

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Statistics from the NI Drug Misuse Database: 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnstríe O Poustie

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1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

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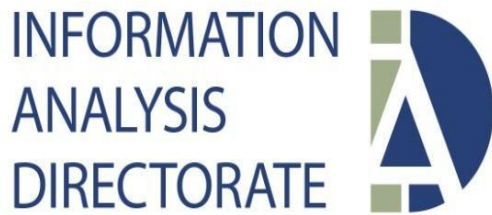
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Statistics and research for the **Department of Health** is provided by **Information Analysis Directorate (IAD)**. It comprises four statistical sections: Hospital Information, Community Information, Public Health Information & Research and Project Support Analysis.

IAD is responsible for compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering health and social care.

The statisticians within IAD are out-posted from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and our statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and protocols set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

About Public Health Information and Research Branch

The role of Public Health Information and Research Branch (PHIRB) is to support the public health survey function and to provide support on public health issues within the Department. The head of the branch is the Principal Statistician, Mr. Bill Stewart.

In support of the public health survey function, PHIRB is involved in the commissioning, managing and publishing of results from departmental funded surveys, such as the Health Survey Northern Ireland, All Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey, Young Persons Behaviour & Attitudes Survey, and the Adult Drinking Patterns Survey.

PHIRB also has responsibility for the management of a programme of patient experience surveys across the Health and Social Care sector.

PHIRB provides support to a range of key DoH strategies including Making Life Better, a 10 year cross-departmental public health strategic framework as well as a range of other departmental strategies such as those dealing with suicide, sexual health, breastfeeding, tobacco control and obesity prevention. It also has a key role in supporting the Alcohol and Drug New Strategic Direction 2011-2016, by maintaining and developing key departmental databases such as, the Drug Misuse Database, Impact Measurement Tool and the Census of Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services, which are all used to monitor drug misuse and treatments across NI.

The branch also houses the NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System which covers a range of different health inequality/equality based projects conducted for both the region as well as for more localised area levels.

Statistics from the NI Drug Misuse Database: 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

This bulletin summarises information on people presenting to services with problem drug misuse and relates to the 12-month period ending 31 March 2016. It is the fourteenth (and final) bulletin reporting on information collected through the NI Drug Misuse Database (DMD), and collects detailed data on those presenting for treatment, including information on drugs misused and injecting behaviour. The Drug Misuse Database will be superseded by the new Substance Misuse Database from 1st April 2016 to also include data on alcohol.

In Summary:

- In 2015/16, a total of 2,229 clients presented to services for problem drug misuse and gave their consent for their details to be included in the DMD. This was similar to the number of clients (2,262) in 2014/15.
- Four-fifths of clients (79%) were male. Male clients tended to be younger on average than female clients. A third of male clients (35%) were aged 18-25 while 17% were aged over 40 years old. For female clients, 29% were aged 18-25 and 32% were aged over 40 years old.
- Two-fifths of those presenting for treatment (40%) took just one drug, while a fifth (23%) took two drugs. A fifth of clients (19%) took four or more drugs.
- Four-fifths of all clients (82%) used at least one hypnotic drug, with 59% of all clients using a hypnotic drug as their main drug.
- Almost half of all clients (46%) used at least one stimulant drug, with it being the main drug for a fifth of all clients (18%).
- Over a quarter of all clients (26%) used at least one opioid analgesic drug, with 20% of all clients using one as their main drug.
- Considering all drugs used by clients, the most commonly reported used drug was Cannabis (used by 66% of clients) followed by Benzodiazepines (37%) and Cocaine (35%).
- Cannabis was used by 40% of clients as their main drug of misuse in 2015/16, similar to the figure in 2014/15.
- Over a quarter of those presenting for treatment (26%) had previously received treatment for their drug misuse.
- The proportion of clients that had ever injected drugs during their lifetime stood at 11% in 2015/16.
- Between 2005/06 and 2015/16, use of Cocaine among clients rose from 25% to 35%, while use of Ecstasy (26% to 10%) and Heroin (13% to 10%) both fell.

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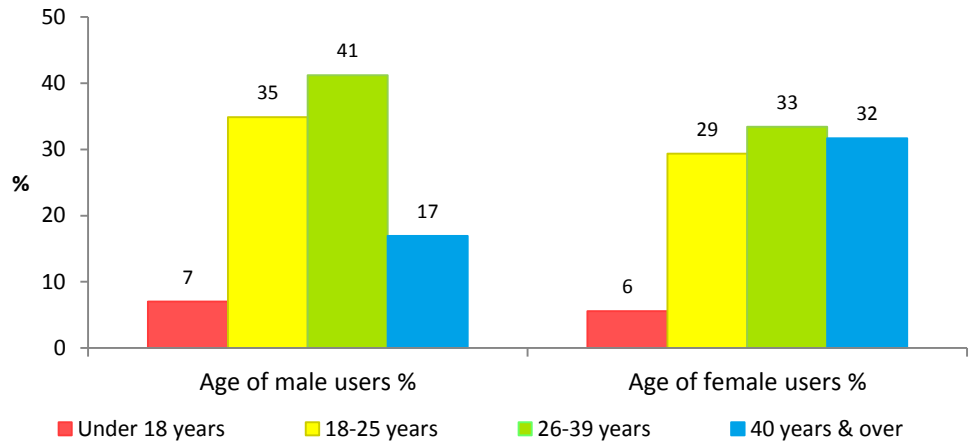
Drug User Profile

In 2015/16, a total of 2,229 clients presented to services for problem drug misuse for the first time or first time in six months and gave their consent for their details to be included in the DMD. This was similar to the number of clients (2,262) in 2014/15.

Age of Clients by gender

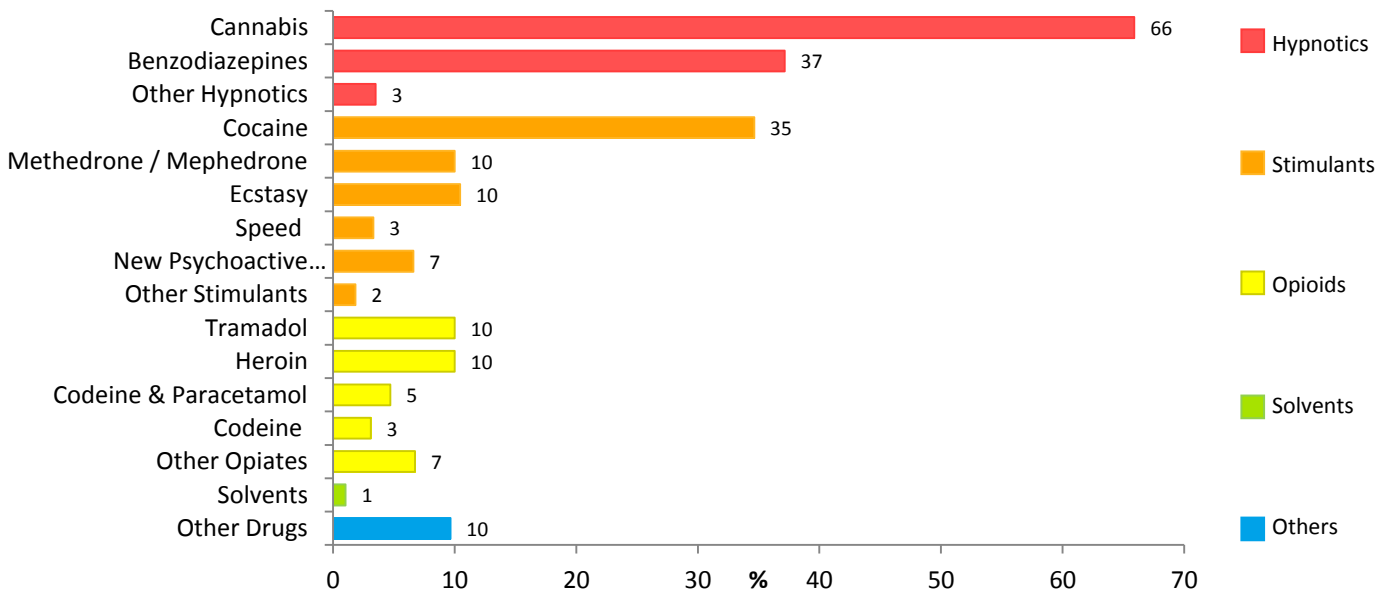
Four-fifths of clients (79%) were male. Male clients were on average younger than female clients. More than four-fifths of males (83%) were aged under 40 compared with two-thirds of females (68%).

