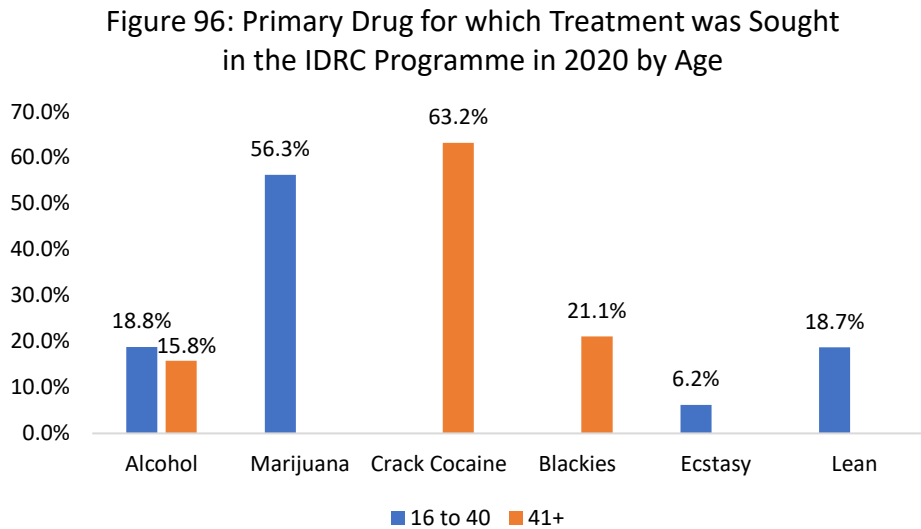
Figure 95: Primary Drug for which Treatment was Sought in the IDRC Programme in 2020 by Gender



Source: Barbados Prison Service

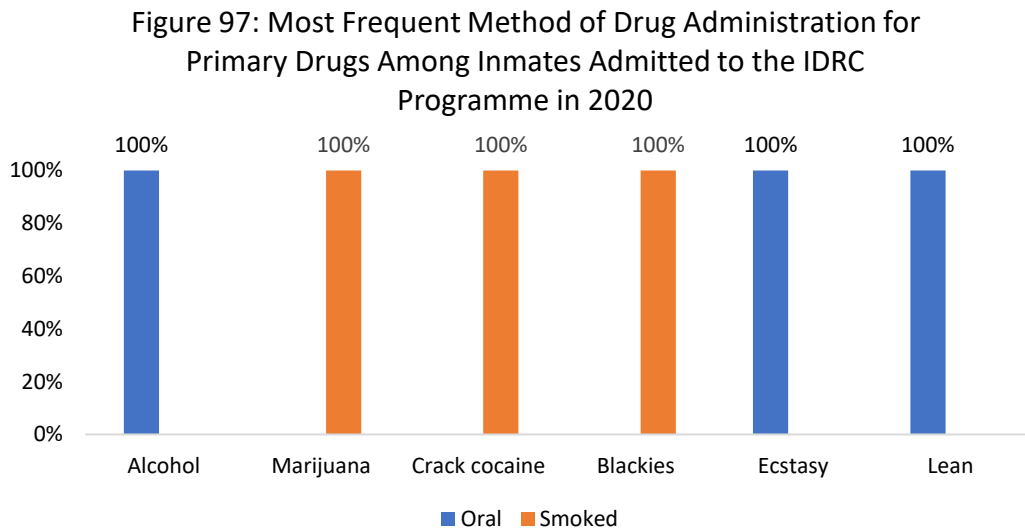
<sup>8</sup> Lean also known as “Purple Drank” or “Sizzurp” is a mixture of codeine cough syrup, soda and hard candy – typically sprite and Jolly Rancher.

Figure 96 reveals that crack cocaine was the main drug for which treatment was sought among persons ages 41 and over. In contrast, marijuana was the primary substance motivating the need for treatment among those between the ages of 16 and 40.



Source: Barbados Prison Service

With respect to the method of administration for inmates’ primary drugs, Figure 97 shows that all of the persons seeking treatment for marijuana, crack cocaine and blackies reported “smoking” these substances. Alternately, all of those treated for alcohol, ecstasy and lean consumed these substances orally.



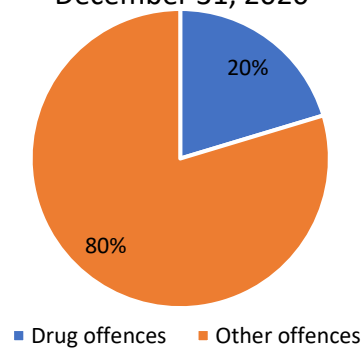
Source: Barbados Prison Service

## 5. Supply Control

### 5.1 Barbados Police Service

The Barbados Police Service (BPS) recorded 7079 offences for the period January 1 to December 31, 2020. Of these, one-fifth (20%) were drug-related (See Figure 98).

Figure 98: Distribution of Drug vs Other Offences recorded by the Barbados Police Service for the Period January 1 to December 31, 2020

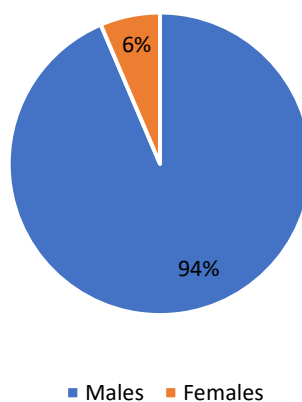


Source: Barbados Police Service

#### **Demographic Profile of Drug Offenders**

Figures 99, 100 and 101 reveal that during 2020, most persons charged with drug offences were Barbadian males under the age of 35. Figure 100 also shows that the percentage of drug offenders increased with age, peaking in the 25 to 29 age group and then steadily declining thereafter.

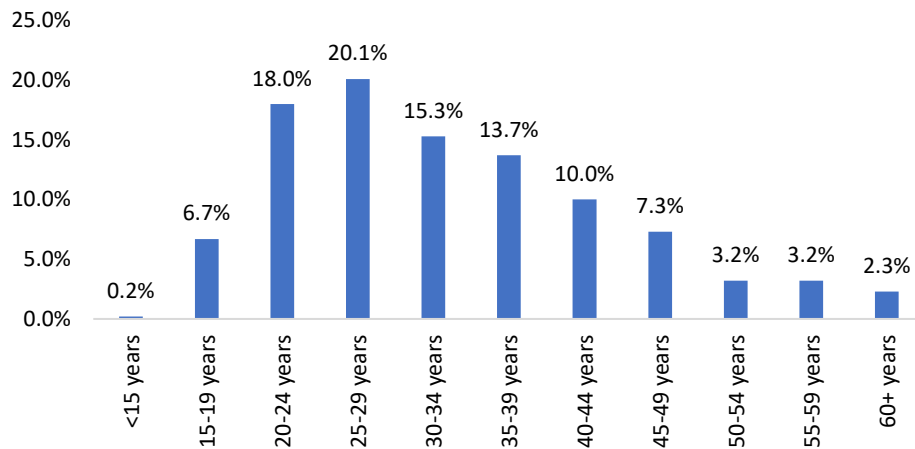
Figure 99: Gender Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences in 2020



Source: Barbados Police Service

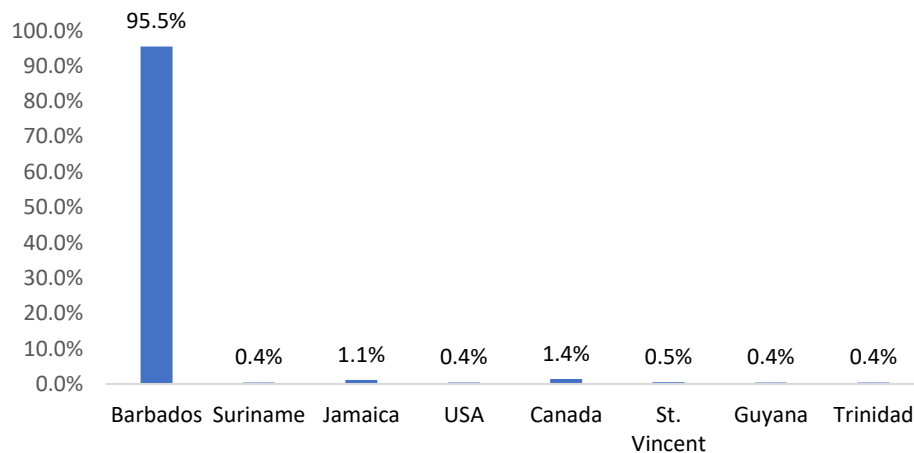


Figure 100: Age Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences during 2020



Source: Barbados Police Service

Figure 101: Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences in 2020 by Nationality

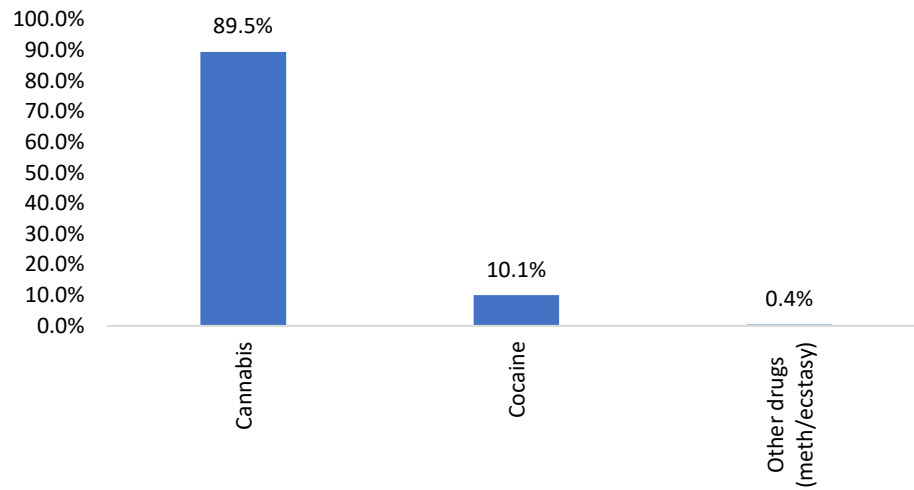


Source: Barbados Police Service

### Drug Offences by Drug Type

Figure 102 presents the distribution of all drug offences recorded in 2020 by drug type. From the Chart, it can be seen that cannabis offences were the most numerous. This corresponds with the data from previous years.

Figure 102: Distribution of Drug Offences by Drug Type  
for the Period January 1 to December 31, 2020

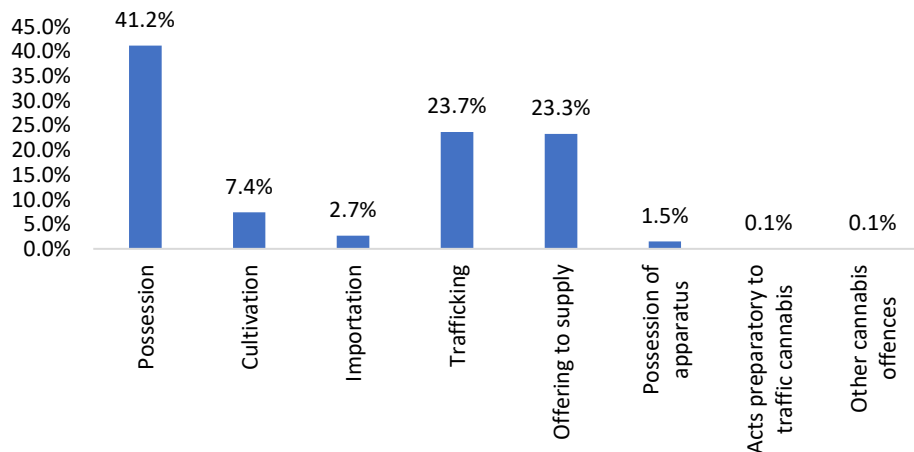


Source: Barbados Police Service

### Cannabis Offences

The offences within each drug type were analysed separately. Figure 103 presents the distribution of Cannabis offences. The Chart shows that “Possession”, “Trafficking” and “Offering to Supply” were the most common offences in 2020, and together, they accounted for just under nine out of every 10 (88.2%) offences recorded during period. Of these offences, “Possession” was most numerous (See Figure 103). This is a consistent finding across all BARDIN reports to date and is likely due to “Possession” being a predicate offence which typically accompanies other offences.

