



## Message from Director, Central Narcotics Bureau

### Overview

Amidst a challenging global and regional drug situation, Singapore remains steadfast in adopting a comprehensive drug control strategy that tackles both drug supply and demand. This is done through preventive drug education (PDE), tough anti-drug laws, rigorous enforcement, international engagement, and rehabilitation and aftercare of drug offenders.

We take a zero-tolerance stand against drugs because it is the best approach for Singapore. Drug abuse exacts a heavy price on abusers, their family, and ultimately society.<sup>1</sup> Livelihoods are lost, relationships are destroyed, and children growing up with caretakers who abuse drugs often suffer the consequences of an unstable and possibly abusive home environment. The wider community is not spared either, because the abuse of drugs may lead to other drug-related crimes being committed. Hence, we continue to take a tough stance against drug abuse, and impose mandatory rehabilitation so as to give drug abusers adequate treatment and support to overcome their addiction.

Singapore is located at the doorstep of the world's largest drug producing region, where there is a ready supply of illicit drugs trying to make its way here. In our region, we see a trend of increased trafficking of methamphetamine, which is of concern as it has been the most commonly-abused drug in Singapore since 2015. Methamphetamine seizures in East and Southeast Asia accounted for 43% of the global quantity seized from 2015 to 2019, and seizure amounts from this region have been increasing. Preliminary data indicates that at least 169 tons of methamphetamine were seized in 2020 alone.<sup>2</sup>

### Arrests and enforcement operations in 2021

In 2021, the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) conducted intensive enforcement operations that resulted in the dismantling of 25 drug syndicates. CNB also worked closely with other Home Team agencies to conduct more than 100 joint operations, including at the checkpoints, to intercept attempts to smuggle drugs into Singapore.

While the number of drug abusers arrested in 2021 decreased by 11%, this is likely due to restricted social interactions arising from COVID-19 measures. Indeed, because of COVID-19 travel restrictions, drug trafficking syndicates have continued to look for novel ways to bring drugs into Singapore. Drug seizures remained high in 2021 and are indicative of CNB's effective enforcement efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Findings from a study by the Nanyang Technological University (commissioned by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2016) quantified the costs of drug abuse on abusers, the victims of their crimes, the family of the abusers and victims, and society.

<sup>2</sup> *Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia: Latest Developments and Challenges*, United Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2021.

There were several other worrying trends in 2021 – the proportion of new drug abusers arrested remained high at 34%, and the proportion of new drug abusers arrested who were under 30 years old remained significant at 60%.

#### Staying ahead of the changing drug landscape

CNB continually reviews our anti-drug strategy to stay ahead of the evolving drug landscape. The First Schedule to the Misuse of Drugs Act was further expanded in May 2021 to cover more drugs.

#### Adapting to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic

Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, CNB remains committed to its mission of keeping Singapore drug-free, while also contributing to the national COVID-19 response. A number of CNB officers were attached to the Ministry of Health to support COVID-19 operations, taking on duties such as managing individuals placed on Quarantine or Isolation Orders. All CNB officers have also been empowered as Enforcement Officers to investigate offences under the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Control Order) Regulations 2020.

CNB continued with its PDE efforts, with many of the community outreach activities and PDE talks held online in view of the COVID-19 safe management measures.

#### Concluding remarks

Singapore's focus is on building a drug-free society, not a drug-tolerant one. As such, Singapore adopts a harm-prevention approach to deal with the scourge of drugs. Our approach has worked well for our context and has helped keep the drug situation under control.

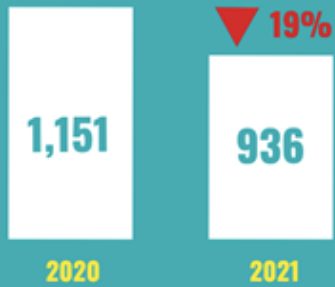
CNB, working closely with the community, will keep up our efforts to prevent drug abuse, and keep Singapore drug-free for future generations.