A quarter of all clients were in prison, with the majority of these being male (94%) and aged under 40 (86%).



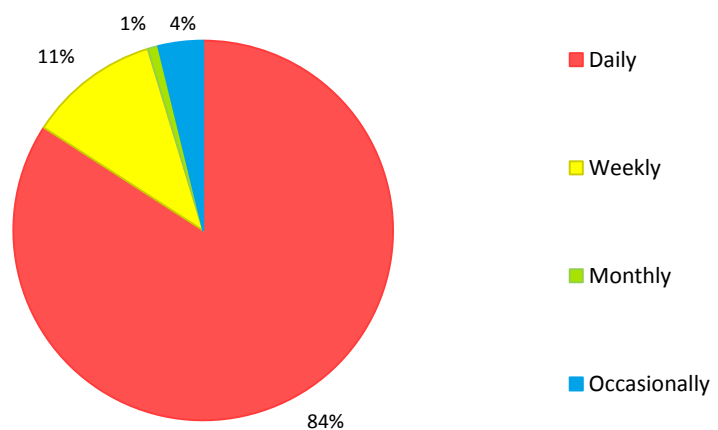
Drugs Used

Considering the range of drugs used by clients, Cannabis was the most commonly reported drug (used by two-thirds of clients) followed by Benzodiazepines (37%) and Cocaine (35%).



Frequency of use

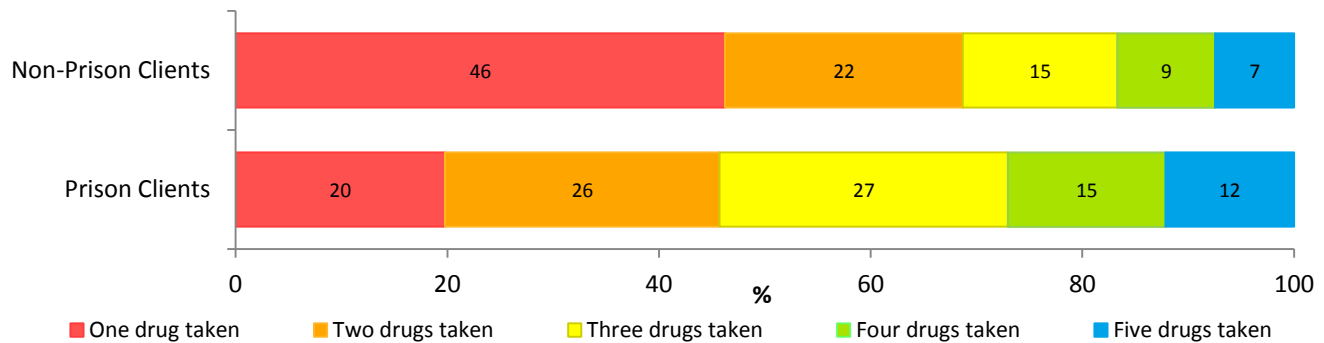
Over four-fifths of all users (84%) used at least one drug on a daily basis and a further 11% used at least one drug weekly. The proportion of clients that had taken at least one drug in the last four weeks ranged from 83% in the Belfast and Southern Trusts to 92% in the South Eastern Trust. This was true for less than half of clients in prison (45%).



Number of Drugs used

Two-fifths of those presenting for treatment (40%) took just one drug, while a quarter (23%) took two drugs and 19% took four or more drugs.

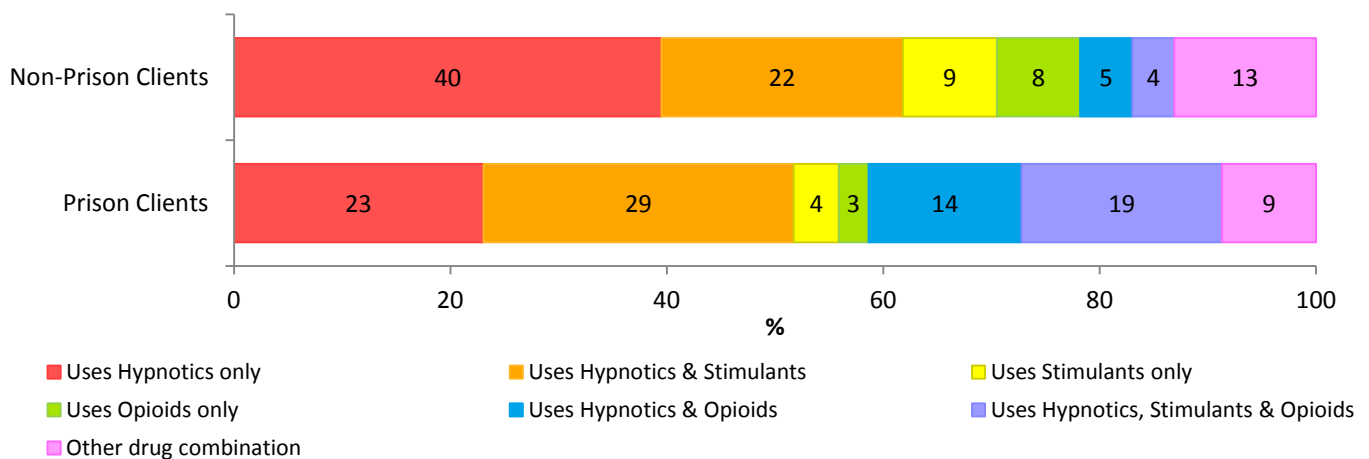
There was a marked difference between the number of drugs used by clients in prison in comparison with those who were not in prison. Almost half of clients not in prison (46%) had one drug of misuse compared with 20% of clients in prison.



Drug Combinations

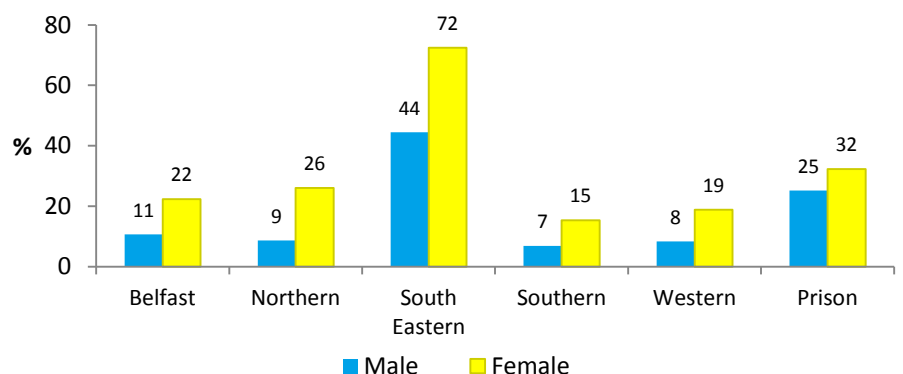
Drug combinations used varied between clients in prison and clients not in prison. Almost three-fifths of non-prison clients (58%) used just one type of drug only compared with 30% of prison clients (e.g. they took hypnotics or stimulants only although they may have taken more than one individual drug of that type). More than two-fifths of prison clients (45%) took a combination of two types of drug (compared with 32% of non-Prison clients), while 23% took a combination of three types of drug.

Nearly two-fifths of non-prison clients (39%) used hypnotic drugs only, with a fifth taking a combination of hypnotics and stimulants. This compared with 29% of clients in prison that used a combination of hypnotics and stimulants, 23% that used hypnotic drugs only and a further 18% that used a combination of hypnotics, stimulants and opioids.



Use of Prescription drugs

Almost a quarter of all clients (23%) took at least one prescribed drug, with females (38%) twice as likely as males (19%) to do so. The high proportion of females that took prescribed drugs in the South Eastern Trust (72%) was due to some extent to their specialised Benzodiazepine projects that are in place.