Figure 103: Distribution of Cannabis Offences Recorded in  
2020 by Offence Type

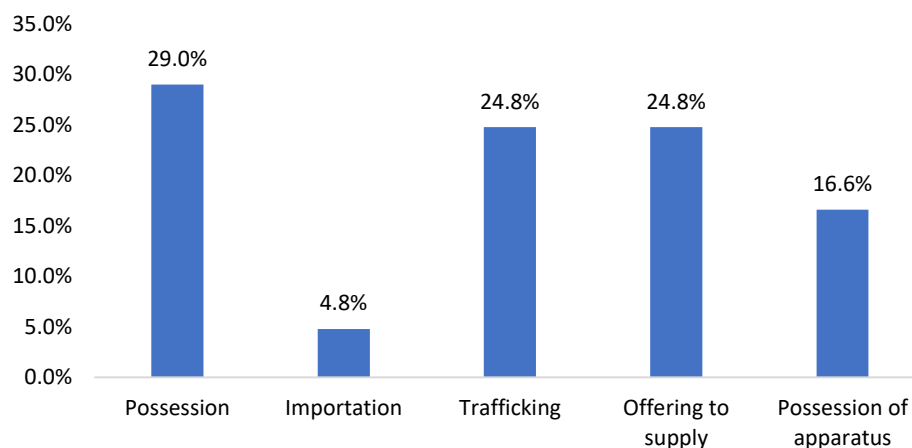


Source: Barbados Police Service

### Cocaine Offences

There were only five categories of cocaine offences recorded during 2020 and Figure 104 shows that their distribution was somewhat more equitable than that for cannabis. While “Possession” was also the most common cocaine offence, it was closely followed by “Trafficking” and “Offering to Supply”. “Possession of Apparatus” and “Importation” were the least common, accounting for 16.6% and 4.8% respectively.

Figure 104: Distribution of Cocaine Offences recorded in 2020 by Offence Type

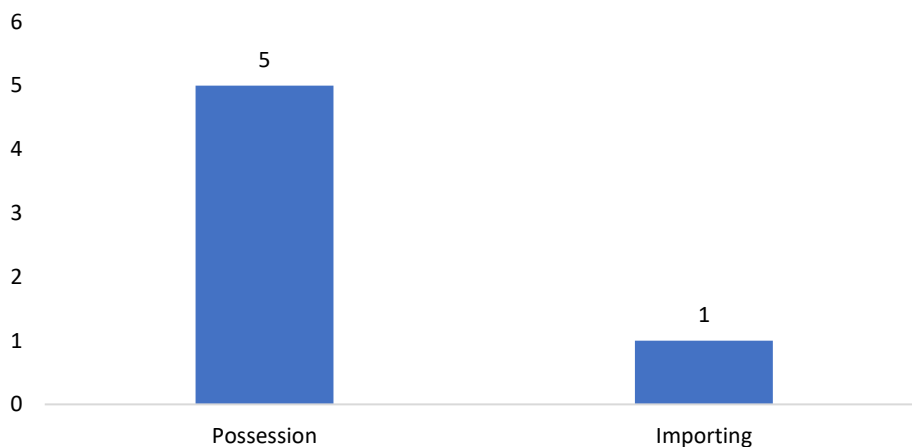


Source: Barbados Police Service

### Other Drug Offences

For Methamphetamine and Ecstasy, only two categories of offences were recorded, and of these, “Possession” was most common (See Figure 105).

Figure 105: Methamphetamine and Ecstasy Offences Recorded in 2020 by Offence Type



Source: Barbados Police Service

## Drug Seizures

Table 3 shows that marijuana continues to be the most commonly seized substance in Barbados. In 2020, it was seized in multiple forms, including compressed, loose, liquid, and plant form (See Table 3). Of particular interest is the seizure of marijuana liquid which has never before been recorded in a BARDIN report. Cocaine, ecstasy and methamphetamine were among the other substances sized during the year (See Table 3). It should be noted that the quantity of methamphetamine seized was unavailable for inclusion in this report.

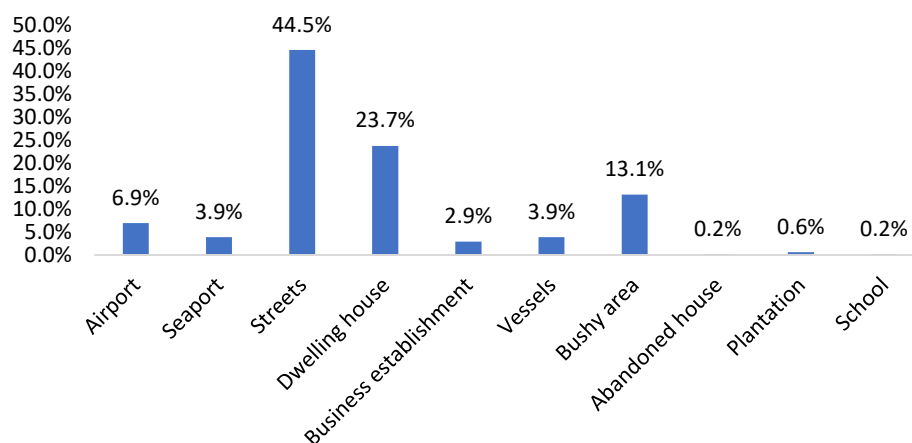
**Table 3: Drug Seizures Recorded by the Barbados Police Service during 2020**

Drug/Substance	Number of Seizures	Quantity
Compressed cannabis	259	5447.756 Kg
Cannabis plants	315	83,091 plants
Loose cannabis (wrappings)	171	1762.619 Kg
Cannabis liquid	2	18.9 Kg
Cocaine	33	50.297 Kg
Ecstasy	1	0.00093 Kg
Methamphetamine	1	Unknown
Other (seeds)	4	0.03465 Kg
Other (stalks)	1	0.2 Kg

Source: Barbados Police Service

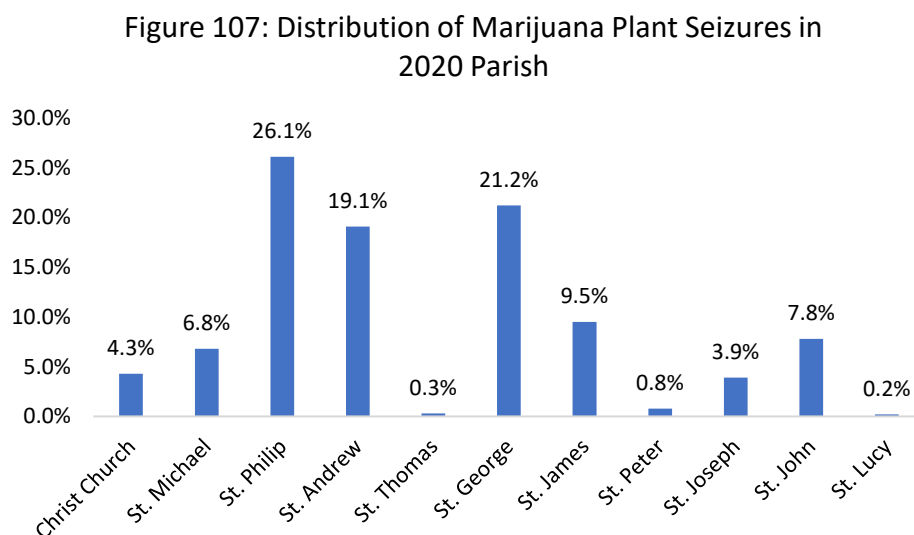
Figure 106 presents the locations where drug seizures took place during 2020. Of the locations on record, “streets”, “dwelling house” and “bushy area” were the most common.

**Figure 106: Distribution of 2020 Drug Seizures by Location of Seizure**



Source: Barbados Police Service

The data regarding cannabis plant seizures was analyzed according to parish. Figure 107 shows that most of the plants on record were seized in St. Philip, St. George and St. Andrew.



*Source: Barbados Police Service*

### ***Street Values of Drugs***

Table 4 presents the street value for various drugs recorded by the Barbados Police Service during the year 2020. As is typically the case, street values are determined based on intelligence reports.

**Table 4: Drug Prices Recorded by the Barbados Police Service for the Period January 1 to December 31, 2020**

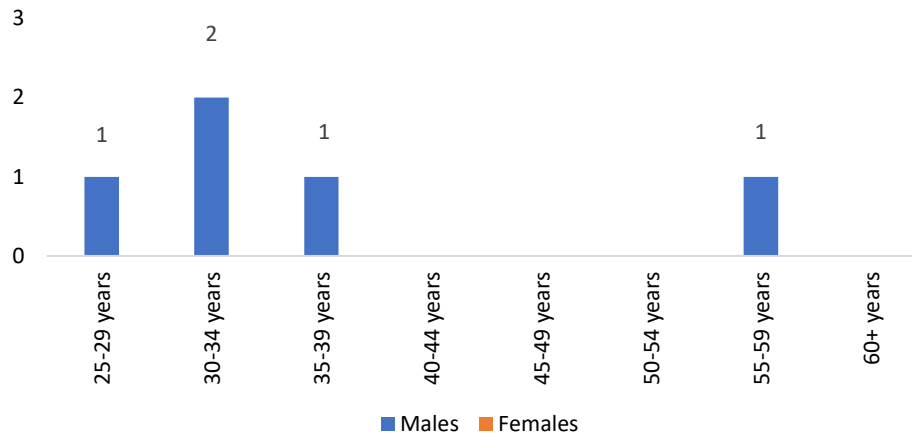
Substance	Estimated Street Value \$
Cannabis	\$4000.00 - \$8000.00 per kg depending on origin or \$5.00 per gram
Cocaine	\$50,000.00 per kg or \$50.00 per gram
Methamphetamine	\$100,000.00 per kg or \$100.00 per gram

*Source: Barbados Police Service*

### ***Deportation Statistics***

A total of nine persons were deported to Barbados during 2020, five (55.5%) of whom were deported for drug-related offences. All persons deported to Barbados for drug-related matters were males and the majority were between the ages of 25 and 39 years (See Figure 108). Only one individual was in the 55 to 59 age category (See Figure 108).

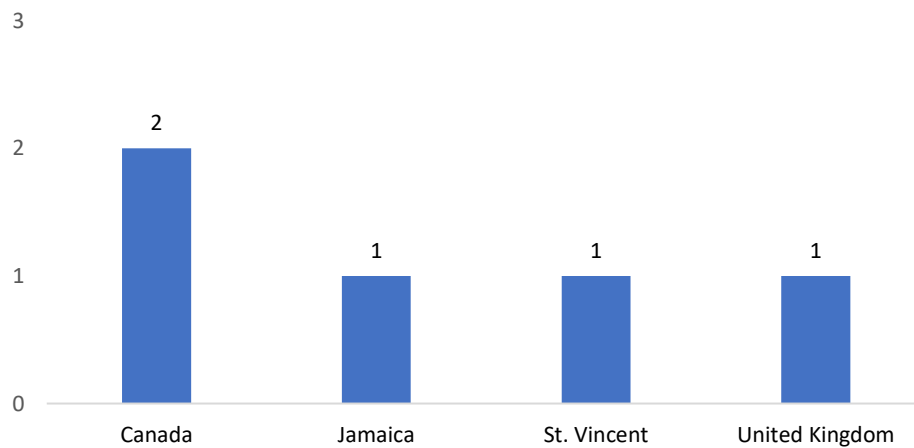
Figure 108: Distribution of Persons Deported to Barbados for Drug-related Matters during 2020



Source: Barbados Police Service

Two of the five drug-related deportees were sent to Barbados from regional countries, namely Jamaica and St. Vincent, while the remaining three were deported from Canada and the United Kingdom (See Figure 109).

Figure 109: Distribution of 2020 Drug-related Deportees by Country



Source: Barbados Police Service

### ***Firearm and Ammunition Seizures***

Table 5 presents the firearm and ammunition seizures recoded by the BPS during 2020.

**Table 5: Firearm and Ammunition Seizures Recorded by the Barbados Police Service during 2020**

<b>Item Seized</b>	<b>Quantity Seized</b>
Firearms	89
Cartridges	1662

*Source: Barbados Police Service*

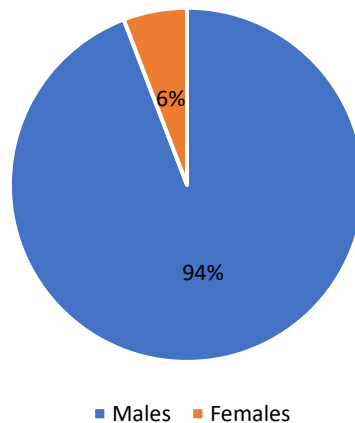
### ***Money Laundering Arrests***

A total of 18 money laundering arrests were recorded in 2020, 9 (50%) of which were drug-related. This finding highlights the link between money laundering and the drug trade.