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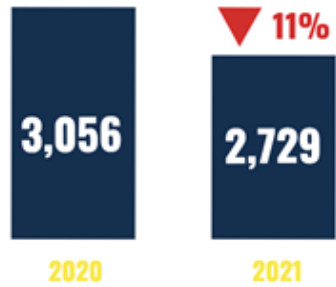
# 2021

## KEY DRUG STATISTICS

### New Drug Abusers Arrested



### Total Drug Abusers Arrested



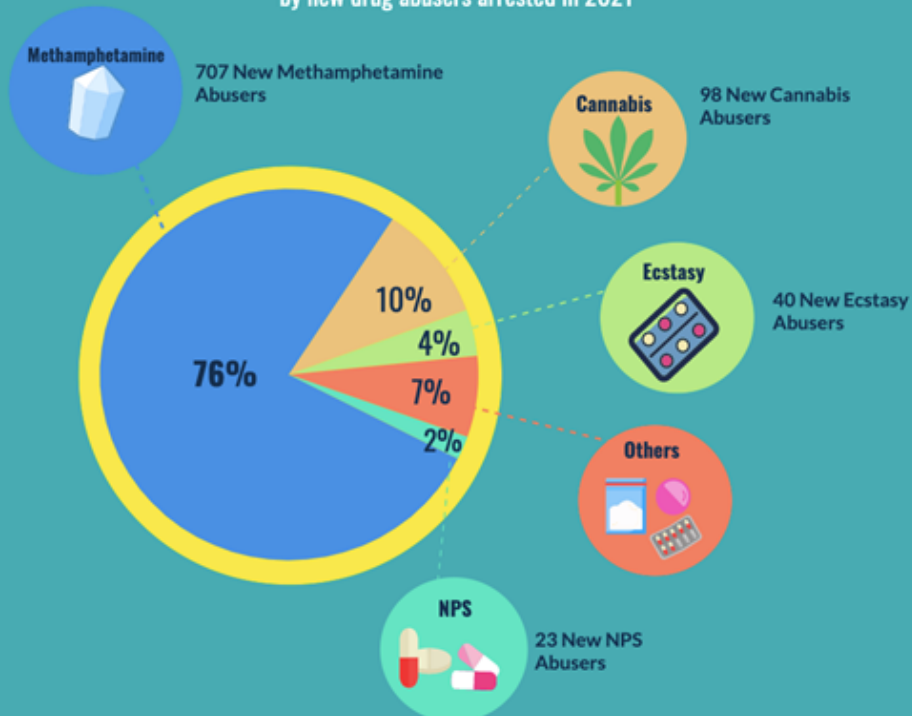
Proportion of the new drug abusers arrested remained high at 34% of total drug abusers arrested



About 60% of the new drug abusers arrested were under 30 years old

### New Abusers by Drug Type

Methamphetamine, cannabis and ecstasy were the three most commonly abused drugs by new drug abusers arrested in 2021



Note: Due to rounding of figures, the numbers in the pie chart do not add up to 100%

## OVERVIEW OF SINGAPORE'S DRUG SITUATION IN 2021

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### 1. Areas of concern

- The proportion of new drug abusers remained high – about 34% of drug abusers arrested in 2021 were new abusers.
- 60% of new drug abusers arrested were under 30 years old.

#### 2. Sustained enforcement efforts to curb drug supply and demand

- CNB continued to launch enforcement operations against drugs and worked closely with Home Team agencies to detect and prevent the flow of drugs into and within Singapore.
  - In 2021, together with the Singapore Police Force and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, CNB conducted seven island-wide operations targeting drug traffickers and abusers, as well as 101 operations at our checkpoints to intercept attempts to smuggle drugs into Singapore.
  - CNB also carried out major operations that crippled 25 drug syndicates.
- CNB made significant drug seizures with an estimated market value of about S\$18.31 million.