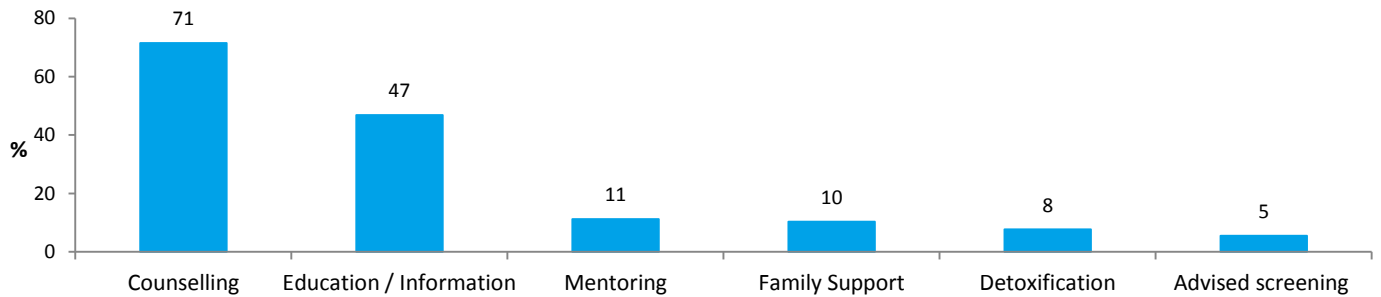


Problem Use of Alcohol

Problem alcohol use was reported by a third of clients (31%). Only 3% of those in Prison reported problem alcohol use, but this ranged between 37% and 44% in the Health and Social Care Trust areas. Overall, 14% of clients reported alcohol as their main problem. This was true for almost a quarter of clients (24%) in the Southern Trust.

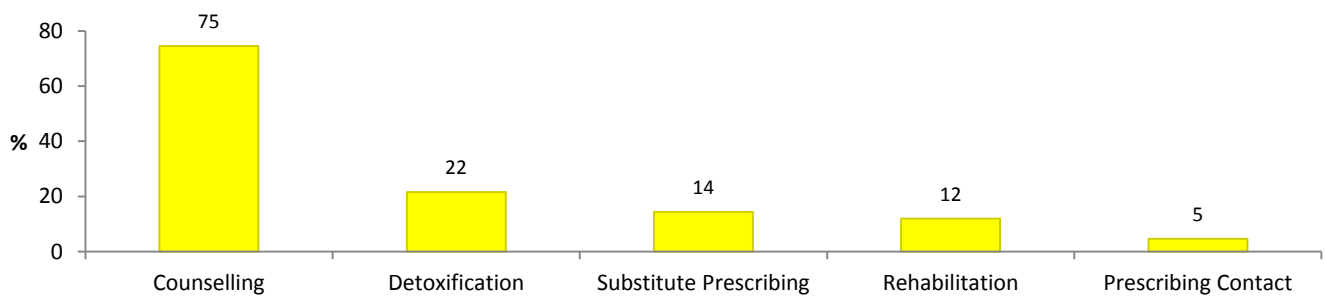
Proposed Treatment

Clients can be offered one or more treatment services. Over a half of clients (55%) were offered one treatment while a further 28% were offered two treatments. The most common treatment offered was counselling (71%) followed by Education / Information (47%) and mentoring (11%).



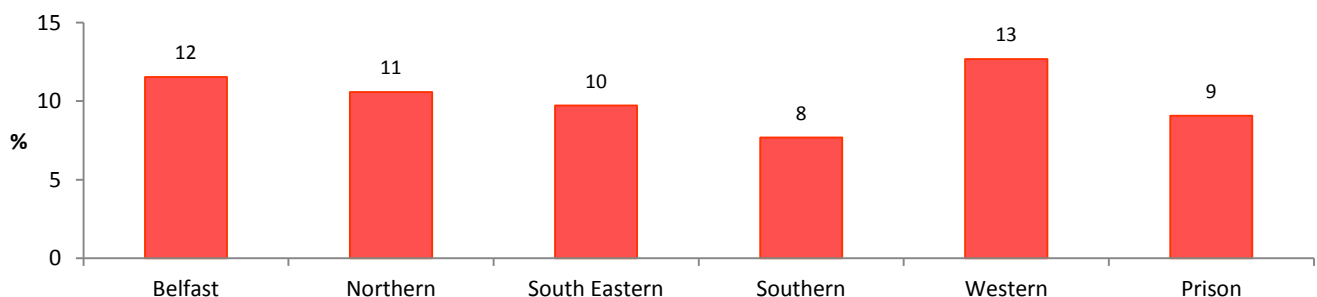
Previous treatment

Over a quarter of those presenting for treatment (26%) had previously received treatment for their drug misuse. Three-quarters of those previously treated (75%) had received counselling as part of their treatment.



Injecting History

Overall 11% of clients had injected their drugs at some point. Of those who had ever injected, a third had shared injecting paraphernalia. Females (54%) were five times more likely to have done so than males (11%).



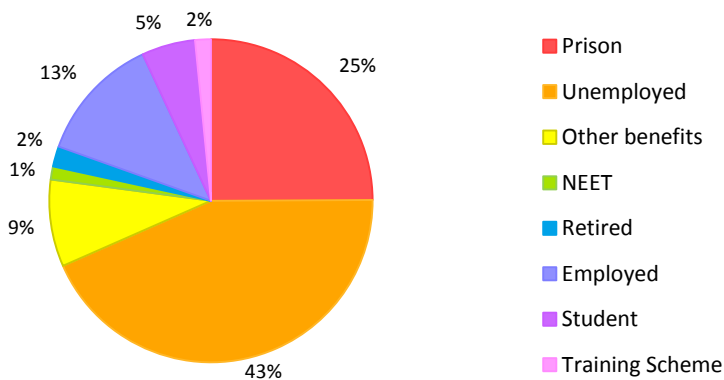
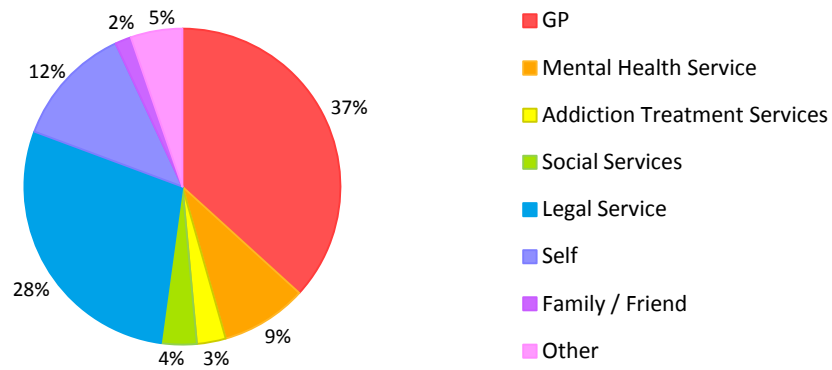
A third of clients (32%) who reported having ever injected had injected in the last four weeks. Three-fifths of those with an injecting history had been tested for HIV (62%), Hepatitis C (61%) and Hepatitis B (60%). Over a quarter (26%) had been fully vaccinated against Hepatitis B, while a further 10% had been partially vaccinated.

Attendance and Referral

Two-fifths of all clients chose by themselves to attend for treatment (43%), while another third were required by others to attend (35%) and a fifth (22%) were persuaded by others.

Clients could give one or more reasons for attendance for treatment. The most common reason given was psychological reasons (53%), followed by family / relationships (48%), legal reasons (35%) and financial reasons (15%).

Almost two-fifths of referrals came from GPs (37%), while more than a quarter came through the legal system (28%) and a tenth were self-referrals (12%).



Employment status

A quarter of all clients were in prison or in a young offender centre. More than two-fifths were unemployed (43%) and 2% were retired. Over one-tenth of clients (13%) were in employment and 5% were students. Just over a third of clients (35%) had worked in the last twelve months.

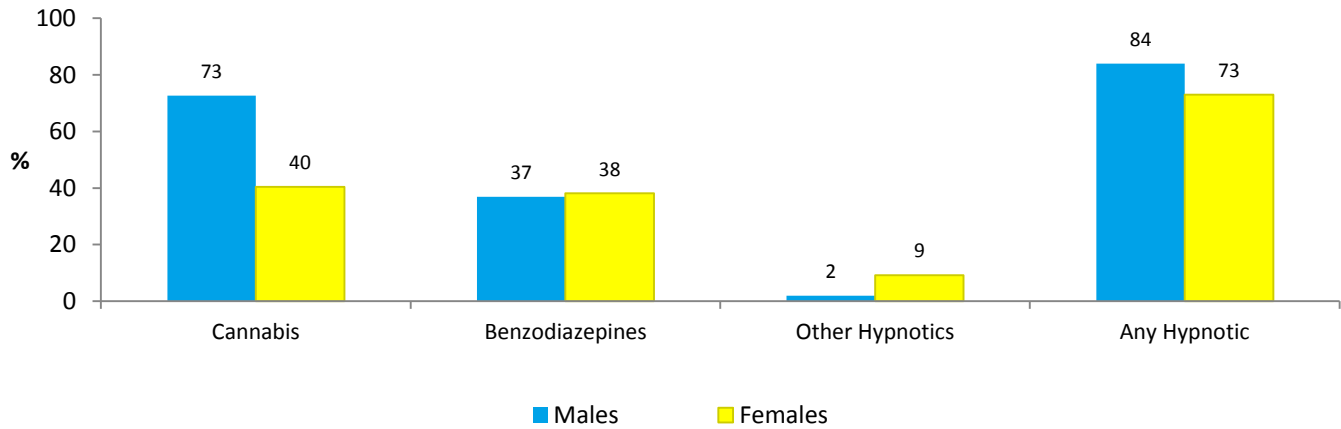
Dependent children

A third of clients (34%) reported having dependent children, ranging from a fifth of those in the Northern Trust (20%) to two-fifths of those in the Belfast Trust area (39%). A quarter of those who reported having dependent children stated that at least one of their children lived with them.

