



New South Wales

2023-24 Drug-related hospitalisations (excluding alcohol and tobacco)



16,166

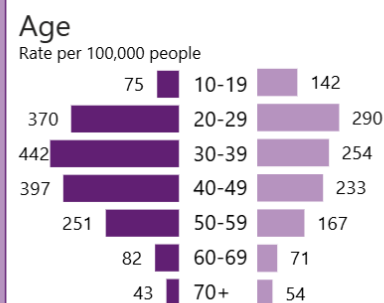
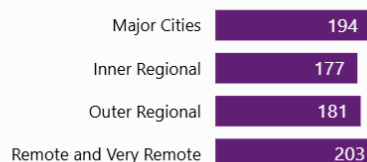
Number of hospitalisations

197

Rate per 100,000 people

Remoteness

Rate per 100,000 people



Drug	Rate per 100,000 people	
	2022-23	2023-24
All drugs	191.7	197.1 ▲
Amphetamine-type stimulants	55.8	60.4 ▲
Methamphetamine*	45.5	49.6 ▲
Antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs	26.3	26.5
Cannabinoids	28.2	24.6 ▼
Opioids	20.6	23.5 ▲
Non-opioid analgesics	16.2	13.5 ▼
Antipsychotics and neuroleptics	8.8	7.6 ▼
Antidepressants	7.7	6.6 ▼
GHB*	5.9	8.0 ▲
Cocaine	6.3	7.0
Volatile solvents	1.7	1.8
MDMA/Ecstasy*	1.9	1.6
Hallucinogens	0.6	1.4

Note: The ▲ up arrow indicates a statistically significant increase, while the ▼ down arrow indicates a statistically significant decrease in population rates from 2022-23 to 2023-24. *Indicates a specific drug type within a broader drug group.

Overall trend

There were 16,166 hospitalisations with a drug-related principal diagnosis in [New South Wales](#) in 2023-24, representing 0.47% of all hospitalisations in New South Wales.

This corresponds to a rate of 197 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, which was 2.8% higher than the rate in 2022-23 (192 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (Table A18 in [Appendix](#)), and the first significant annual increase since 2016-17 ([Figure 1](#)).

Sex

In 2023-24, the rate of hospitalisations was higher among [males](#) than females (230 versus 165 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, respectively).

Age

In 2023-24, hospitalisation rates were highest among those aged 30-39, followed by 20-29 and 40-49 (347, 332, and 315 per 100,000 people, respectively). Females tended to be younger than males, with the highest rates among those aged 20-29; rates among females aged 10-19 were twice those of males. Among males, rates were highest in the 30-39 age group.

Remoteness Area of Usual Residence

The highest rate of hospitalisations in 2023-24 was observed in [remote and very remote](#) New South Wales

(203 hospitalisations per 100,000 people), while the number of hospitalisations was highest in major city areas (12,518 hospitalisations) ([Figure 2](#)).

External Cause of Drug Poisoning

In 2023-24, 30% of drug-related hospitalisations in New South Wales were due to drug poisoning. Over three-fifths (63%) of drug poisoning-related hospitalisations were intentional (37 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) and 27% were unintentional (15 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) ([Figure 3](#)).

Drug Type

In 2023-24, hospitalisation rates were [highest](#) for amphetamine-type stimulants, at 60 hospitalisations per 100,000 people ([Figure 4](#)).

Compared to 2022-23, there were significant decreases in the 2023-24 rates of hospitalisations related to:

- non-opioid analgesics (▼16%),
- antidepressants (▼15%),
- antipsychotics and neuroleptics (▼13%), and
- cannabinoids (▼13%) (Table A18 in [Appendix](#)).

In contrast, there were significant increases in the rates of hospitalisations related to:

- hallucinogens (▲112%),
- GHB (▲36%),
- opioids (▲14%),
- methamphetamine (▲8.9%), and
- amphetamine-type stimulants (▲8.1%).

Figure 1. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, overall and by sex, New South Wales, 2004-05 to 2023-24.