## 5.2 Barbados Prison Service

A total of 791 persons were incarcerated at Dodds Prison during the period January 1 to December 31, 2020, 94% of whom were male (See Figure 110).

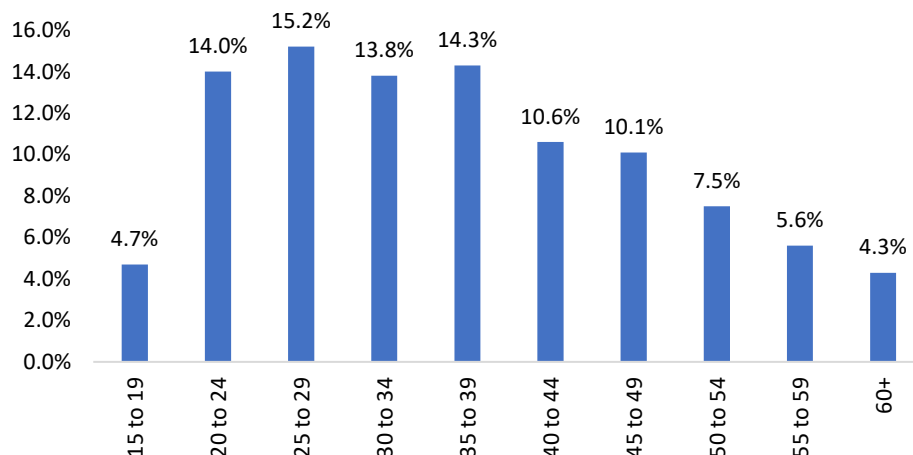
Figure 110: Gender Distribution of Inmates Incarcerated at Dodds Prison during 2020



Source: Barbados Prison Service

Persons of varying ages were incarcerated during the target period. Figure 111 reveals that almost six out of every 10 persons incarcerated were between the ages of 20 and 39. The Chart also shows that the percentage persons 40 years and over steadily declined as age increased.

Figure 111: Age Distribution of Inmates Incarcerated at Dodds Prison in 2020



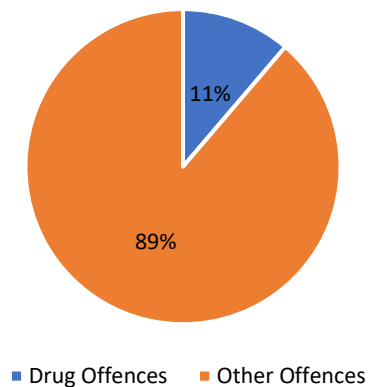
Source: Barbados Prison Service



### ***Drug-related Incarcerations***

Of the 791 persons incarcerated at Dodds Prison during 2020, approximately one out of every 10 were incarcerated for drug offences (See Figure 112).

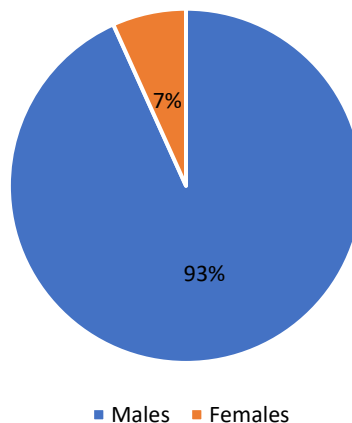
Figure 112: Drug-related Offences versus All Other Offences for which Inmates were Incarcerated at Dodds Prison in 2020



*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

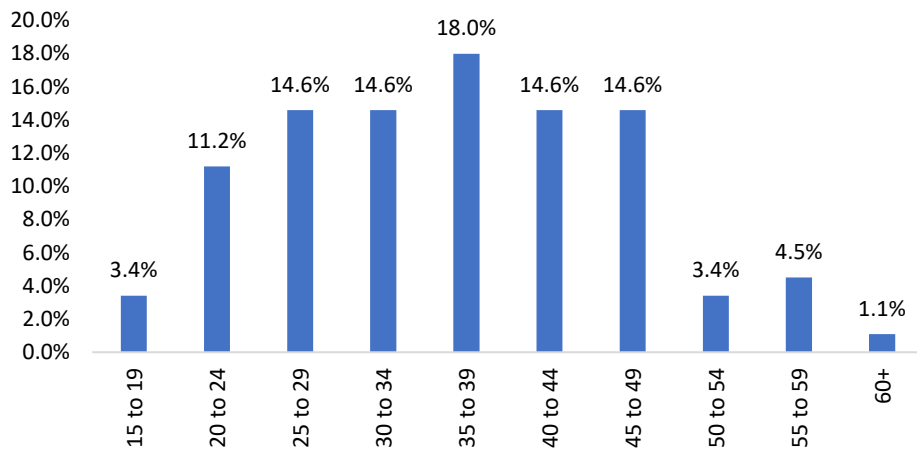
The demographic profile of persons incarcerated for drug offences is similar to that of the wider inmate population presented above, whereby males far outnumbered females and approximately six out of every 10 (58.4%) were between 20 and 49 years of age (See Figures 113 and 114). Figure 114 also reveals that the percentage of persons incarcerated for drug offences increased with age, peaking in the 35 to 39 age category and declining thereafter.

Figure 113: Gender Distribution of Inmates Incarcerated for Drug Offences at Dodds Prison during 2020



*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

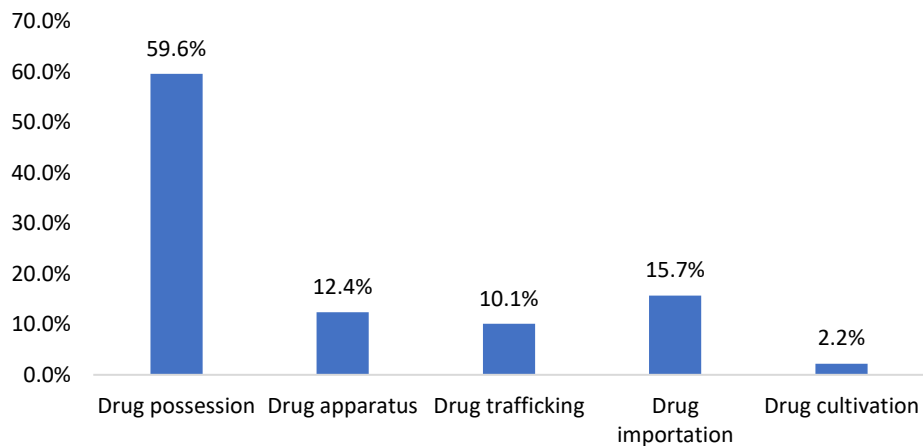
Figure 114: Age Distribution of Persons Incarcerated for Drug Offences at Dodds Prison in 2020



Source: Barbados Prison Service

Figure 115 presents the distribution of drug offences for which persons were incarcerated during the year. From the Chart, it can be seen that Drug Possession was the most common offence, distantly followed by Drug Importation, Possession of Drug Apparatus and Drug Trafficking. Very few persons were incarcerated for Drug Cultivation.

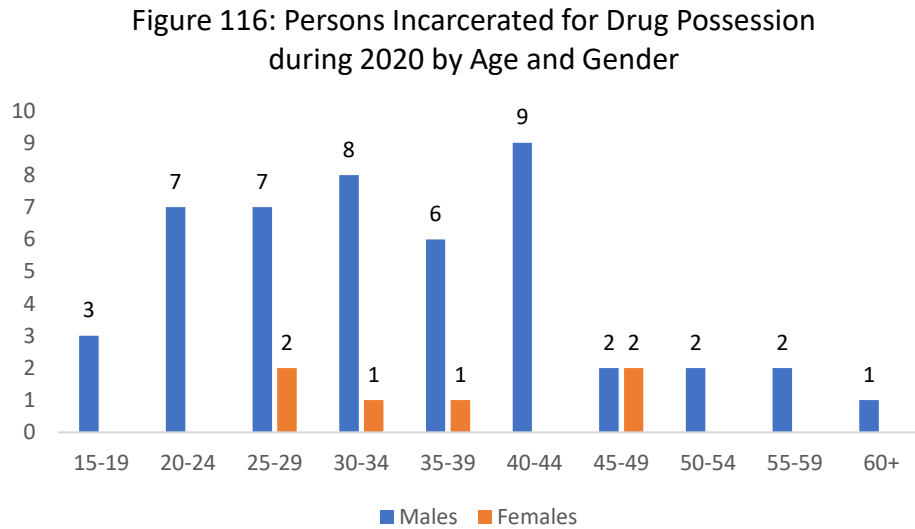
Figure 115: Distribution of Drug Offences for which Inmates were Incarcerated at Dodds Prison in 2020



Source: Barbados Prison Service

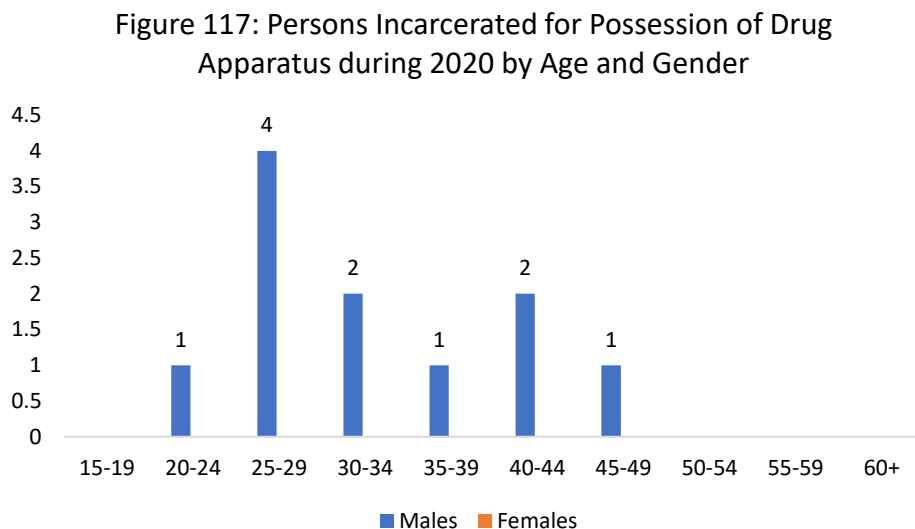
### *Drug-related Incarcerations by Age and Gender*

From Figure 116, it can be seen that males incarcerated for drug possession far outnumbered their female counterparts. With respect to age, most persons incarcerated for this offence were 44 or under (See Figure 116).



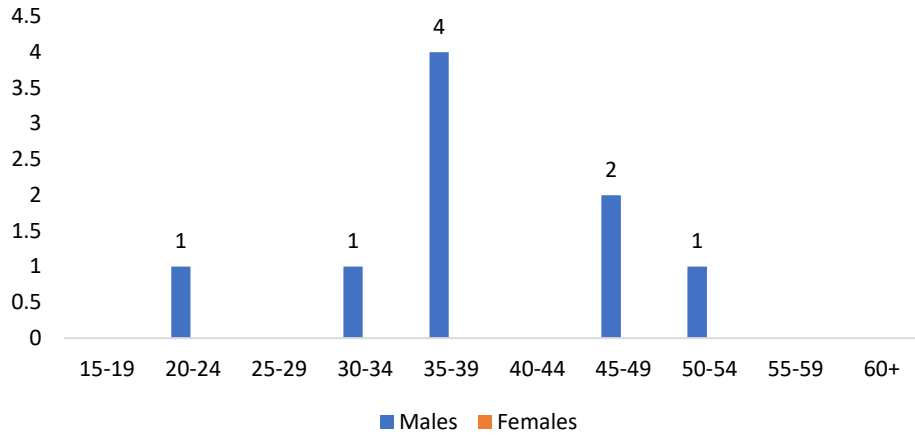
*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

For Possession of Drug Apparatus, Figure 117 reveals that all persons incarcerated for this offence were male and between the ages of 20 and 49. Of the six age groups, the 25-29 age category was the single largest.