Use of Hypnotic Drugs

Use by gender

Hypnotic drugs were the most commonly used type of drug by both males (84%) and females (73%). Use of Cannabis varied greatly by gender, with males more likely to use Cannabis (73%) than females (40%), while there was no difference in the use of Benzodiazepines between males and females.



Prescribing

Females (48%) were three times as likely to obtain Benzodiazepines solely on prescription than males (17%). More than four-fifths of those taking Other Hypnotics (83%) obtained them solely on prescription.

Frequency of use

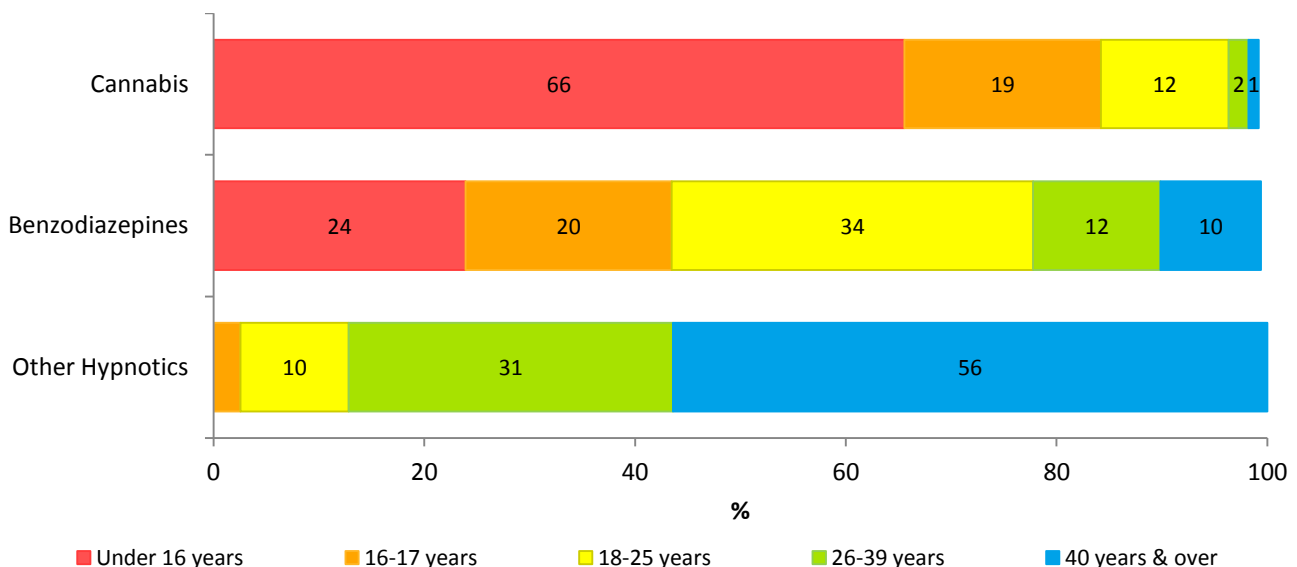
The majority of those using Other Hypnotics (86%) and Cannabis (82%) did so on a daily basis. This was also true for two-thirds of those using Benzodiazepines (65%).

Route of Use

Almost all clients that used Benzodiazepines and Other Hypnotics took these orally, while smoking was the main route of use for Cannabis.

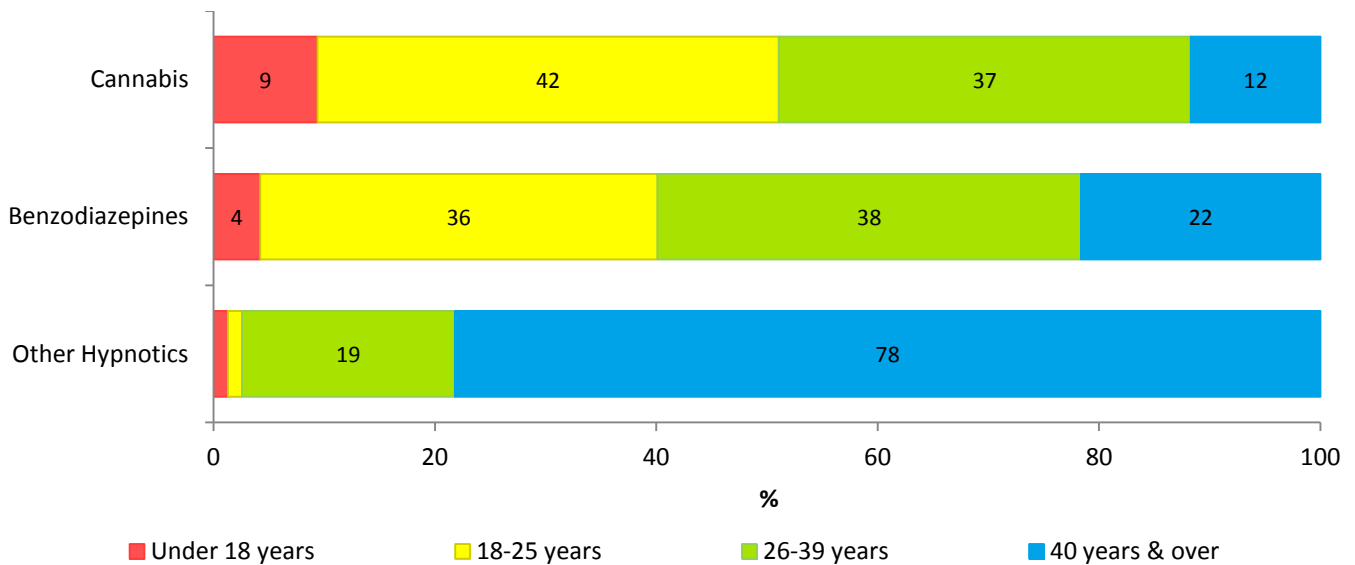
Age of first use

The majority of clients using Cannabis (84%) had first taken this drug under the age of 18. Almost three-fifths of clients using Other Hypnotics (56%) first used these drugs aged 40 or over.



Age at presentation for treatment

As with first use, age at presentation for treatment for Cannabis was younger with just over half of clients aged 25 and under compared with two-fifths of clients using Benzodiazepines and 3% of clients using other hypnotics.

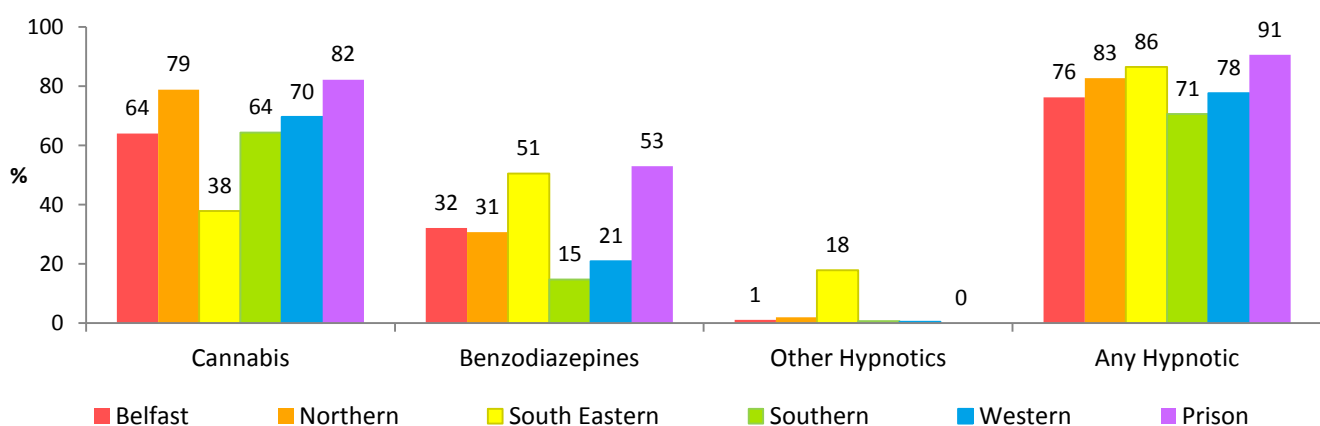


Use by Trust

Hypnotic drugs were used by the majority of clients ranging from 71% of those in the Southern Trust to 91% of those in prison. However the level of use of individual hypnotic drugs varied widely across Trusts.