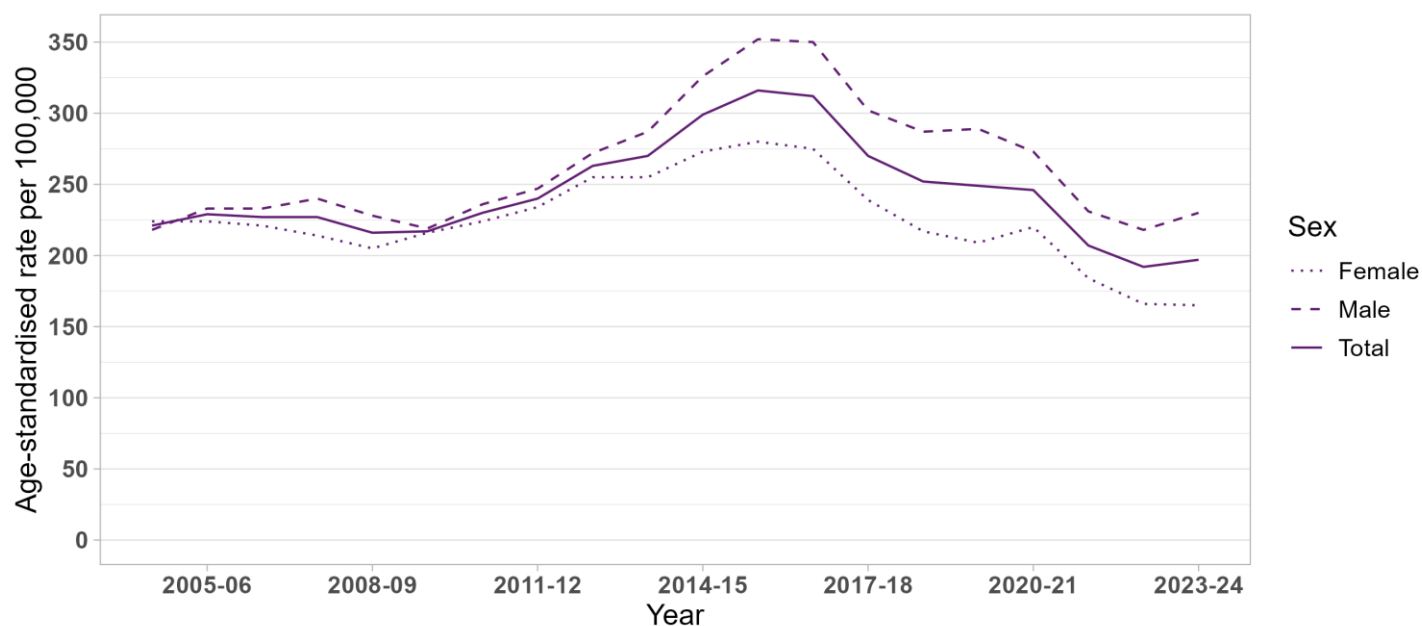
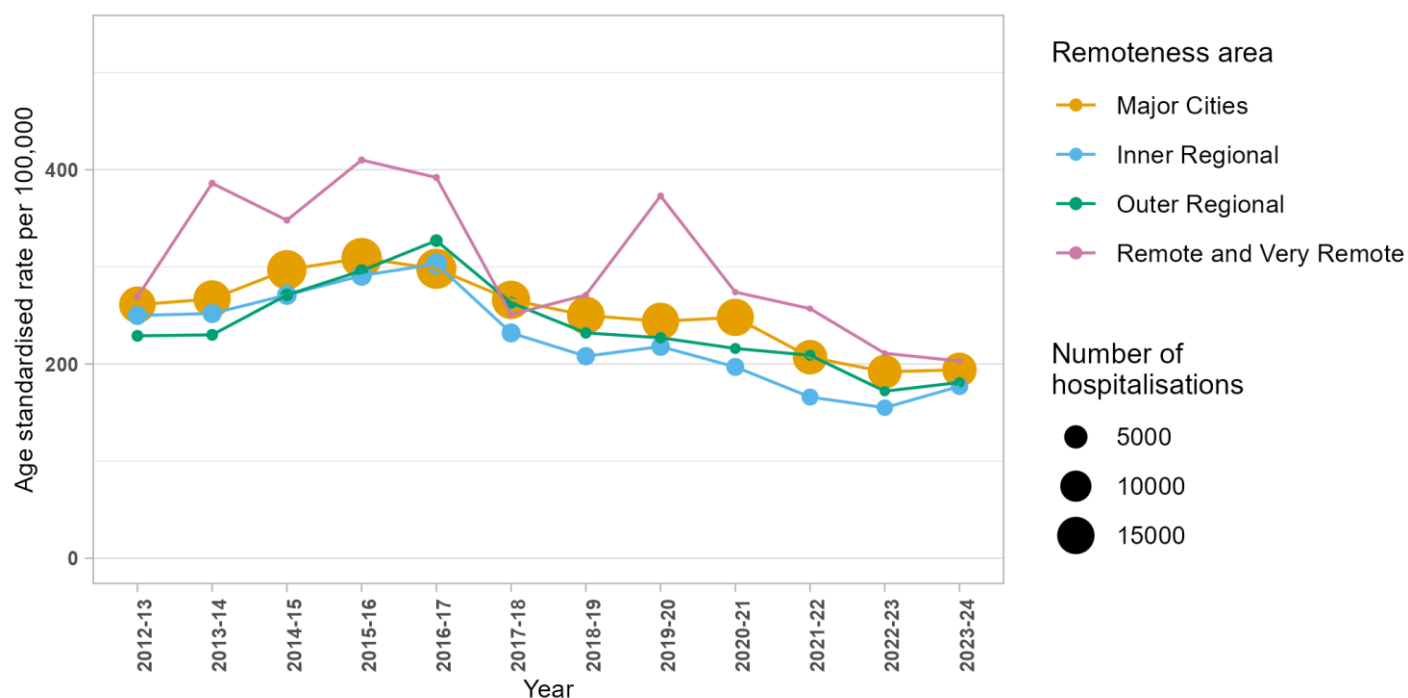