#### 3. Preventive drug education (PDE) outreach and engagement efforts

- CNB continued to engage our partners, volunteers, anti-drug advocates and community groups, to collaborate on PDE initiatives and programmes for both youths and the general public.
  - For example, CNB collaborated with youths to co-create anti-drug content such as comic books, art installations, mobile game applications and social media campaigns, to reach out to their peers.

#### 4. Amendments to Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA)

- As part of regular drug reviews, the First Schedule to the MDA was further amended in May 2021 to cover 13 additional New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) as Class A controlled drugs. Such listings ensure that our legislative controls remain up-to-date, allowing CNB to take swift enforcement action against the abuse and trafficking of new drugs.

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## GLOBAL DRUG SITUATION

Singapore is vulnerable to developments in the regional drug situation. According to data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report 2021 (WDR 2021), methamphetamine seizures in East and Southeast Asia made up 43% of the global quantity seized in the period 2015 to 2019.<sup>3</sup> In 2018 and 2019, Thailand reported the largest quantities of methamphetamine seized, accounting for 38% of the total drugs seized in East and Southeast Asia in 2019. This was followed by China (18%), Myanmar (14%) and Indonesia (13%). The wholesale prices of crystalline methamphetamine have fallen despite increases in quantities seized, suggesting that the methamphetamine supply may have outstripped the demand in the region.

More than 90% of global illicit opium production takes place in Asia. Myanmar, accounting for 7% of the global opium production, is the main supplier to the East and Southeast Asia markets. Asia accounts for 62% of the global quantities of heroin and morphine seized, with East and Southeast Asia accounting for 9% of the global total in 2019.

On the international front, there is continued push for more liberal drug control policies by various parties with vested interests. In particular, the cannabis legalisation movement has led to a substantial disconnect between real risks and public perception. According to WDR 2021, cannabis products in some parts of the world have almost quadrupled in potency, and yet the percentage of adolescents who perceive cannabis as harmful has dropped by as much as 40%, despite the evidence linking regular use to health problems, particularly in young people, and despite the correlation between potency and harm.

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<sup>3</sup> *World Drug Report 2021 – Booklet 4*, United Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2021.

## LOCAL DRUG SITUATION IN 2021

In 2021, CNB arrested 2,729 drug abusers. This was an 11% decrease from the 3,056 drug abusers arrested in 2020. This decrease was likely due to restricted social interactions arising from COVID-19 measures.

The number of repeat drug abusers arrested decreased by 6% to 1,793 in 2021, from 1,905 in 2020. The number of new drug abusers arrested decreased by 19% to 936 in 2021, from 1,151 in 2020. 60% of new abusers arrested were under 30 years old.

CNB made significant drug seizures in 2021. The drugs seized in 2021 were estimated to have a street value of about S\$18.31 million. There was a 31% increase in seizures of heroin to 95.43kg in 2021, from 72.70kg in 2020. Cannabis seizures saw a 148% increase to 107.08kg in 2021, from 43.10kg in 2020. Seizures of crystalline methamphetamine (more commonly known as 'Ice') saw a 7% increase to 49.95kg in 2021, from 46.81kg in 2020.