Cannabis was the most commonly reported drug across all Trust areas with the exception of the South Eastern Trust area (38%). By contrast, Cannabis was used by four-fifths of clients in prison (82%) and the Northern Trust area (79%).

Over half of those in prison (53%) and those in the South Eastern Trust area (51%) reported having used Benzodiazepines. Use of Other Hypnotics was relatively low in all Trusts with the exception of the South Eastern Trust area (18%), with the vast majority of these having been prescribed.



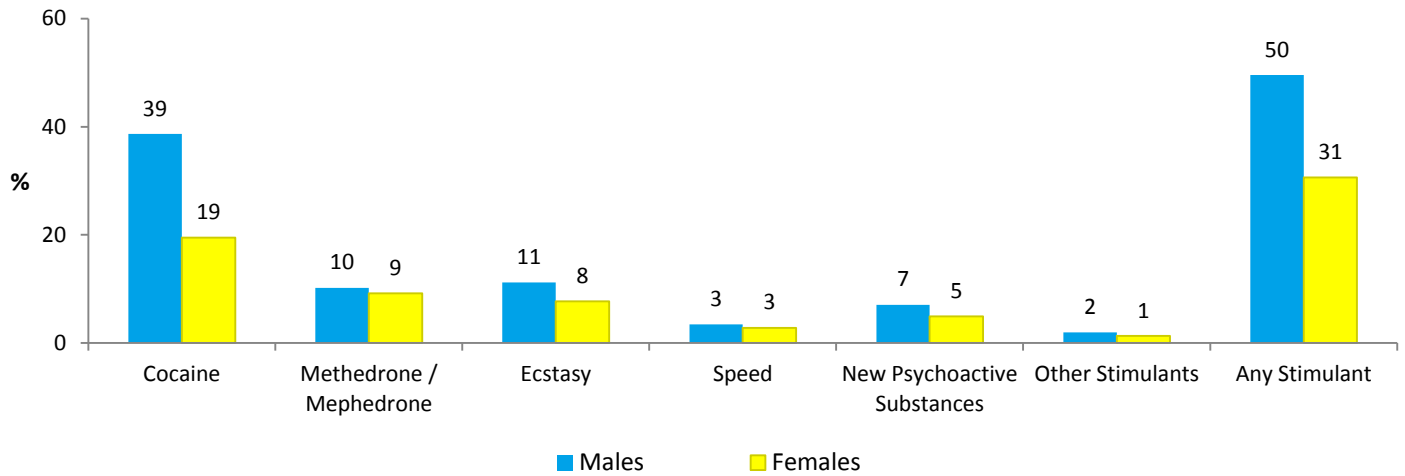
Comparison of use between 2014/15 and 2015/16

Use of hypnotics among male clients rose from 81% in 2014/15 to 84% in 2015/16, while there was no substantial change in use of hypnotics among female clients. There was no change in the use of Cannabis or Benzodiazepines.

Use of Stimulant Drugs

Use by gender

Male clients (50%) were more likely to use stimulant drugs than female clients (31%). Use of Cocaine among males (39%) was double that of females (19%).



Frequency of use

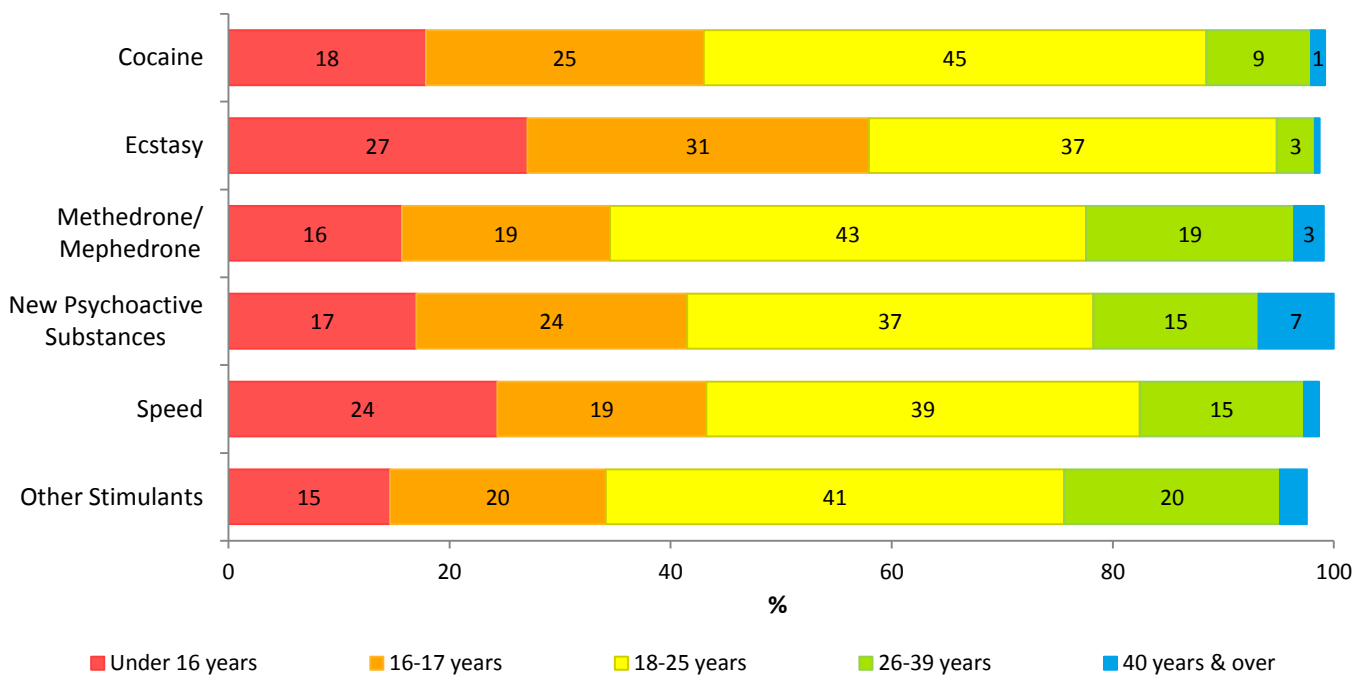
Four-fifths of those who used New Psychoactive Substances did so at least on a weekly basis. This was also true for 73% of clients using Methedrone / Mephedrone, 64% of clients using Cocaine, 55% of Speed users, 55% of Ecstasy users and 61% of clients using other stimulant drugs.

Route of Use

The main route of use for Cocaine (90%) and Methedrone / Mephedrone (69%) was by sniffing, while the main route of use for Ecstasy (93%) was orally.