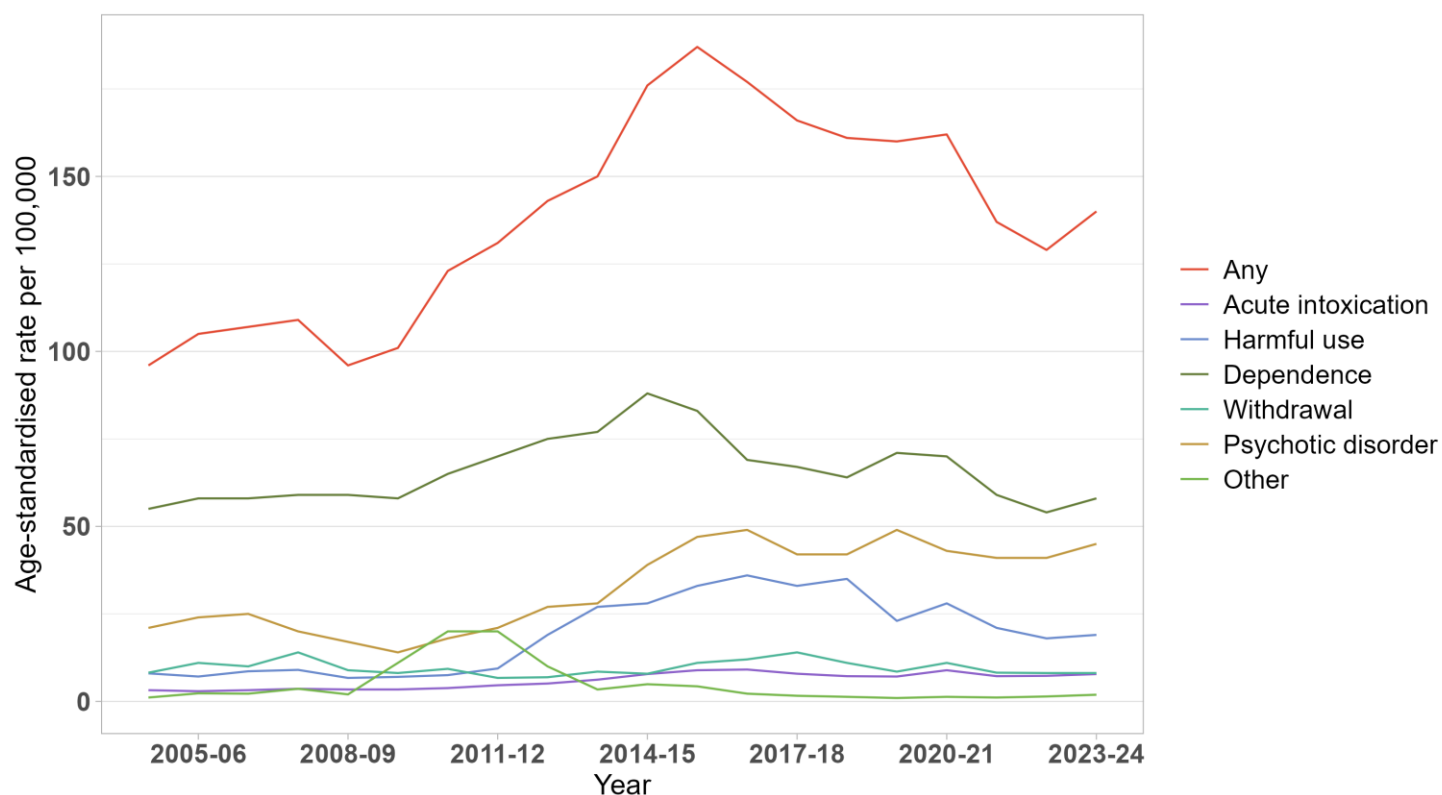
Figure 2. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by remoteness area of usual residence, New South Wales, 2012-13 to 2023-24.