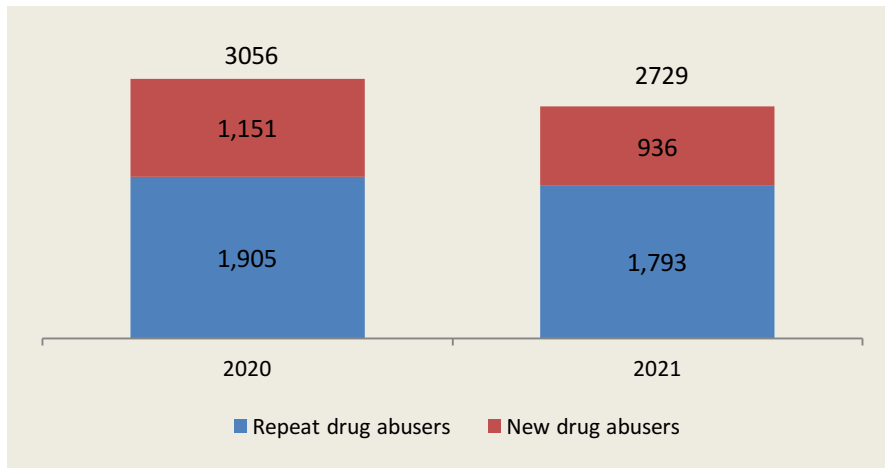
Methamphetamine, heroin, and cannabis were the three most commonly abused drugs in 2021, with 92% of drug abusers arrested abusing at least one of these three drugs. For new drug abusers, methamphetamine, cannabis and 'Ecstasy' were the three most commonly abused drugs, with 90% of new drug abusers arrested abusing at least one of these three drugs.

Local Drug Seizures in 2021					
Drug type	2020	2021	% change in seizure	Estimated market value 2020	Estimated market value 2021
Heroin No.3	72.70kg	95.43kg	+31.3%	≈ S\$12.18 million	≈ S\$18.31 million
Methamphetamine ('Ice')	46.81kg	49.95kg	+6.7%		
Cannabis	43.10kg	107.08kg	+148.4%		
Cocaine	21.15g	0.98g	-95.4%		
'Ecstasy'	23,141 tablets + 92.13g	9,313 tablets + 252.27g	-59.8% (tablets) +173.8% (weight)		
Methamphetamine tablets ('Yaba')	70 tablets	29 tablets	-58.6%		
Ketamine	3.96kg	3.46kg + 747 tablets	-12.6%		
Erimin-5	42,706 tablets	13,292 tablets	-68.9%		
Buprenorphine ('Subutex')	NIL	NIL	-		
New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) (e.g. synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones)	305 tablets + 6,216.6g + 33 bottles	2,775 tablets + 6,681.6g + 249 bottles + 9 stamps	+809.8% (tablets) +7.48% (weight) +654.5% (bottles) +900.0% (stamps)		

## Local Drug Abusers - Overall

CNB arrested 2,729 drug abusers in 2021. New abusers arrested decreased by 19% to 936 in 2021, from 1,151 in 2020. Refer to Chart 1. New abusers continue to form a significant proportion (34%) of all abusers arrested.

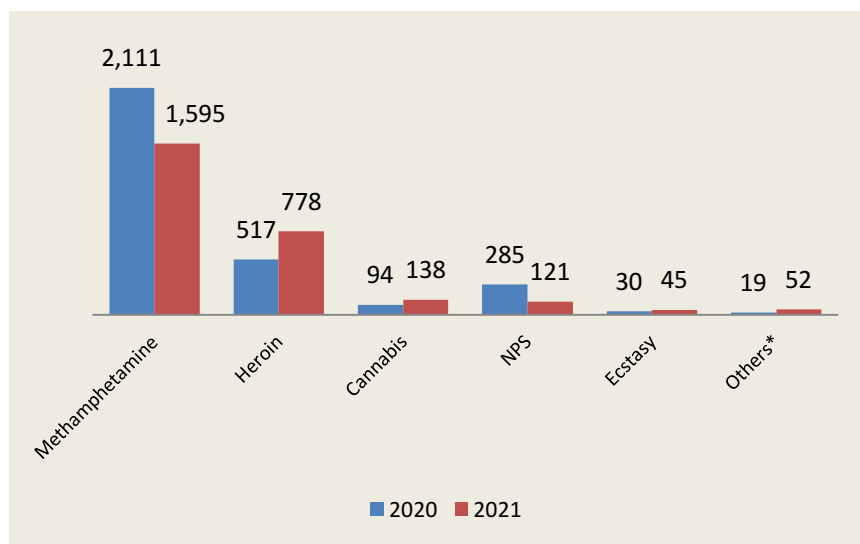
**Chart 1: Total and new drug abusers**



## Drug Abusers - By Drug Type

Methamphetamine, heroin, and cannabis were the three most commonly abused drugs in Singapore. 1,595 methamphetamine abusers (58%), 778 heroin abusers (29%) and 138 cannabis abusers (5%) were arrested in 2021. Refer to Chart 2.