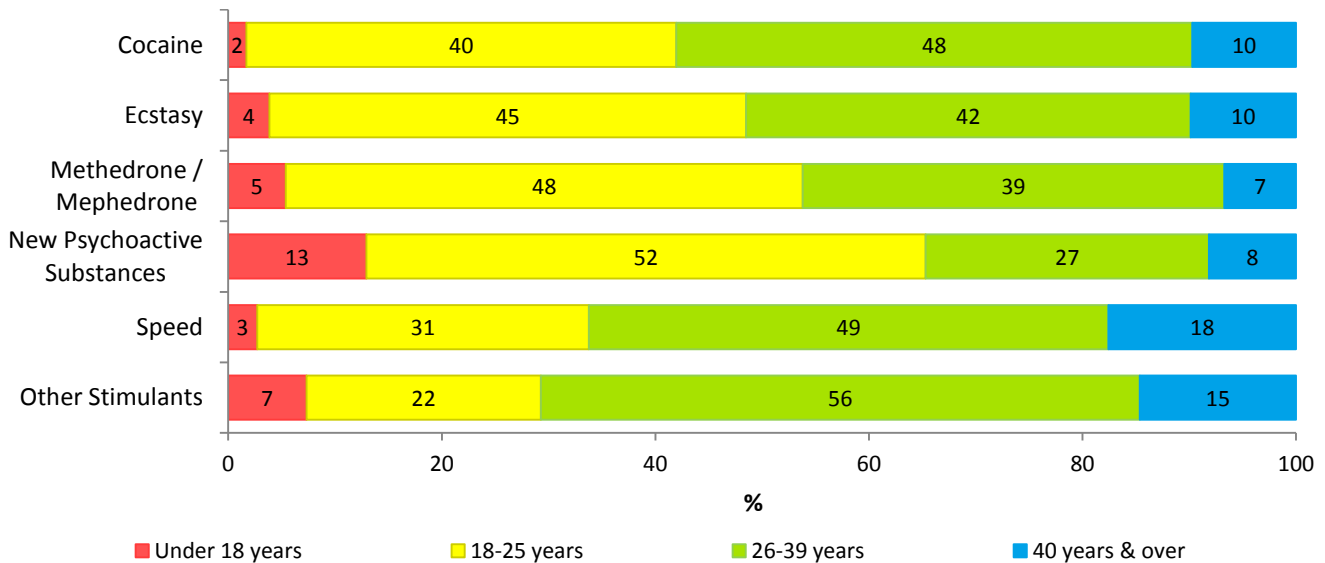
Age of first use

For all stimulant drugs, the highest percentage of clients first used them between the age of 18 and 25 years. Three-fifths of those who used Ecstasy (58%) first used it at under eighteen years of age.



Age at presentation for treatment

Two-thirds of clients using New Psychoactive Substances presented for treatment aged under 25 years. This was higher than for Methedrone / Mephedrone (54%). Almost half of those who used Speed (49%) and Cocaine (48%) presented for treatment at between 26 and 39 years.



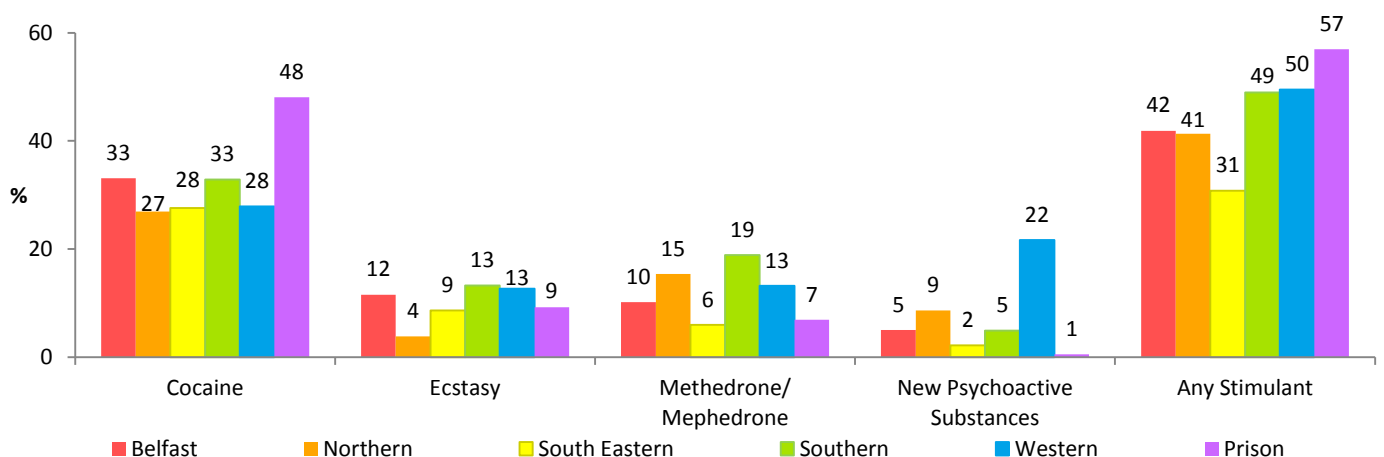
Use by Trust

Use of any stimulant drug varied across the Trust areas ranging from a third of clients (31%) within the South Eastern Trust to half of clients (50%) in the Western Trust. Almost three-fifths of clients in prison (57%) used stimulant drugs.

Cocaine was used by half of clients in prison (48%). Outside Prison its use ranged from 27% of clients in the Northern Trust to 33% in the Belfast and Southern Trust areas.

The highest proportion of clients that used Ecstasy occurred in the Southern and Western Trust areas (13%). Methedrone / Mephedrone was used by a fifth of clients in the Southern Trust area (19%).

The use of New Psychoactive Substances was highest in the Western Trust (22%). Speed was used by 6% of clients in Prison and 5% of clients in the South Eastern Trust area, but by 1-2% of clients in all other Trust areas.



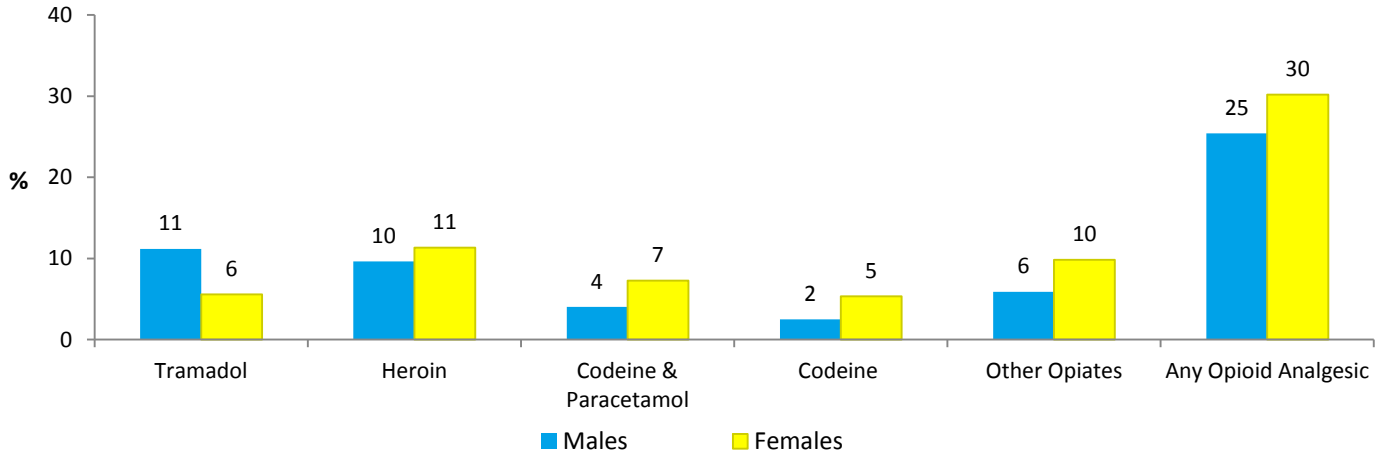
Comparison of use between 2014/15 and 2015/16

Use of Stimulants among males decreased from 53% in 2014/15 to 50% in 2015/16, while there was no significant change in use among females. Use of Methedrone / Mephedrone decreased from 17% to 10% of clients while use of New Psychoactive Substances increased from 4% to 7% of clients.

Use of Opioid Analgesic Drugs

Use by gender

Females (30%) were more likely than males (25%) to use Opioid Analgesics. Females were more likely to use Codeine & Paracetamol, Codeine and Other Opiates than males. Conversely, more males (11%) used Tramadol than females (6%).