*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

Figure 118: Persons Incarcerated for Drug Trafficking during 2020 by Age and Gender

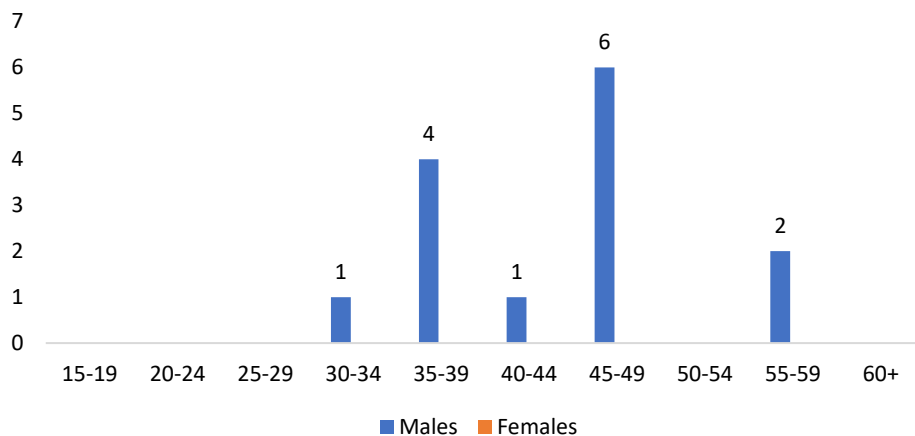


Source: Barbados Prison Service

No females were incarcerated for Drug Trafficking during 2020 (See Figure 118). Of the nine persons incarcerated for this offence, four were in the 35-39 age category, making this the single largest age group in the distribution (See Figure 118).

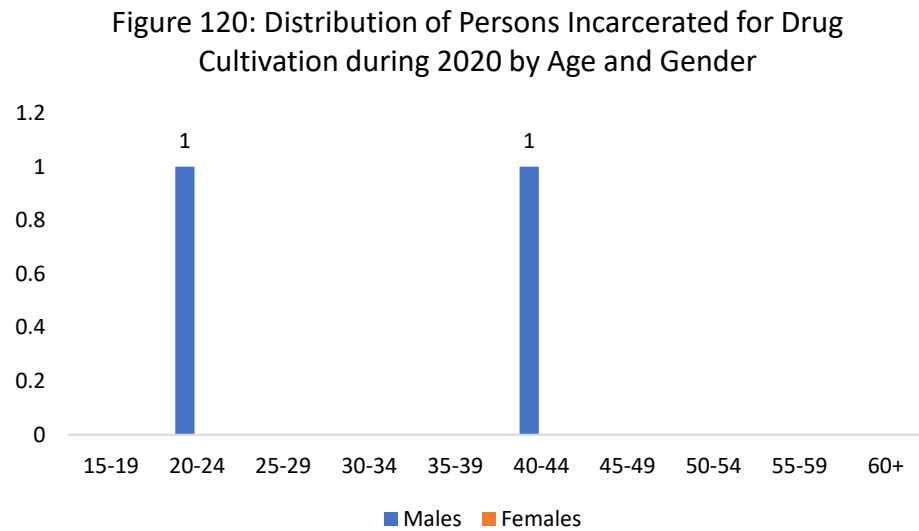
All persons incarcerated for Drug Importation were male and most were between the ages of 30 and 49 (See Figure 119).

Figure 119: Persons Incarcerated for Drug Importation during 2020 by Age and Gender



Source: Barbados Prison Service

Figure 120 reveals that only two persons were incarcerated for Drug Cultivation during 2020. Both were males. One was in the 20 to 24 age category while the other was in the 40 to 44 age group.

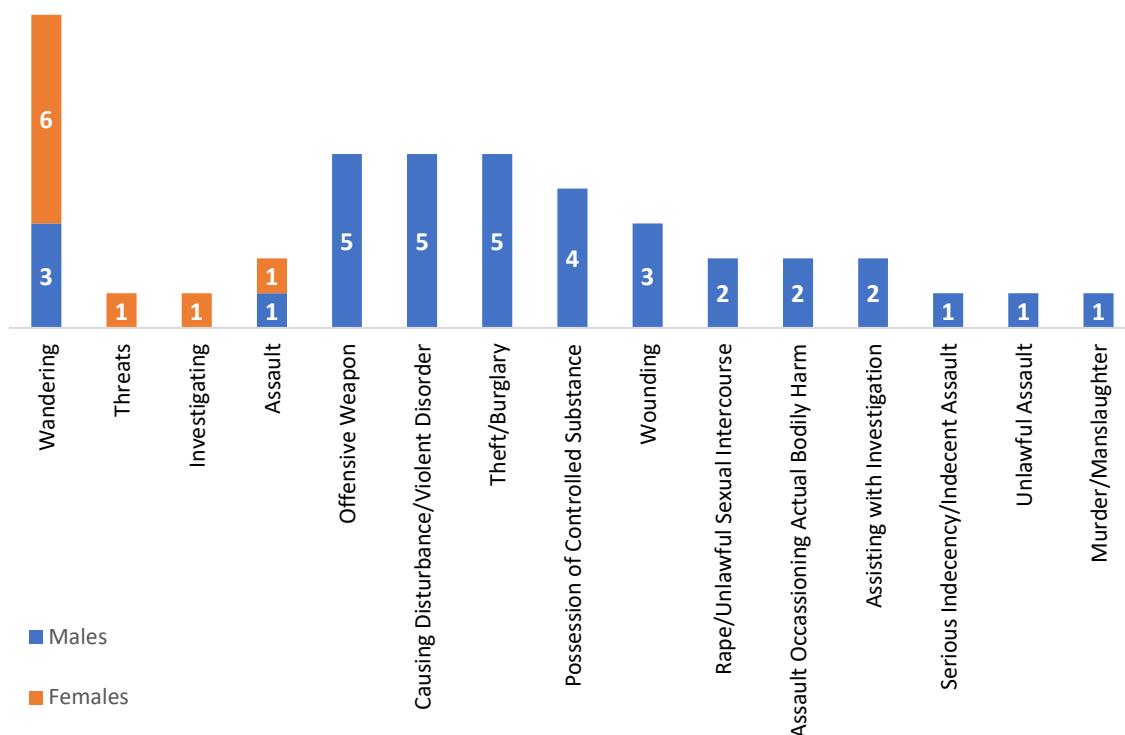


*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

### 5.3 Government Industrial School

A total of 44 offences were recorded among the wards remanded and/or committed to the Government Industrial School (GIS) between January 1 and December 31, 2020. Figure 121 presents the gender breakdown for these offences. From the Chart it can be seen that male wards far outnumbered female wards at the institution during the reporting period. The Chart also shows that “Wandering” was the most common offence among females, and that males were charged/investigated for more serious offences than females.

Figure 121: Gender Distribution of Offences for which Wards were Remanded/Committed to the Government Industrial School Between January 1 and December 31, 2020



Source: Government Industrial School

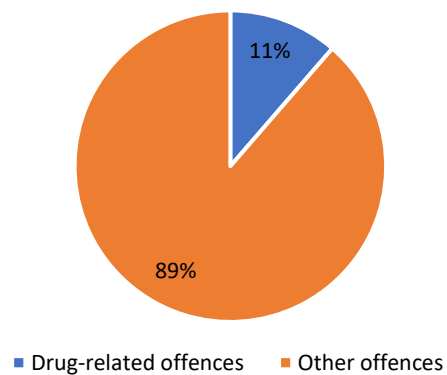
Age-related statistics were not available for inclusion in this Report. However, the NCSA was informed that the majority of wards remanded/committed to GIS during 2020 were between the ages of 13 and 15 years<sup>9</sup> (K. Jordan, personal communication, May 11, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that minors can be committed to the GIS up to the age of 15 and can reside at the institution up to the age of 18. Any individual age 16 and over, who requires a custodial sentence, must be sent to Dodds Prison (K. Jordan, personal communication, May 11, 2022).

### *Drug-Related Offences*

Of the 44 offences recorded by GIS in 2020, five (11.4%) were drug-related (See Figure 122). All five were for “Possession of a Controlled Substance”. In each case, this referred to possession of marijuana (K. Jordan, personal communication, May 11, 2022).

Figure 122: Drug vs. All Other Offences for which Wards were Remanded/Committed to the Government Industrial School between January 1 and December 31, 2020



*Source: Government Industrial School*

While the majority of offences for which wards were remanded/committed to GIS were not drug-related, anecdotal reports suggest that offences such as “Wandering”, “Assault”, “Causing a Disturbance/Violent Disorder”<sup>10</sup> and “Theft/Burglary” are often related to drug use. Such drug use primarily involves marijuana.

### *Drug Testing*

The Magistrate presiding over a ward’s case will, on occasion, request that they be drug-tested. In 2020, seven wards (five males, two females) were tested prior to being committed to GIS. Three of the seven (42.9%) tested positive for marijuana use (two males, one female). Table 6 presents the drug test results for those individuals. It should be noted that no wards tested positive for cocaine use.

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<sup>10</sup> “Causing a Disturbance” often involves fighting at school or in ‘Town’, etc. (K. Jordan, personal communication, May 11, 2022).

**Table 6: Positive Marijuana Test Results for Wards Committed to the Government Industrial School during the Period January 1 to December 31, 2020**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Result</b>
Male 1	56 ng/ml
Male 2	286 ng/ml
Female 3	54 ng/ml

*Source: Government Industrial School*

As this is the first BARDIN report to include this type of data, it cannot be determined if the high percentage of wards returning a positive drug test result is typical. In an effort to gain a greater understanding, the 2019 results are used as a comparison. In 2019, 25 wards were tested prior to being committed to the institution, and only one (4%) tested positive. This individual, a male, tested positive for marijuana use with a reading of 114 ng/ml.

The 2019 findings are markedly different from those of 2020 (4% vs. 42.9%). As such, a pattern cannot be identified and further monitoring is needed.



## 5.4 Financial Intelligence Unit

The Financial Intelligence Unit receives Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) from financial institutions and non-financial designates. As the name suggests, these reports detail suspicious financial activity by individuals, groups and organizations; and they are examined by the FIU in an effort to identify potential crimes such as fraud, terrorist financing and money laundering. Credible reports are forwarded to the Barbados Police Service for investigation.

STR data is included in BARDIN reports due to the strong link between money laundering and the drug trade. However, caution must be exercised when interpreting the data, as not all STRs will result in a police investigation or in persons being charged with a criminal offence. As such, STRs are merely building blocks for investigations.

### ***Suspicious Transaction Reports During 2020***

Of the 230 STRs received by the FIU in 2020, 10 (4.3%) were drug-related (See Table 7). Also of note are the STRs for which a predicate offence could not be easily identified, as police investigations may later reveal a drug link. There were 94 such STRs recorded during the year (See Table 7). This equates to approximately four out of every 10 (40.9%) of the STRs received in 2020.

**Table 7: Suspicious Activity Reports during the Period January 1 to December 31, 2020**

<b>Total Number of Suspicious Transaction Reports in 2017</b>	<b>Number of Drug-Related Suspicious Transaction Reports (%)</b>	<b>Number of Suspicious Transaction Reports for which a Predicate Offense Could Not be Easily Identified (%)</b>
230	10 (4.3%)	94 (40.9%)

*Source: Financial Intelligence Unit*

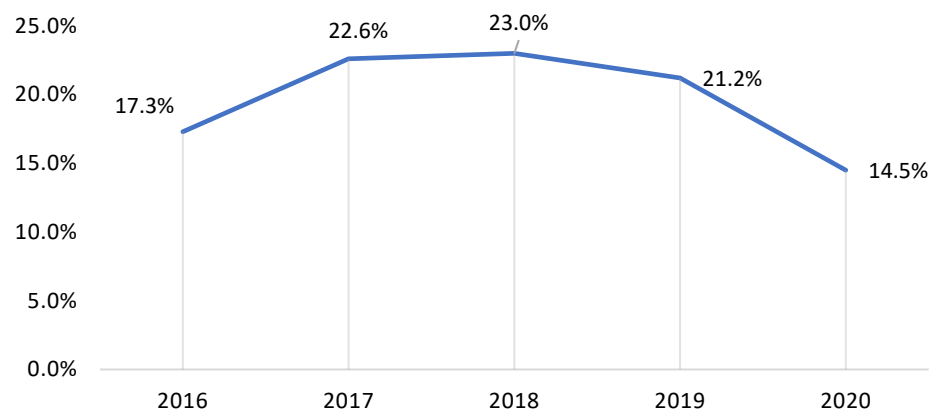
## 6. Trend Analysis

This section presents select trend analysis related to: students testing positive for marijuana use on admission to the Edna Nicholls Centre; admissions for drug-related treatment at the Psychiatric Hospital; persons seeking substance abuse treatment at the SAF and NCSA; and drug offences recorded by the Barbados Police Force. Data regarding the STRs recorded by the FIU is also included. Efforts were made to present five year analyses where possible; however, in some instances only three- and four-year analyses were feasible due to variations in data collection over time.

### ***Edna Nicholls Centre***

Figure 123 presents the percentage of students testing positive for marijuana use on admission to the Edna Nicholls Centre during the period 2016 to 2020. From the Chart it can be seen that, on average, just over one-fifth of students typically test positive on admission; however, the percentage recorded in 2020 is markedly lower. As proposed earlier in the report, this may be due in large part to the pandemic, particularly the national restrictions enforced to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus which may have reduced students' ability to access and use drugs. These included curfews and restrictions on social gathering.