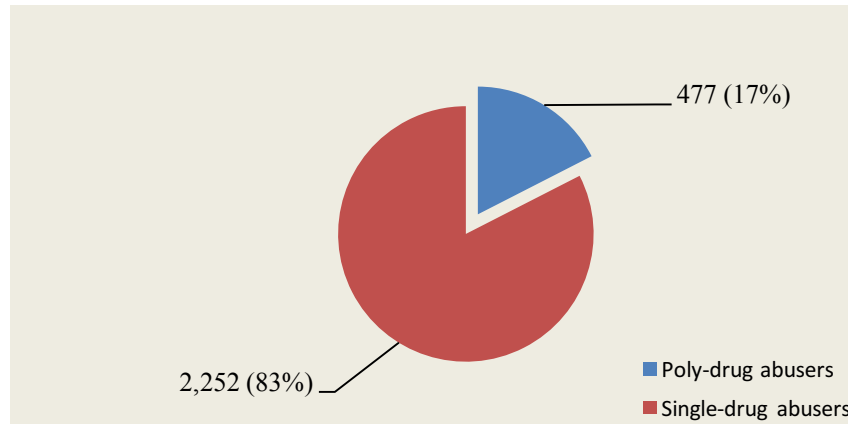
**Chart 2: Total abusers by drug**



\*Others include Dihydrocodeine, Ketamine, GHB, LSD, Methadone, Methylphenidate and Tapentadol

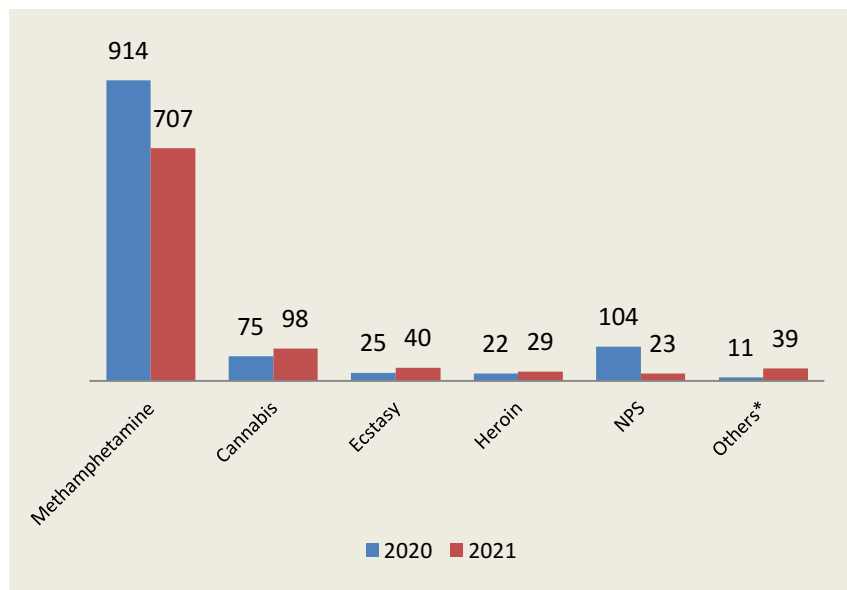
Of the 2,729 drug abusers arrested in 2021, 477 abusers (17%) were poly-drug abusers who abused more than one type of drug. Refer to Chart 2a.

**Chart 2a: Breakdown of single/poly-drug abusers in 2021**



Methamphetamine abusers made up the largest proportion of all new abusers. Of the 936 new abusers arrested in 2021, 707 (76%) abused methamphetamine. Refer to Chart 2b.