Frequency of use

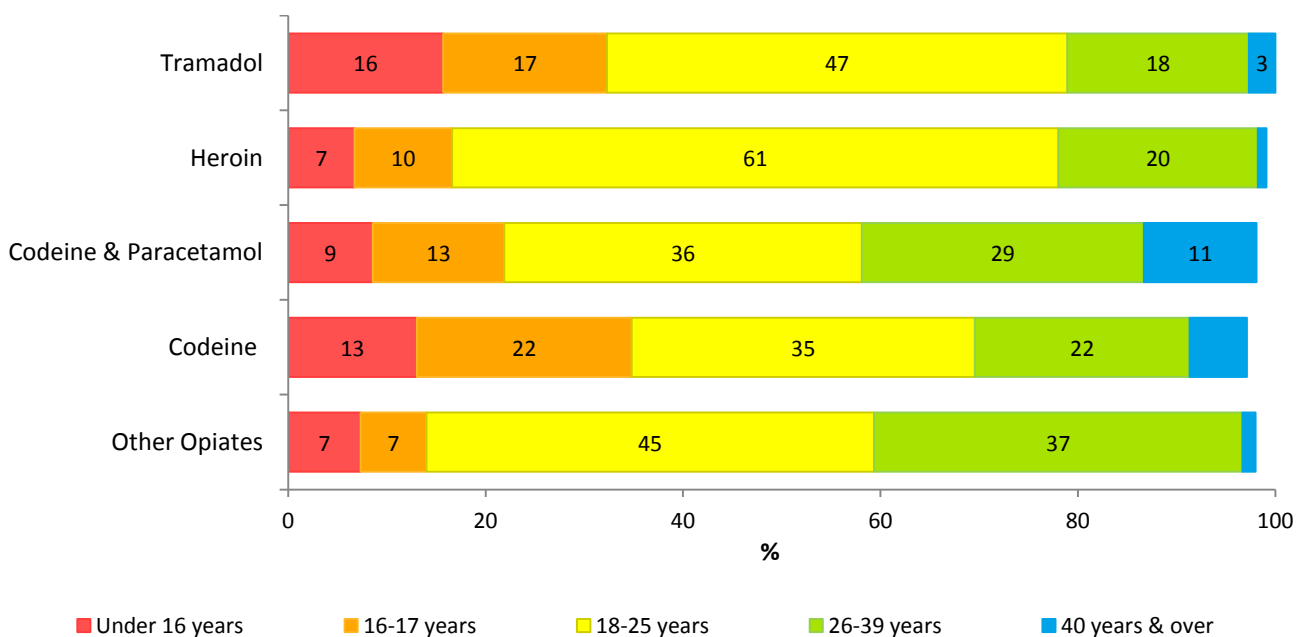
The majority of those using opioid analgesics used them on a daily basis. Over four-fifths of Codeine & Paracetamol users (86%) and Codeine users (83%), and around two-thirds of Tramadol users (70%), Other Opiate users (68%) and Heroin users (62%) took these drugs daily.

Route of Use

Just over half of Heroin users (54%) injected it, while 43% smoked it. The main route of use for Codeine & Paracetamol, Tramadol, Codeine and Other Opiates was orally.

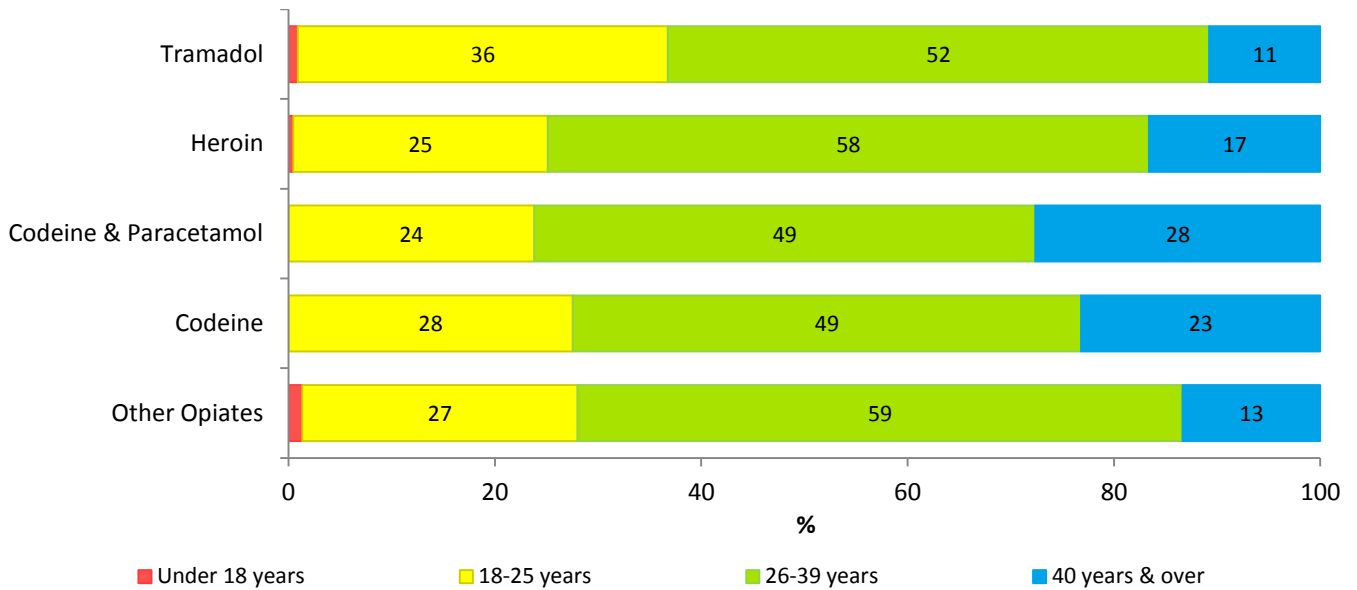
Age of first use

The highest proportion of clients first used an opioid analgesic drug between the age of 18 and 25 years. Three-fifths of clients (61%) with problem Heroin use first used it at this age.



Age at presentation for treatment

The highest proportion of clients using each opioid analgesic drug presented for treatment aged between 26 and 39 years.

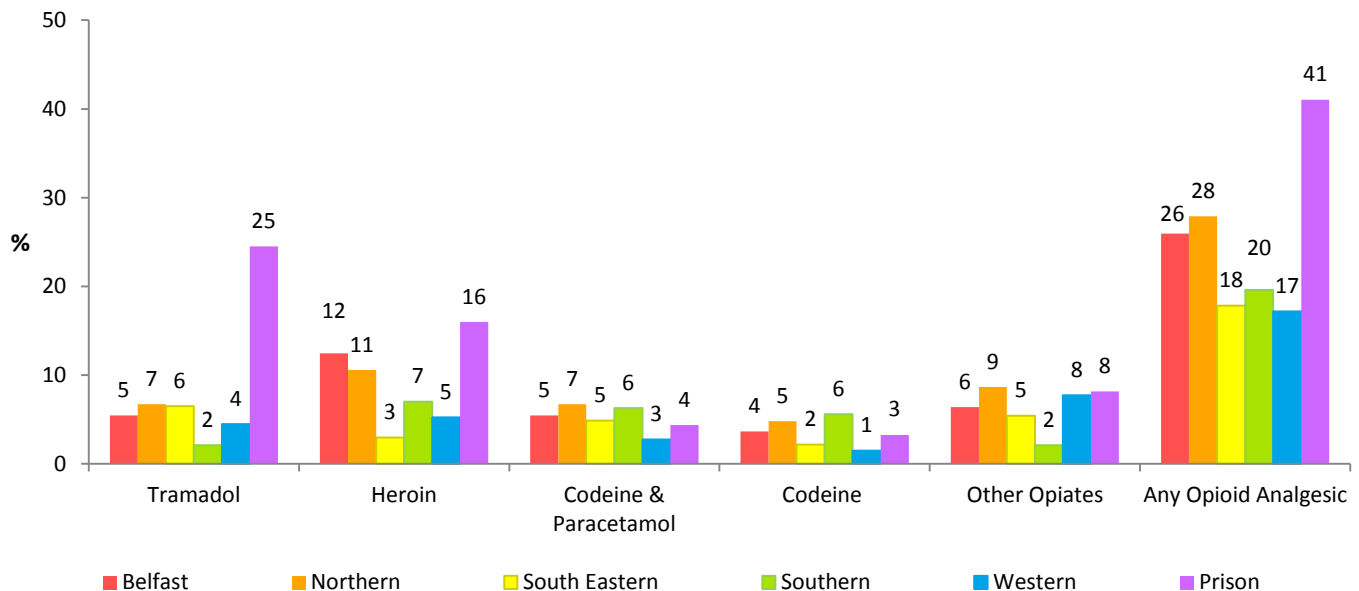


Use by Trust

Use of opioid analgesic drugs was highest in prisons (41%). Use within the Northern (28%) and Belfast (26%) Trust areas was higher than in the other Trust areas.

A quarter of clients in prisons used Tramadol, almost four times the proportion in the highest Trust.

Use of Heroin ranged from 3% in the South Eastern Trust to 12% of clients in the Belfast Trust. Almost a fifth of prison clients (16%) used Heroin.



Comparison of use between 2014/15 and 2015/16

Overall use of opioid analgesic drugs among clients fell from 32% in 2014/15 to 26% in 2015/16. Use of Tramadol or Heroin among clients remained similar, however use of Codeine and Other Opiates decreased.