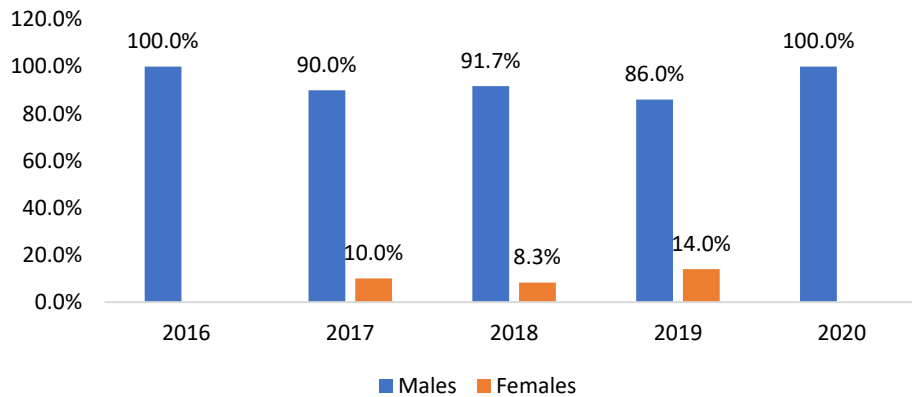
Figure 123: Percentage of Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use at Edna Nicholls Centre between 2016 and 2020



*Source: Barbados Drug Information Network*

Males have traditionally been found to account for the majority, or all, of the students testing positive for marijuana use (See Figure 124). Figure 124 shows that the overall reduction in the percentage of students testing positive in 2020 did not affect this finding.

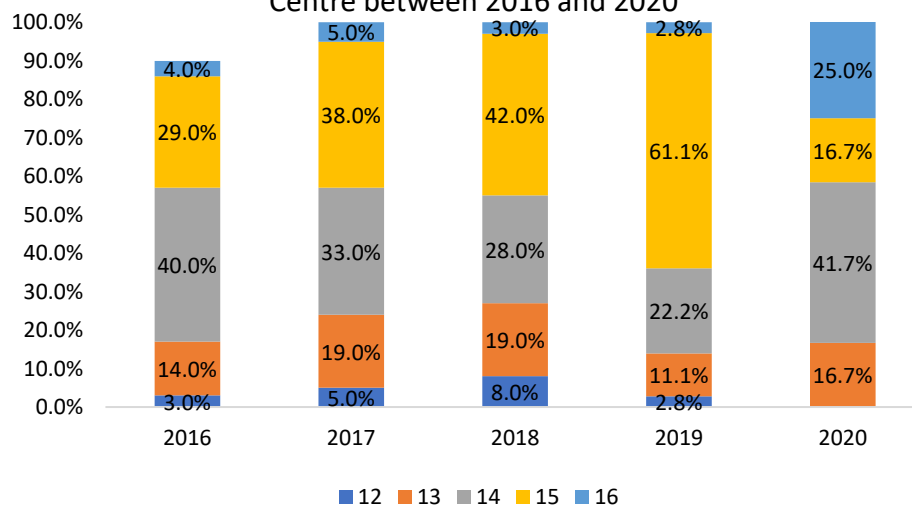
Figure 124: Gender Distribution of Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use on Admission to the Edna Nicholls Centre between 2016 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

With regards to age, Figure 125 shows that between 2016 and 2019, the majority of students testing positive for marijuana use were between 14 and 15 years. While this remained the case in 2020, the distribution is somewhat different, as the percentage of 15 year old students testing positive was lower than in previous years while the percentage of 14 year olds testing positive was higher. Similarly, the percentage of 16 year olds testing positive was also much higher in 2020. Also noticeable is the fact that there were no positive tests recorded among 12 year olds. These changes are likely due to the smaller numbers on which the percentages were based and, by extension, the overall decline in students testing positive.

Figure 125: Age Distribution of Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use on Admission to the Edna Nicholls Centre between 2016 and 2020



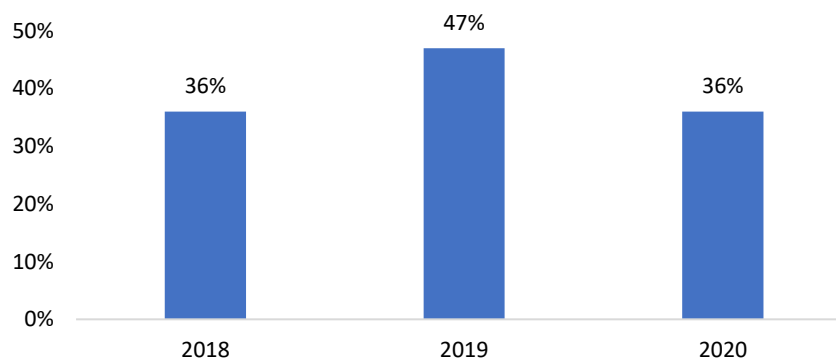
Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

## Psychiatric Hospital

The percentage of persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for drug-related treatment during the period 2018 through 2020 is presented in Figure 126. The Chart shows that 36% of persons admitted to the Hospital in 2018 and 2020 required such treatment; however, the percentage was more than 10 percentage points higher in 2019. Given this distribution, it is not possible to determine if the percentage is increasing or decreasing over time and further monitoring will be needed in this regard. Nevertheless, the data does suggest that more than one-third of the patients admitted during the target period required treatment due to drug-related issues.

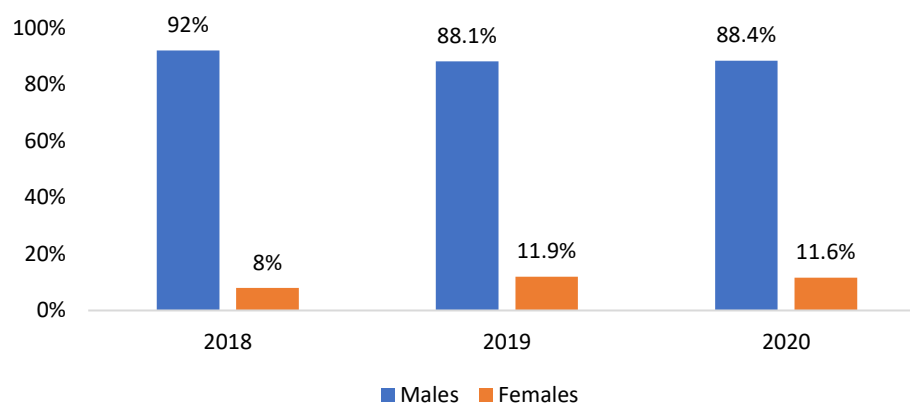
Figure 127 reveals that males accounted for approximately nine out of every 10 such admissions during the three-year period. Unfortunately, differences in data collection prevented age-related analysis.

Figure 126: Percentage of Patients Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for Drug-Related Treatment between 2018 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 127: Gender Distribution of Patients Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for Drug-related Treatment between 2018 and 2020

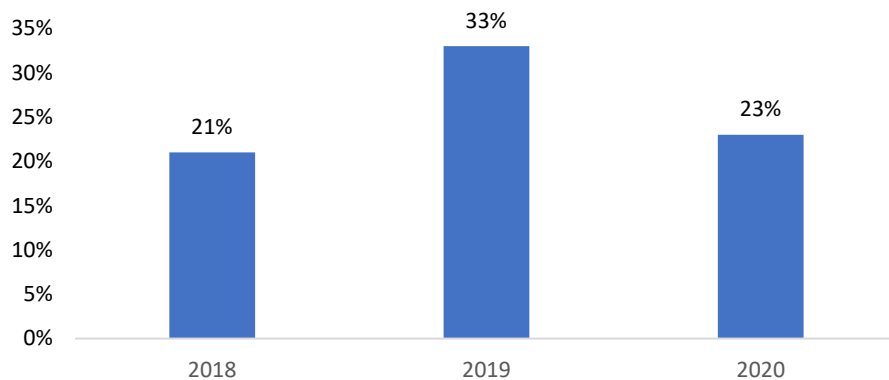


Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Comorbid diagnoses including a substance use disorder continue to be a common feature among persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital. Between one-fifth and one-third of those admitted to the

hospital between 2018 and 2020 had such diagnoses (See Figure 128). The distribution of percentages presented in Figure 128 makes it impossible to identify a trend at this time. Therefore, further monitoring will be needed to determine if this percentage is increasing, decreasing or remaining approximately the same over time.

Figure 128: Percentage of Patients with Comorbid Diagnoses Including Substance Use Disorders Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital between 2018 and 2020

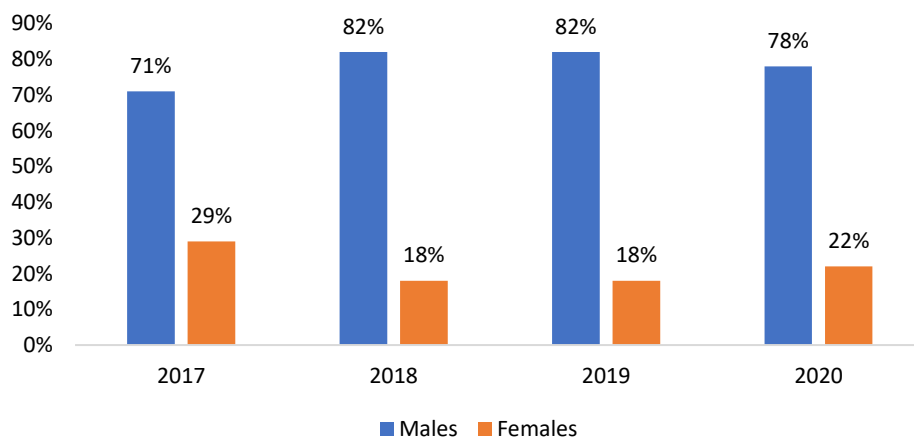


Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

### Substance Abuse Foundation

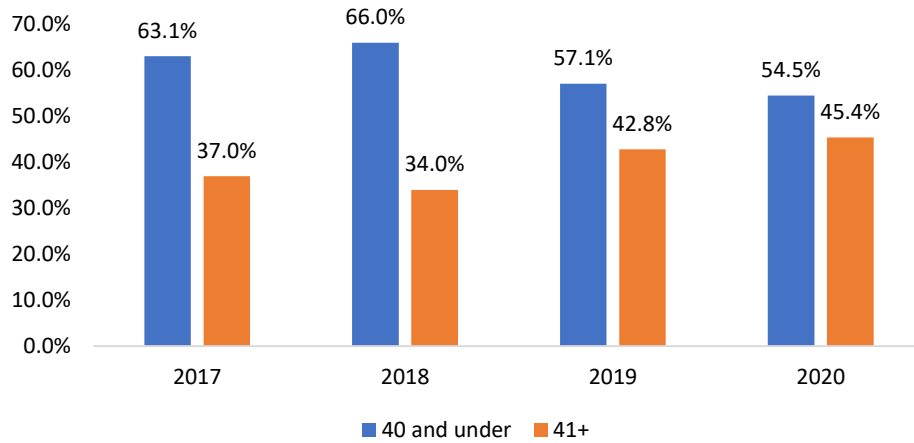
Figure 129 shows that, much like the patients at the Psychiatric Hospital, persons seeking treatment at the SAF are predominantly male. In fact, males accounted for between 7 and 8 out of every 10 admissions during the period 2017 through 2020 (See Figure 129). With regards to age, Figure 130 reveals that, during the same period, more than half of the SAF clients were age 40 or younger.