**Chart 2b: Total new abusers by drug type**



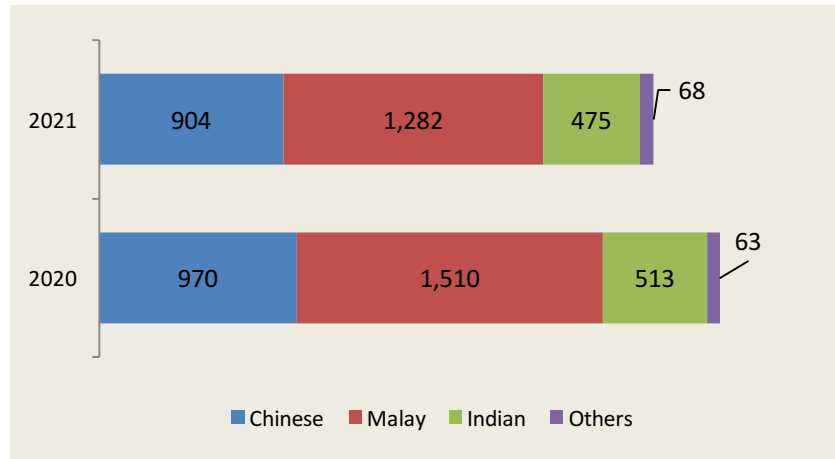
\*Others include Dihydrocodeine, Ketamine, LSD, GHB, Methylphenidate and Tapentadol



## Drug Abusers - By Ethnic Group

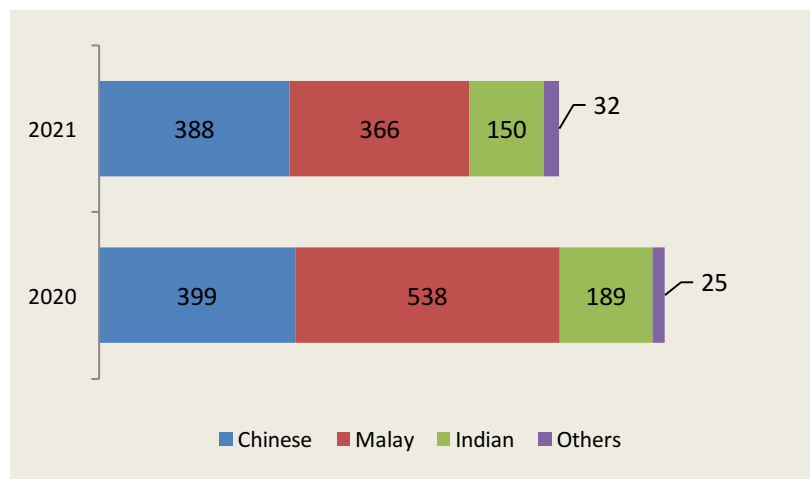
The number of Chinese, Malay and Indian drug abusers arrested decreased in 2021. The proportion of drug abusers by ethnic group is similar to the previous year (2020). Refer to Chart 3.

**Chart 3: Total abusers by ethnic group**



Similarly, the number of new Chinese, Malay and Indian drug abusers arrested decreased in 2021. Refer to Chart 3a.