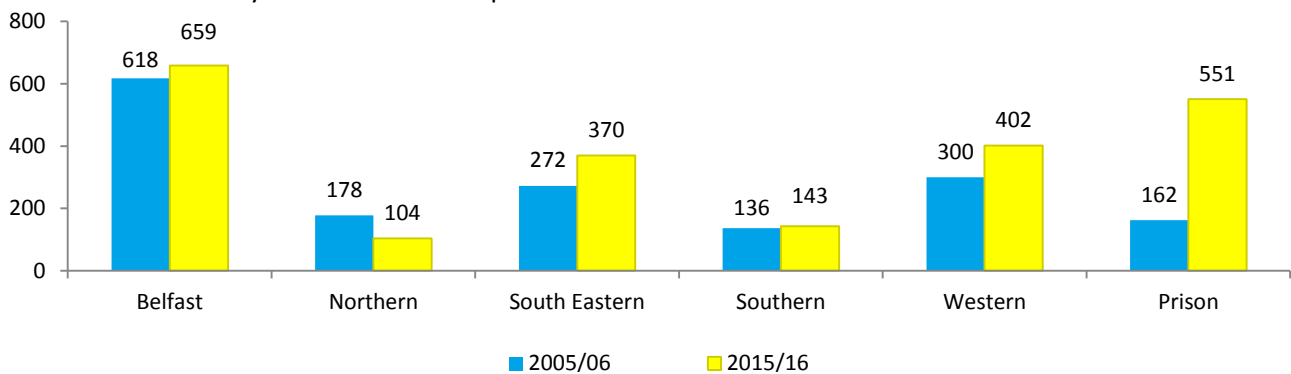
Use of Solvents / Other Drugs

Solvents were used by just 1% of all clients in the region. Over two-thirds of users (70%) first used them under the age of sixteen. Over four-fifths of solvent users (83%) used it at least on a weekly basis. The route of use for solvents for the majority of clients was sniffing (96%).

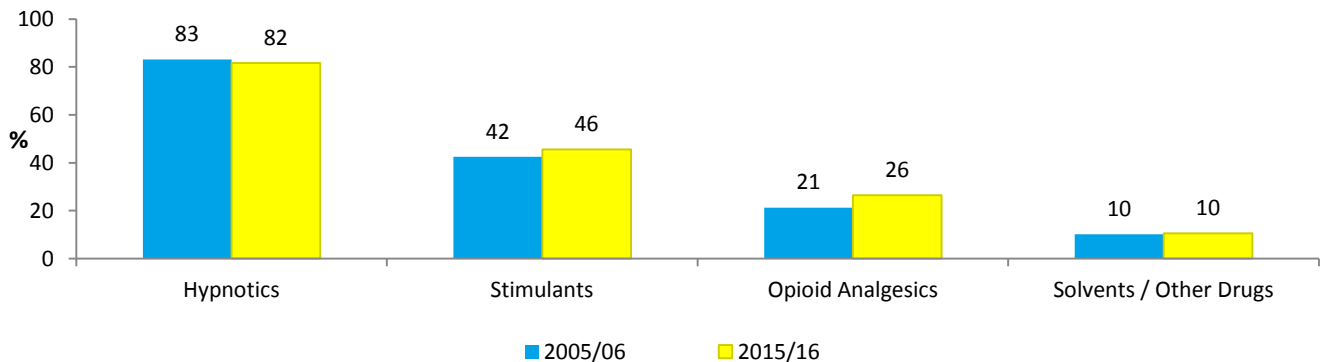
The other drugs category includes hallucinogens, steroids and other drugs rarely reported by clients. Other drugs were used by 10% of clients. Use across the Trusts varied from 7% of clients in the Southern Trust area to 12% in the Belfast Trust. Other drugs were most likely to be used as a fourth or fifth drug rather than as a main drug. Over half of those who used these drugs (55%) did so on a daily basis.

Comparison of use in 2015/16 with 2005/06

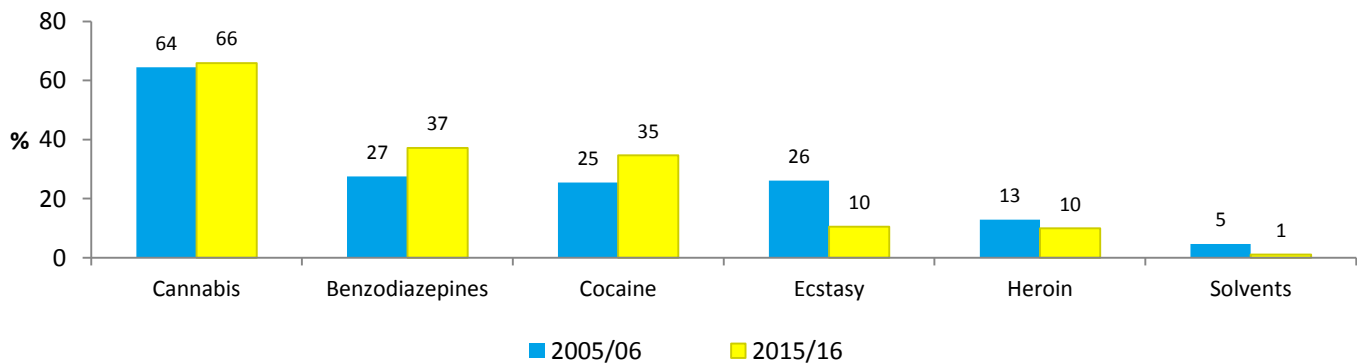
The number of clients recorded in treatment for drug misuse has risen from 1,666 in 2005/06 to 2,229 in 2015/16. This increase can mainly be attributed to reported increases from the Prisons.



There was little difference in the use of Hypnotic and Stimulant drugs by clients between 2005/06 and 2015/16, while the use of Opioid Analgesics increased from 21% to 26%.



Between 2005/06 and 2015/16, there was no change in Cannabis use. Use of cocaine increased from 25% of clients to 35%, while use of Ecstasy fell from 26% of clients to 10%. Use of Heroin fell from 13% of clients to 10% and use of solvents dropped from 5% to 1%.



Summary Statistics Map by Trust

Belfast HSC Trust



Number of clients: 659 (30%)

Most commonly used drugs:

1. Cannabis: 64%
2. Cocaine : 33%
3. Benzodiazepines: 32%
4. =Ecstasy & Heroin: 12%

12% of clients have injected.

Northern HSC Trust



Number of clients: 104 (5%)

Most commonly used drugs:

1. Cannabis: 79%
2. Benzodiazepines : 31%
3. Cocaine: 27%
4. Methedrone/Mephedrone: 15%

11% of clients have injected.

South Eastern HSC Trust



Number of clients: 370 (17%)

Most commonly used drugs:

1. Benzodiazepines: 51%
2. Cannabis: 38%
3. Cocaine: 28%
4. Other Hypnotics: 18%

10% of clients have injected.

Southern HSC Trust



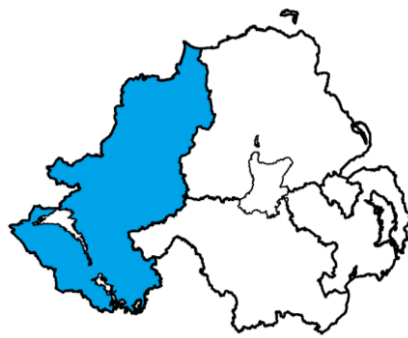
Number of clients: 143 (6%)

Most commonly used drugs:

1. Cannabis: 64%
2. Cocaine: 33%
3. Methedrone/Mephedrone: 19%
4. Benzodiazepines: 15%

8% of clients have injected.

Western HSC Trust



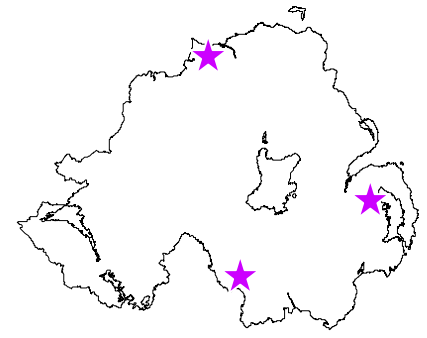
Number of clients: 402 (18%)

Most commonly used drugs:

1. Cannabis: 70%
2. Cocaine: 28%
3. New Psychoactive Substances: 22%
4. Benzodiazepines: 21%

13% of clients have injected.

HM Prisons (Marked with stars ★)



Number of clients: 551 (25%)

Most commonly used drugs:

1. Cannabis: 82%
2. Benzodiazepines : 53%
3. Cocaine: 48%
4. Tramadol: 25%

9% of clients have injected.