Figure 129: Gender Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment at the SAF between 2017 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

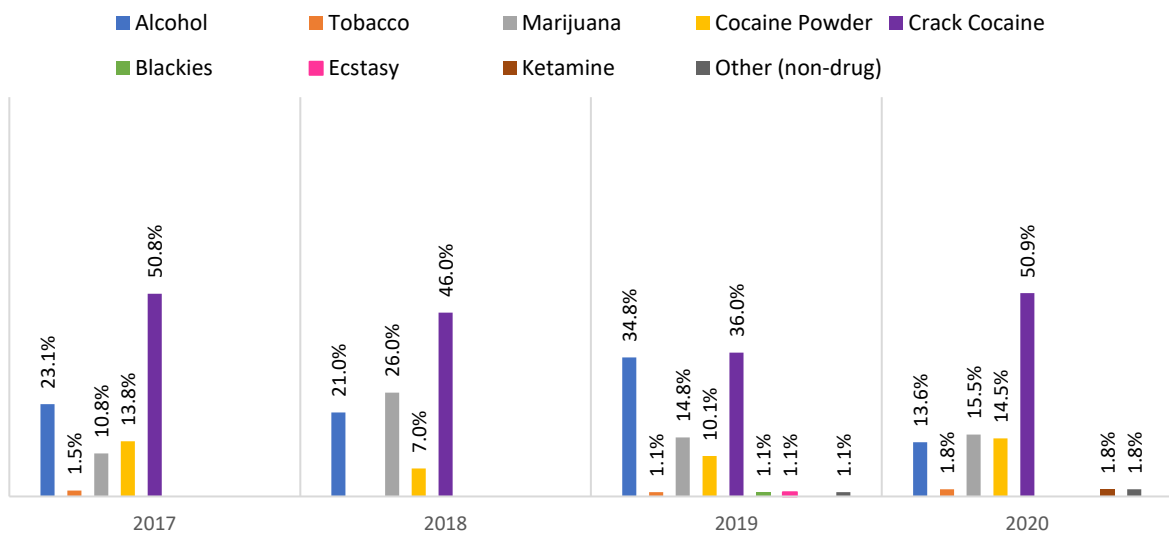
Figure 130: Age Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment at SAF between 2017 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 131 presents the primary drugs for which persons sought treatment at the SAF between 2017 and 2020. In each year, crack cocaine was the most common primary drug (See Figure 131). Other common drugs included alcohol, marijuana and cocaine powder (See Figure 131). The Chart also highlights the ongoing diversification of the local drug situation with persons seeking treatment for ecstasy in 2019 and Ketamine in 2020.

Figure 131: Primary Drugs for which Persons Sought Treatment at SAF between 2017 and 2020

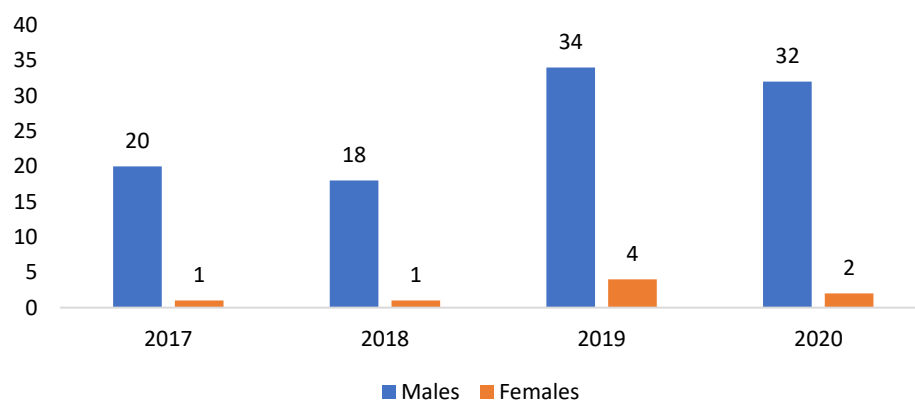


Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

### **National Council on Substance Abuse**

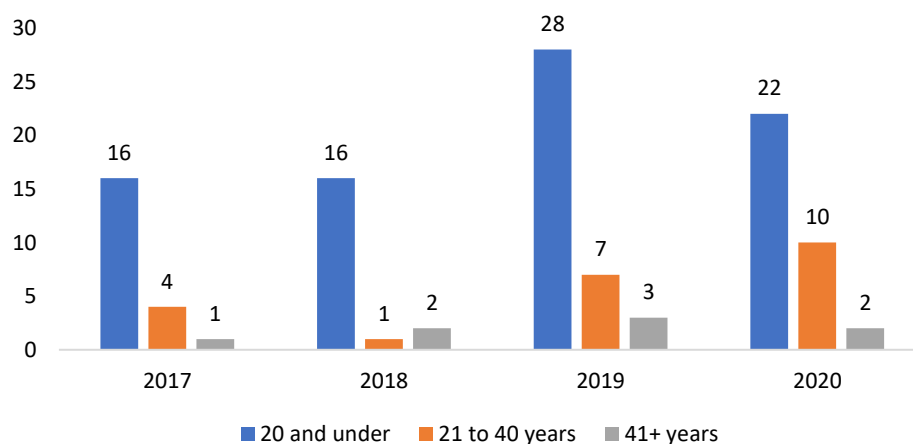
Males and persons 20 years and under accounted for the majority of clients seeking substance abuse treatment at the NCSA between 2017 and 2020 (Sees Figure 132 and 133). During the same period, marijuana was the most common primary drug for which persons sought treatment at the NCSA (See Figure 134). Figure 134 also points to the diversification of the local drug situation with one person seeking treatment for ecstasy in 2020.

Figure 132: Gender Distribution of Persons Receiving Substance Abuse Treatment at NCSA between 2017 and 2020



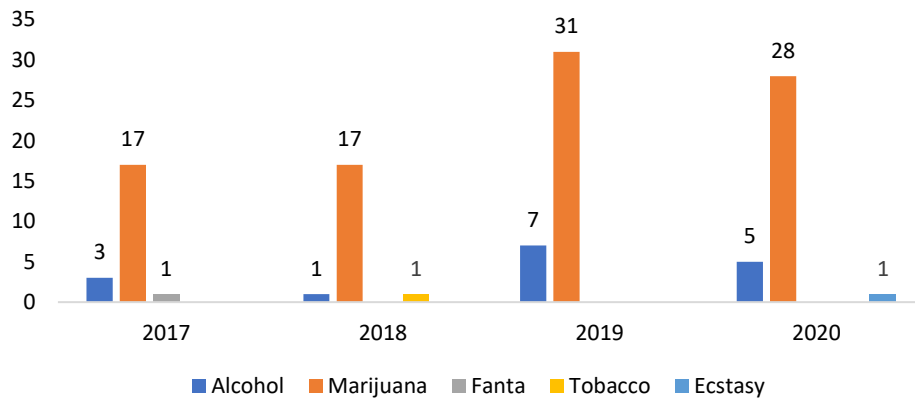
Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 133: Age Distribution of Persons Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment at the NCSA between 2017 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 134: Primary Drugs for which Persons Sought Substance Abuse Treatment at the NCSA between 2017 and 2020

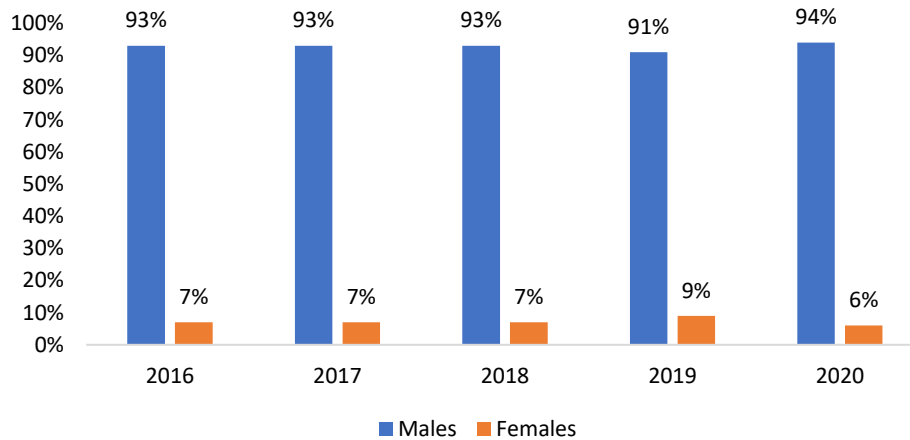


Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

### Barbados Police Service

Figures 135 and 136 reveal that the majority of persons charged with drug offences during the preceding five year period were males between the ages of 20 and 39 years.

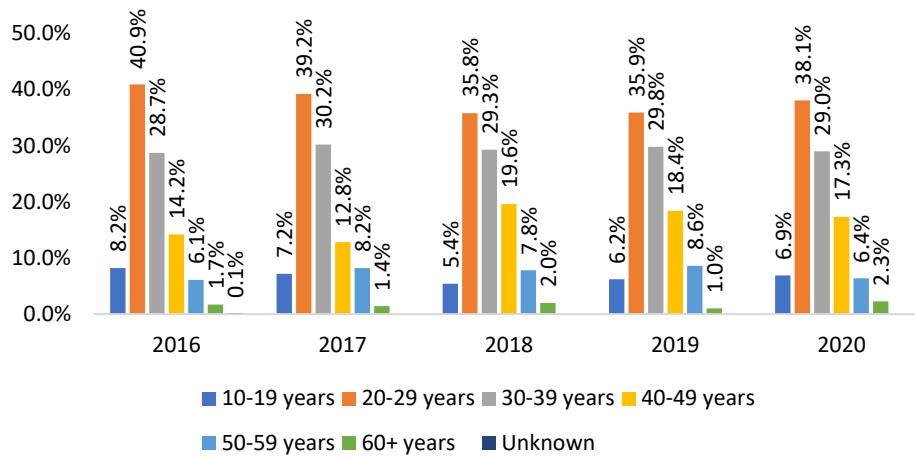
Figure 135: Gender Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences between 2016 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network



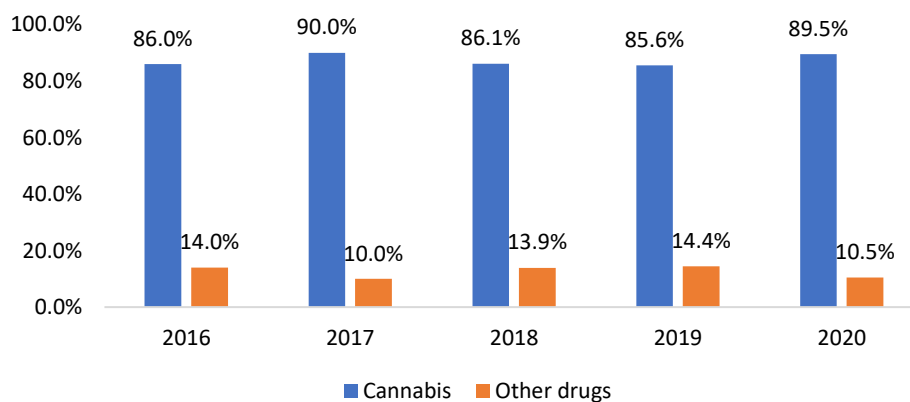
Figure 136: Age Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences between 2016 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

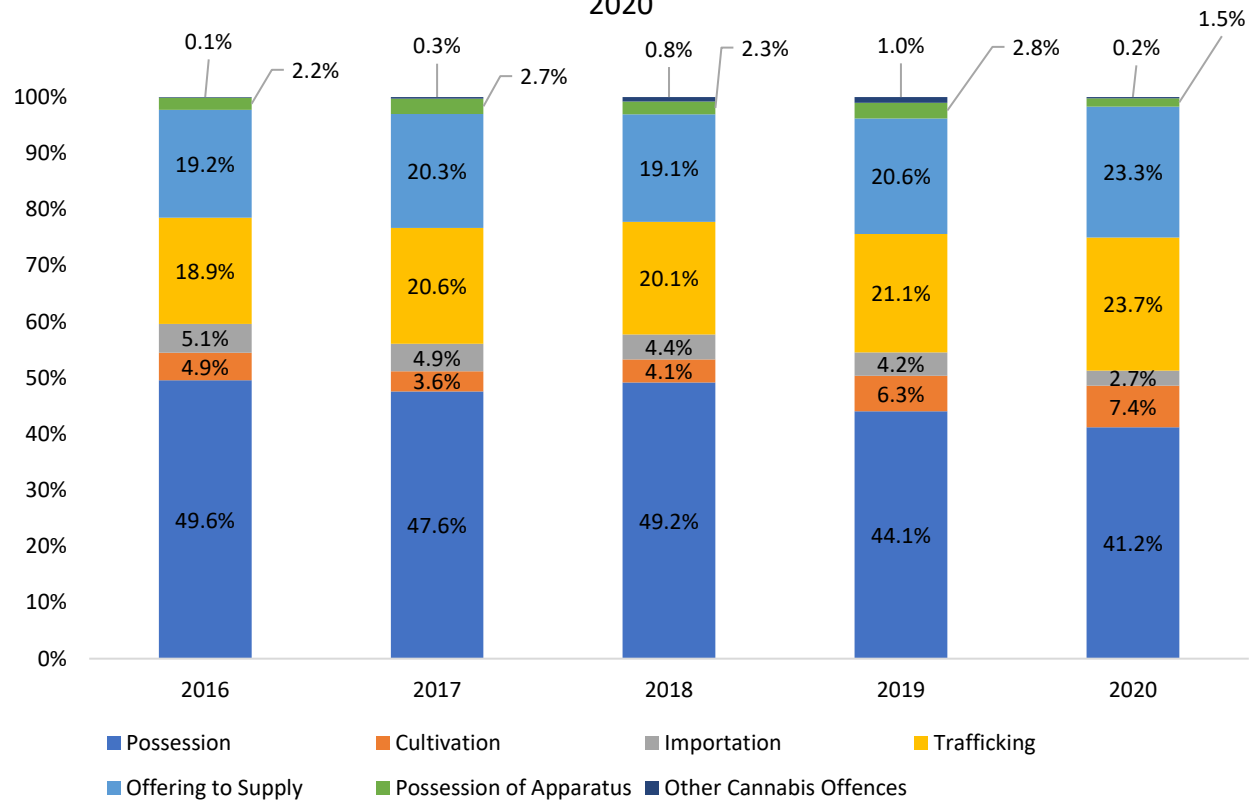
Figures 137 and 138 highlight the fact that during the target period (2016-2020) most persons were charged with cannabis-related offences, with Possession of Cannabis being the single most common offence on record each year. This was followed by Trafficking and Offering/Intent to Supply (See Figure 138). Other cannabis offences were notably less common (See Figure 138).