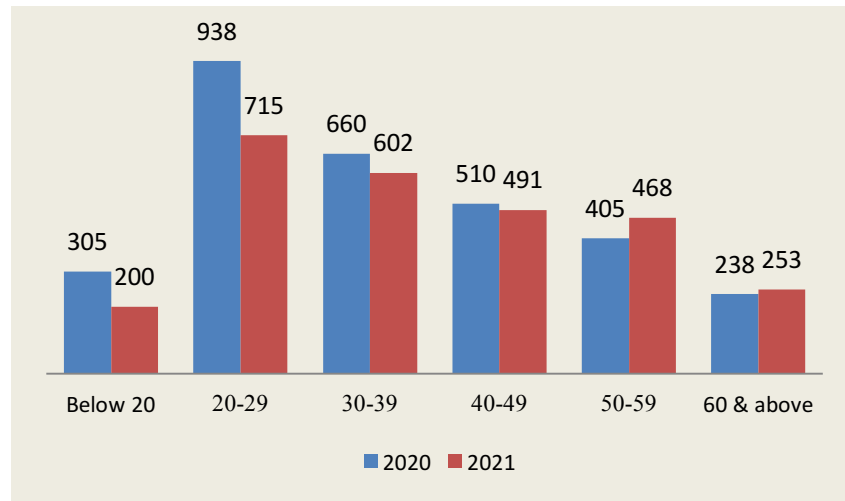
**Chart 3a: New abusers by ethnic group**



## Drug Abusers Arrested - By Age

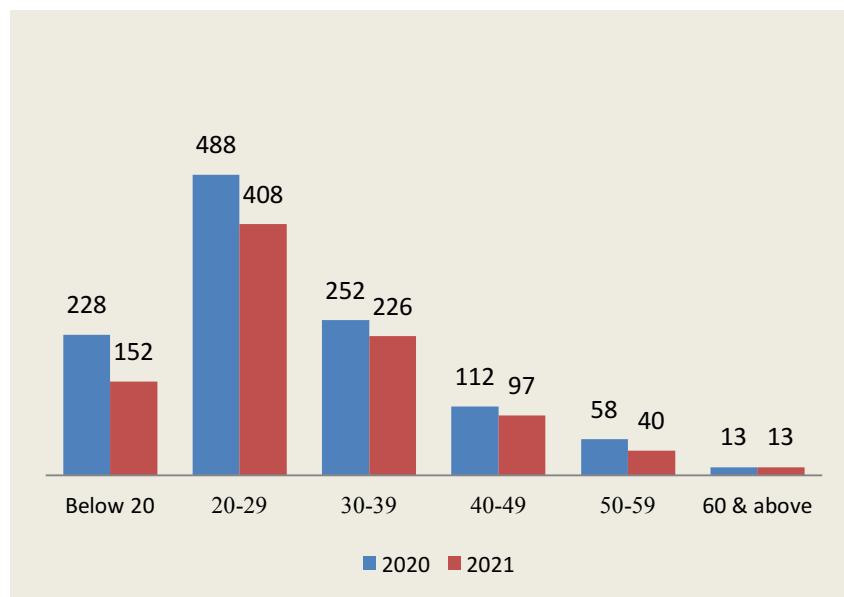
In 2021, 915 (34%) of all drug abusers arrested were below 30 years old. Drug abusers in the 20 to 29 age group continued to form the largest group of abusers. There was a 16% increase in the number of drug abusers in the 50 to 59 age group to 468 in 2021, from 405 in 2020. Refer to Chart 4.

**Chart 4: Total abusers by age**



In 2021, 560 (60%) of all new abusers arrested were aged below 30, a decrease from 716 (62%) in 2020. Refer to Chart 4a.