Figure 137: Distribution of Drug Offences by Drug Type Recorded by the Barbados Police Service for the period 2016 through 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 138: Distribution of Cannabis Offences Recorded between 2016 and 2020



Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Table 8: Drug Seizures Recorded by the Barbados Police Service between 2016 and 2020

Drug/Substance	Quantity				
	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Compressed cannabis	5447.756 Kg	4226.92 Kg	4512.5 Kg	2402.1 Kg	2959.29 Kg
Cannabis plants	83,091	59,692	3,487	16,067	27,602
Loose cannabis (wrappings)	1762.619 Kg	0.89 Kg	-	-	-
Cannabis liquid	18.9 Kg	-	-	-	-
Cocaine	50.297 Kg	46.59 Kg	40.9	126.2 kg	172.345 Kg
Ecstasy (tablets)		13 tablets	-	2000	-
Ecstasy (powdered)	0.00093 Kg	93gm	-	-	-
Methamphetamine	Unknown	1 tablet	0.02 kg	1.6 kg	-
Other (seeds)	0.03465 Kg	-	-	-	-
Other (stalks)	0.2 Kg	-	-	-	-

Source: Barbados Drug Information Network

Table 8 reveals that while cannabis and cocaine were the drugs most commonly seized by the Barbados Police Service during the period 2016 through 2020, from 2017 onwards there were seizures of non-traditional substances such as ecstasy and methamphetamine.

### ***Financial Intelligence Unit***

Table 9 presents STR data for the period 2017 through 2020. From the Table it can be seen that the percentage of STRs which were drug-related ranged between 4.1% and 6.3%. STRs for which a predicate offence could not be easily identified accounted for between three and six out of every 10 STRs on record during the same period.

**Table 9: Suspicious Activity Reports Recorded between 2017 and 2020**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Suspicious Transaction Reports</b>	<b>Number of Drug-Related Suspicious Transaction Reports (%)</b>	<b>Number of Suspicious Transaction Reports for which a Predicate Offence Could Not be Easily Identified (%)</b>
2017	278	17 (6.1%)	165 (59.3%)
2018	428	27 (6.3%)	138 (32.2%)
2019	267	11 (4.1%)	141 (52.8%)
2020	230	10 (4.3%)	94 (40.9%)

*Source: Barbados Drug Information Network*

## 7. Discussion

The current report reveals that traditional drugs such as alcohol, marijuana and cocaine (mainly crack cocaine) continued to dominate the treatment and supply control sectors in Barbados during 2020. However, it also highlights the ongoing diversification of the local drug situation. As in previous years, there were sporadic reports of methamphetamine and ecstasy-related arrests and seizures. Likewise, there were also increased reports of persons seeking treatment for ecstasy – primarily from the Psychiatric Hospital's Drug Rehabilitation Unit and the NCSA. This is of particular note, as this is the first BARDIN report to include persons seeking treatment for ecstasy at either of these agencies.

Also of concern is the fact that there were two instances in which persons sought treatment for Ketamine at the SAF. Additional evidence of diversification lies in the reports of lifetime and past month drug use obtained from treatment seekers. Such reports highlight the use of a wide range of substances, including Speed, LSD, Scotties, Mushrooms and prescription medications such as Benzodiazepines, just to name a few.

In addition to the emergence of new substances, the report also suggests that males and younger persons are more likely to use, and become addicted to, non-traditional drugs in Barbados.

### ***Issues Regarding Emerging Drugs***

Many of the emerging drugs in Barbados are highly addictive and can have dangerous side effects. This has specific implications for professionals in the demand reduction (prevention and treatment) and medical fields. Research has shown that higher levels of risk perception are associated with lower levels of drug use (Mendez-Ruiz, Ortiz-Moreno, Eligio-Tejada, Yáñez-Castillo & Villegas-Pantoja, 2018; NCSA, 2020; Yeomans-Maldonado & Patrick, 2015). As such, prevention professionals should incorporate the new substances in their education initiatives and ensure that they highlight the dangers associated with these drugs. Likewise, they should also include programmes tailored specifically to males and young persons, given their increased likelihood of using such substances.

Similarly, the emergence of new drugs may require the introduction of new treatment modalities to ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of the approaches used with persons who have substance use disorders. With regards to health, first responders and medical professionals need to be apprised of the new drugs being used on island, including the signs and symptoms of overdose as well as the potential chronic illnesses that may arise from their use. This will aid in their ability to effectively manage the health of drug users and respond to emergent situations.

In addition to public health concerns, the changing patterns of drug use also pose challenges for interdiction efforts. It is critical that law enforcement personnel and other professionals working in the supply control sector be aware of emerging substances, including their appearance and effects, and have the necessary tools to facilitate their accurate identification. Without the requisite training or tools, new and potentially dangerous drugs can go undetected and make their way into the local drug market.

The Early Warning System is a useful tool which can keep professionals in all fields apprised of emerging drugs and changes in drug use patterns. By design, it allows for rapid information sharing which in turn can facilitate a speedy response. Initially launched in 2019, the EWS faced a number of challenges which hindered its progress. One such challenge was the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020. National directives were issued in an effort to manage the local effects of the pandemic. These included national shutdowns, curfews, work-from-home orders and other public health regulations which affected the work and overall capacity of many of the EWS stakeholders. One such stakeholder is the Barbados Police Service. Throughout the pandemic many of the Service's resources were directed towards policing breaches of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another major challenge affecting the EWS, is the fact that the Forensic Sciences Centre (FSC) has only been able to conduct presumptive/field testing for an extended period of time due to environmental issues which prevented laboratory analysis. Presumptive/field tests indicate the potential nature of a substance but are unable to scientifically confirm its chemical composition. The ability to analyze and identify substances is key to the successful functioning of an EWS. Remediation work at the FSC is ongoing and is projected to be completed in the near future.

Given its obvious utility, efforts should be made to revive the EWS. To facilitate this, consideration can be given to revising the System's approach to data collection and information dissemination. In this regard, one potential data source can be drug-testing results from persons seeking treatment at emergency medical facilities, particularly in cases involving motor vehicular and other accidents. Such data would also be a useful addition to BARDIN.

### ***Age and Gender Considerations***

Overall, males seeking substance abuse treatment continue to outnumber their female counterparts. This has been a consistent observation since the inception of BARDIN. However, it does not suggest that the need for treatment is greater among men. Rather, it has been established internationally that, women experience barriers which often reduce their ability to access substance abuse treatment despite their need for such services (Schamp, Simonis, Roets, Van Havere, Gremaux, & Vanderplasschen, 2021). This is a global phenomenon and Barbados is no exception.

The NCSA is currently conducting a study to investigate the barriers to treatment among women in Barbados, and preliminary findings suggest that the following are among the factors hindering women's use of treatment services on the island: Stigma surrounding female drug use and addiction; lack of knowledge about addiction at the individual, family and community levels; lack of awareness about treatment options and the treatment process; having a drug using partner; lack of child care; and competing needs, such as the need for housing and food, just to name a few.

The fact that treatment services are underused by women in Barbados is concerning, as women have been shown to develop addiction much more quickly than men and are more likely to experience the negative side effects of drug use, including overdose and death (Becker, McClellan, & Reed, 2017). As such, efforts should be made to incorporate the findings from the Council's study into evidence-based policies and programmes aimed at increasing the uptake of treatment by women on the island.

While persons of all ages seek treatment for substance abuse in Barbados, BARDIN data suggests that the demand for treatment is greatest among persons age 40 and under. This finding coincides with the data regarding drug offenders. The majority of persons charged with drug offences in Barbados are also under the age of 40; and like treatment seekers, they are also typically male. In an attempt to address their high level of involvement in the local drug scene, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation professionals should pay special attention to persons age 40 and under – particularly males – through programmes tailored to meet their specific needs.

### ***Economic Impact of the Drug Situation***

The potential economic impact of drug addiction and drug offending becomes apparent when the age of drug offenders and persons seeking treatment is compared to the age distribution of the labour force in Barbados. Data from the Barbados Labour Force Survey conducted during the second quarter of 2021 suggests that, at the time of the survey, more than half (53.5%) of the labour force was 44 years of age or younger (Barbados Statistical Service, 2021). When persons are in treatment, or while they are incarcerated, they are unable to work or contribute meaningfully to the economy, thus resulting in lost productivity (International Narcotics Control Board, 2014). Lost productivity translates into fiscal losses which in turn reduce a country's overall economic performance (International Narcotics Control Board, 2014). Concerns regarding lost productivity are underscored by the large proportion of treatment seekers who are unemployed at the time of intake, thereby suggesting that they have not been contributing to the economy for a prolonged period of time.

It should be noted that the economic impact of the drug problem is not solely related to lost productivity. Consideration must also be given to the financial burden associated with the cost of treatment and incarceration borne by the state. For example, a January 2020 Loop News article quoted the then Minister of Home Affairs, the Hon. Edmund Hinkson M.P., as stating that the cost of incarceration was \$32,000 per inmate per year (Ellis, 2020). A total of 89 inmates were incarcerated for drug offences in 2020. Based on the annual incarceration cost per inmate, the estimated total cost of incarcerating all drug offenders in 2020 is approximately \$2, 848,000. While this is an imprecise estimate, it still suggests the magnitude of the incarceration cost shouldered by the state.

Drug Treatment Courts (DTCs) are a viable alternative to incarceration which can help to reduce incarceration-related expenses and reduce the likelihood of recidivism among participants. In fact, research has shown that for every \$1 USD spent on DTCs, \$4 USD is saved on incarceration- and health-related costs (Stanford Network on Addiction Policy, n.d.). Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 154 independent DTC evaluations suggests that DTC participation reduces recidivism rates from 50% to 38%, with the effects lasting for up to three years (Mitchell, Wilson, Eggers & MacKenzie, 2012). Results such as these underscore the value of DTCs and highlight the need for the Barbados DTC to be restarted and adequate funding to be allotted to facilitate its staffing, operation, monitoring and evaluation.

### ***Poly Drug Use and Comorbid Diagnoses***

The current report shows that poly drug use and comorbid diagnoses continued to be common among persons seeking treatment for substance use disorders in 2020. The treatment of persons who use multiple substances can be challenging as they often have complex medical, psychiatric and social needs and require approaches that simultaneously focus on all substances involved in order to improve their treatment outcomes (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2021). As such, poly drug users typically require multi-faceted treatment plans which may include various combinations of withdrawal, psychological, and/or pharmacological treatment as well as monitoring (SAMHSA, 2021). In order to adequately meet the needs of poly drug users, treatment centres should be given the support needed to recruit, retrain and retool staff to ensure that they have the requisite skills and knowledge. Partnerships can also be established with other agencies to fill any resource deficits which they may have.

Specialized treatment plans are also needed for persons with comorbid diagnoses. However, there are often gaps between the treatment needed and that received. This occurs for a number of reasons, including (1) a lack of consensus over what constitutes adequate care for persons with comorbid diagnoses, and (2) inadequate screening and assessment which in turn leads to underdiagnosing and inadequate treatment (SAMHSA, 2020). These reduce the likelihood of long-term recovery and are often the result of a lack of relevant training (SAMHSA, 2020). As such, it is imperative that mental health and substance abuse treatment professionals receive appropriate training in the area of co-occurring disorders.

Research suggests that integrated treatment<sup>11</sup> is more effective than treating co-occurring disorders separately i.e. each with its own individual treatment plan (Kelly & Daley, 2013). Therefore, mental health and substance abuse treatment centres should endeavor to provide integrated treatment to clients as needed. To facilitate this, consideration should be given to expanding the services offered by treatment centres and hiring the necessary mental health staff where feasible. In cases where this is not possible, partnerships can be established between mental health and substance abuse treatment centres with a view to developing and implementing coordinated treatment plans that simultaneously address both types of disorders.

### ***Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic***

A comparison of the 2020 data to that from previous years highlights changes in the number of persons reached by agencies working in the demand reduction sector. This is due in large part to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The pandemic resulted in national shutdowns and curfews at various times throughout the year, as well as the implementation of public health measures and restrictions at the national level. These ultimately led to a reduction in the number of drug prevention programmes/interventions conducted, and by extension, a reduction in the number of persons reached by the NCSA in 2020. Likewise, there was a transition to online schooling within the education system. This resulted in a short adjustment period for the Council which curtailed the delivery of prevention programming to educational institutions.

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<sup>11</sup> Integrated treatment - Treatment for two or more conditions which often includes the combined use of multiple approaches e.g. psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy (Kelly & Daley, 2013).

The regulatory measures also affected access to, and delivery of, substance abuse treatment. Some treatment centres were forced to close during the shutdowns while other resorted to virtual/telephone assessment and counselling. Additionally, many non-residential centres operated with shortened working hours when they reopened. These issues had an overall impact on the number of clients admitted to treatment centres during the year. For example, non-residential centres such as CASA and the NCSA reported reduced numbers. However, the SAF saw an increase in admissions. Anecdotal reports suggest that the increase in clients at the SAF may be related to an increase in the number of persons requesting residential treatment when they present for assessment at the Psychiatric Hospital's Drug Rehabilitation Unit.

### ***Legislative Changes***

While this report covers the year 2020, two legislative changes which are directly related to the local drug situation took place during the year that this report was prepared (2021) and are therefore considered below.

#### ***Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) (Amendment) Act, 2021***

In March 2021, the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act was amended to allow for the application of a fixed penalty for persons found in possession of small quantities of marijuana (Government of Barbados, 2021). In accordance with the Act, persons, 18 years of age or older, who are found in possession of 14 grammes or less of marijuana will be required to pay a penalty of \$200. If the Police believe the individual may be addicted to marijuana, they will also be referred to the NCSA for assessment and counselling. Persons under 18 years found in possession of 14 grammes or less of marijuana will be required to pay the same penalty and attend *mandatory* assessment and counselling at the NCSA. In addition to prescribing a fixed penalty, the Act also makes provisions for persons previously charged with possession of less than 14 grammes of marijuana, and who have served their sentence, to have their convictions expunged.

This legislative change has the potential to affect the number of drug-related crimes recorded by the Barbados Police Force. At present, "Possession" of marijuana remains the single largest drug offence recorded by the Force each year. This is due in part to (1) marijuana being the main substance capturing the attention of law enforcement officials and (2) "Possession" being a predicate offence which often accompanies more serious drug offences. Making the possession of small quantities of marijuana a ticketable offence, will likely reduce the number of persons charged with marijuana possession, particularly in instances where persons have the substance in their possession for personal use.

The legislative change can also have a direct impact on the lives of persons found with quantities of marijuana below the prescribed threshold and those who are eligible to have their convictions expunged. Data shows that persons with a criminal record are less likely to receive a job offer or secure legitimate employment (Minor, Persico, & Weiss, 2018). Without legitimate employment, they may turn to a life of crime in order to survive. A criminal record can also hinder other aspects of a person's life e.g. it can prevent them from receiving travel visas for countries such as the United States of



America (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). As such, avoiding a criminal conviction can have many benefits at the individual level.

Despite the aforementioned benefits associated with decriminalizing the possession of small quantities of marijuana, consideration must be given to the potential implications for prevention efforts. Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit substance in Barbados, particularly among young males. It is also among the top three substances for which persons seek substance abuse treatment on island. The popularity of marijuana is due in large part to the cultural acceptance of the drug and declining levels of perceived risk associated with its use (NCSA, 2015; NCSA, 2020). This legislative change in combination with other recent developments, namely the enactment of the Medical Cannabis Industry Act 2019 and the Sacramental Cannabis Act, 2019, and the United Nations' 2020 reclassification of marijuana which places the substance in a schedule which is less harmful than other dangerous drugs, may signal to some that marijuana is not harmful. Given the known association between risk perception and drug use (Mendez-Ruiz et al., 2018; NCSA, 2020; Yeomans-Maldonado & Patrick, 2015), it is recommended that prevention professionals continue to educate persons about the harms associated with marijuana use and about the differences between medicinal and recreational marijuana. Education efforts should be tailored to meet the needs of specific target audiences, and special attention should be paid to young persons, and young males in particular.

Research emerging from Jamaica underscores the importance of using education which emphasizes harms/risks in an effort to reduce the incidence and prevalence of marijuana use in the context of decriminalization. Spencer and Strobl (2020) found that the incidence and prevalence of marijuana use were higher among Jamaicans who were aware of the decriminalization of small amounts of the substance which took place in 2015. In fact, they found that youth who were aware of the legislation were 10% more likely to try marijuana. They also found that favourable attitudes towards marijuana consumption further increased the likelihood of using the drug. They proposed that persons with favourable attitudes were more likely to have lower risk perceptions.

Given the popularity of marijuana use and the potential impact which the legislation can have on incidence and prevalence, provisions should be made for the ongoing monitoring of consumption patterns to allow for timely interventions at the macro and micro levels. Particular attention should be paid to youth and other vulnerable groups who are more likely to use the substance. While it is recognized that the NCSA periodically conducts school surveys which assess incidence and prevalence, there is often a considerable amount of time between each survey round due to resource constraints. As such, it is recommended that the resources allocated for such surveys be increased and that local school surveys be conducted more frequently.

#### *Liquor Licences Act, 2021*

In May 2021, the Government of Barbados enacted the Liquor Licences Act, 2021 and repealed the previously enforced Liquor Licences Act, Cap. 182. Of particular interest is the fact that the new Act prohibits the sale or supply of alcohol to persons under the age of 18. This is critical given that alcohol is the leading drug used in Barbados among all age groups, including students at the primary and secondary school levels (NCSA, 2015; NCSA 2020). Like marijuana, it is also among the top three

substances for which persons seek substance abuse treatment. The younger persons are when they initiate drug use, the more likely they are to develop addiction (Jordan & Andersen, 2017; SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2014). Therefore, such efforts to reduce access to, and consumption of, alcohol among minors may lead to an eventual reduction in the level of alcohol abuse and addiction in Barbados.

Another possible benefit of the increased legal purchasing age is the potential for reduced road traffic accidents and fatalities among those under 18, particularly those involving the consumption of alcohol. This possibility is supported by the international literature (World Health Organization [WHO], 2004).

Anecdotal reports suggests that many persons are not familiar with the aforementioned legislative changes and therefore it is recommended that public education campaigns be used to raise awareness.

### ***Similarity of the Local Drug Situation to that in Other Caribbean Countries***

Barbados' local drug situation generally remains similar to that of other Caribbean countries. Drug Information Network (DIN) reports from Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago suggest that alcohol, marijuana and cocaine are also the most common problematic substances in these territories (Alexander & Japal, 2020; National Anti-Narcotics Agency, 2020; National Drug Abuse Prevention Unit, 2019; National Drug Council, 2020). Trinidad and Tobago has also noted the presence of ecstasy/MDMA as did Guyana (National Anti-Narcotics Agency, 2020; National Drug Council, 2020). Though, like Barbados, the seizures of marijuana and cocaine are more common and greater in quantity than seizures of ecstasy/MDMA.

Overall, marijuana is the main substance capturing the attention of regional law enforcement officials, both in terms of seizures and drug-related arrests. As in Barbados, possession of marijuana is the single most common offence in Dominica, Grenada, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (Alexander & Japal, 2020; National Anti-Narcotics Agency, 2020; National Drug Abuse Prevention Unit, 2019; National Drug Council, 2020).

With regard to the profile of treatment seekers and drug offenders, the regional DIN reports confirm that, as in Barbados, males also account for the majority of persons seeking substance abuse treatment and being arrested for drug-related crimes in other Caribbean countries (Alexander & Japal, 2020; National Anti-Narcotics Agency, 2020; National Drug Abuse Prevention Unit, 2019; National Drug Council, 2020). Differences in age-categories used across the various countries made age-related comparisons more difficult. Nevertheless, some similarities were identified. Much like Barbados, persons seeking substance abuse treatment or being charged with drug offences in Dominica, Grenada, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago tended to be younger, typically under the ages of 35 or 40 (Alexander & Japal, 2020; National Anti-Narcotics Agency, 2020; National Drug Abuse Prevention Unit, 2019; National Drug Council, 2020).

### ***Summary of Recommendations***

Below is a summary of the recommendations emerging from the foregoing discussion.

1. The issue of emerging drugs requires a multi-faceted national response. To this end, drug prevention professionals should design programmes to address new drug trends, with an emphasis on males and young persons given their increased likelihood of using such substances. There should also be efforts to revive the Early Warning System to allow for rapid information sharing and speedy responses to emerging drugs. Regular training sessions should be provided for persons working in the demand reduction, supply control and medical fields to ensure that they are kept abreast of any changing patterns of drug use. Law enforcement officials should be provided with the requisite tools and training to identify and detect new drugs.
2. Prevention professionals should continue to educate persons about marijuana, including its potential harms and the differences between medical and recreational marijuana. Males and young persons should be targeted as they are more likely to become problematic users of this substance.
3. Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programming should include a focus on persons age 40 and under – particularly males. Specialized programmes should be designed to meet their specific needs, in an attempt to address their high level of involvement in the local drug scene.
4. Substance abuse treatment centres should pay special attention to the issues of comorbid diagnoses and poly drug use. This includes training staff to ensure that they are adequately equipped to treat the affected clients/patients. Additionally, integrated treatment plans should be used to treat persons with comorbid diagnoses. To facilitate this, substance abuse treatment centres should hire mental health staff where feasible or partner with mental health facilities to develop and implement coordinated treatment plans that simultaneously address both types of disorders. Substance abuse treatment centres should also partner with other agencies to address resource deficits in an effort to effectively meet the complex medical, psychiatric and social needs of poly drug users.
5. Once the findings from NCSA's study "The Barriers to Substance Abuse Treatment in Barbados: Factors Hindering Women's Use of Treatment Services" are released, efforts should be made to incorporate them, where applicable or feasible, into policies and programmes aimed at increasing the uptake of treatment by women on the island.
6. Public education campaigns should be used to raise awareness of recent legislative changes i.e. the enactment of the Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control)(Amendment) Act, 2021 and the Liquor Licences Act, 2021.
7. In order to assess the impact of changing marijuana legislation and provide timely interventions at the macro and micro levels, provisions should be made to monitor marijuana consumption patterns, with a specific emphasis on youth and other vulnerable populations.
8. Additional resources should be allocated for the regular conduct of school surveys thereby allowing them to be conducted more frequently.

## 8. Conclusion

Alcohol, marijuana and cocaine continue to be the main motivators for treatment across all age groups and populations (incarcerated and non-incarcerated). Of these, marijuana is the primary substance capturing the attention of law enforcement officials. Despite the popularity of alcohol, marijuana and cocaine, the drug situation continues to be slowly diversifying. This is marked by the emergence of non-traditional substances – the most common of which is ecstasy. The presence of new drugs has implications for the work of professionals in the demand reduction, medical and supply control fields, thereby making the ongoing monitoring of drug trends, information sharing and training imperative for these groups. The previously launched Early Warning System will be a critical tool in this regard.

Special attention should be paid to persons under the age of 40 - and young males in particular - as they are more likely to be drug offenders or require substance abuse treatment. Their high level of involvement in the local drug scene can have a significant economic impact through lost productivity and the cost of treatment and incarceration borne by the state. As such, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation efforts designed specifically for, and catering to the needs of, this population are critical. Treatment professionals should also focus on the ongoing poly drug use trend and the presence of co-occurring disorders as these can hinder the treatment process and negatively affect treatment outcomes.

The recent institution of a minimum alcohol purchasing age can help to protect the youth and potentially reduce the local levels of alcohol dependence in the future. Similarly, the recent decriminalization of small quantities of marijuana can have a positive effect on the lives of individuals through the avoidance of a criminal record. However, consideration should be given to impact which this change can have on the perceived levels of risk associated with marijuana use and by extension the prevalence levels on island. It is therefore important that prevention professionals continue to educate the public about possible marijuana-related harms and the difference between recreational and medicinal marijuana – with a special emphasis on the youth as they are most likely to become problematic users of this substance.

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