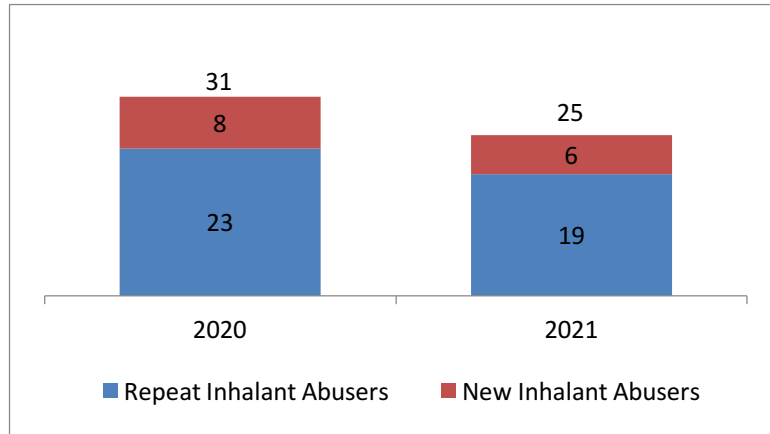
**Chart 4a: New abusers by age**



## INHALANT ABUSE SITUATION IN 2021

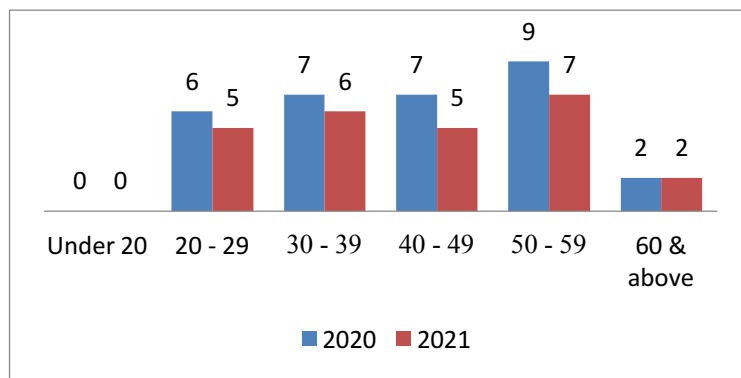
There was a 19% decrease in the total number of inhalant abusers arrested – from 31 in 2020, to 25 in 2021. Refer to Chart 5.

**Chart 5: Inhalant abuse situation**



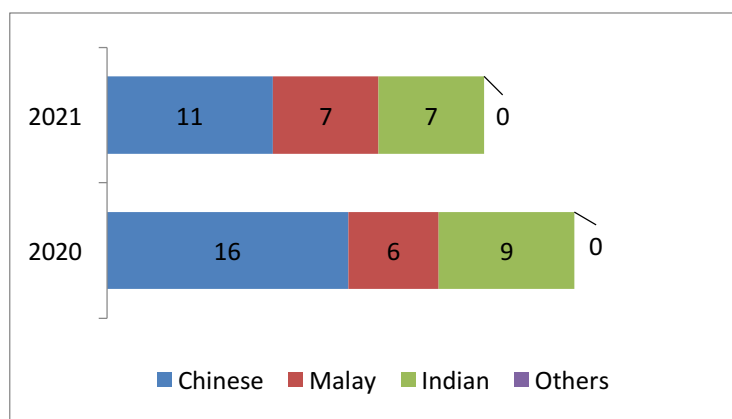
The number of inhalant abusers arrested in 2021 decreased across most age groups. Inhalant abusers aged 50 to 59 formed the largest group at 28% (7 abusers) in 2021. Refer to Chart 6.

**Chart 6: Inhalant abusers by age group**



The majority of inhalant abusers arrested in 2021 were Chinese (44%). Refer to Chart 7.

**Chart 7: Inhalant abusers by ethnic group**



## **PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION (PDE) IS A KEY COMPONENT OF OUR STRATEGY**

The fundamental principle underlying Singapore's approach against drugs is to prevent harm to our people and society in the first place. We believe that this is much more effective than letting the drug problem fester and grow to a magnitude of harm that cannot be eradicated and can only be reduced. CNB's PDE is therefore our first line of defence. It aims to reduce the demand for drugs by educating youths on the dangers of drug dependence, and engaging community partners and the public to sustain a national consensus of zero tolerance against drug abuse. Through effective public education, we aim to stem drug abuse upstream before it causes more troublesome social problems and misery to drug abusers and their families.

A list of highlights of the PDE initiatives in 2021 is attached at [Annex](#).

**ISSUED BY:  
CENTRAL NARCOTICS BUREAU  
10 JUNE 2022**

***NOTE: 2021 figures are confirmed. In this report, 2021 refers to the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021.***