Note: The size (area) of the bubble is proportional to the number of hospitalisations. Data on remoteness area are only available from 2012-13.

Figure 3. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by principal diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorder due to substance use (A) and external cause of poisoning (B), New South Wales, 2004-05 to 2023-24.

(A) Mental & behavioural disorder due to substance use



(B) Drug poisoning

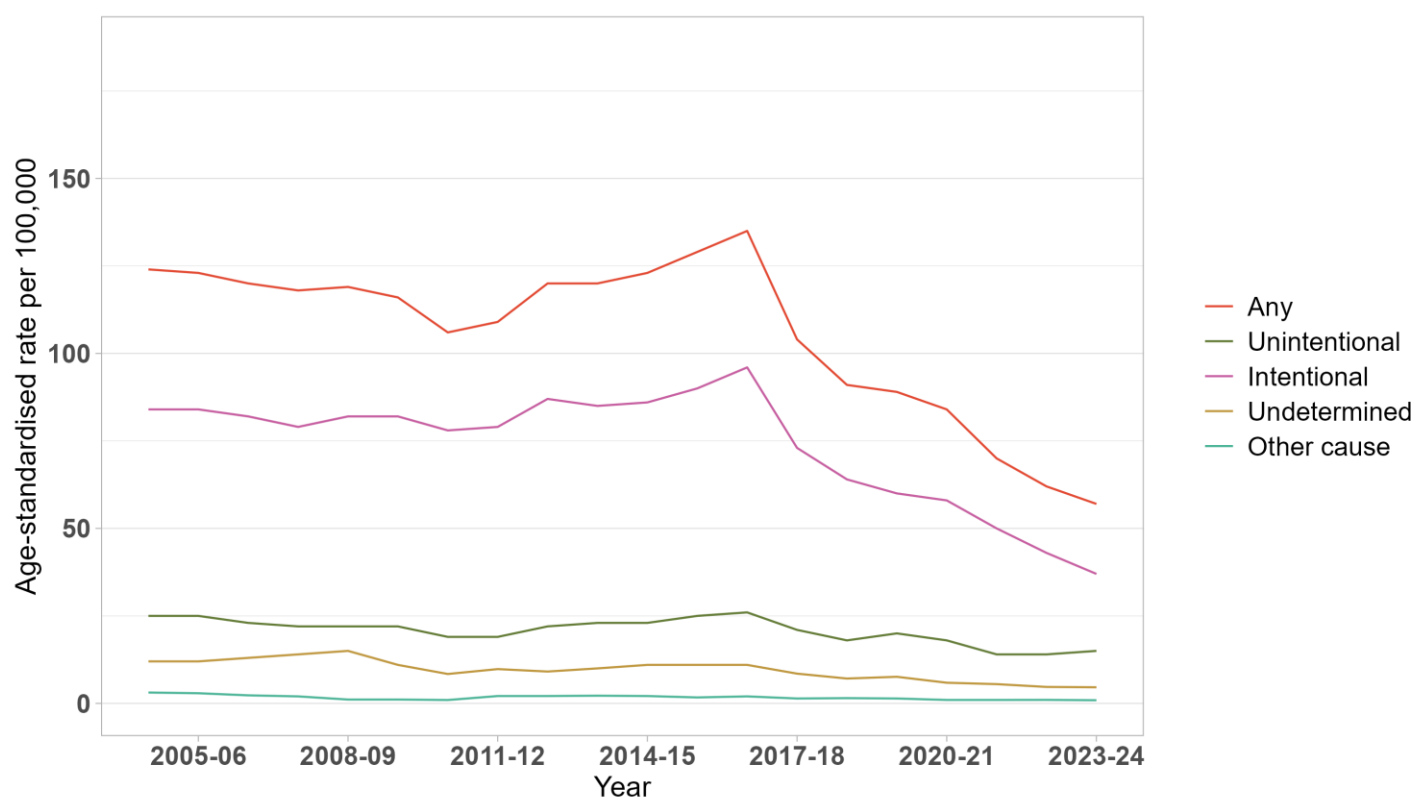


Figure 4. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by drug identified in the principal diagnosis, New South Wales, 2004-05 to 2023-24.

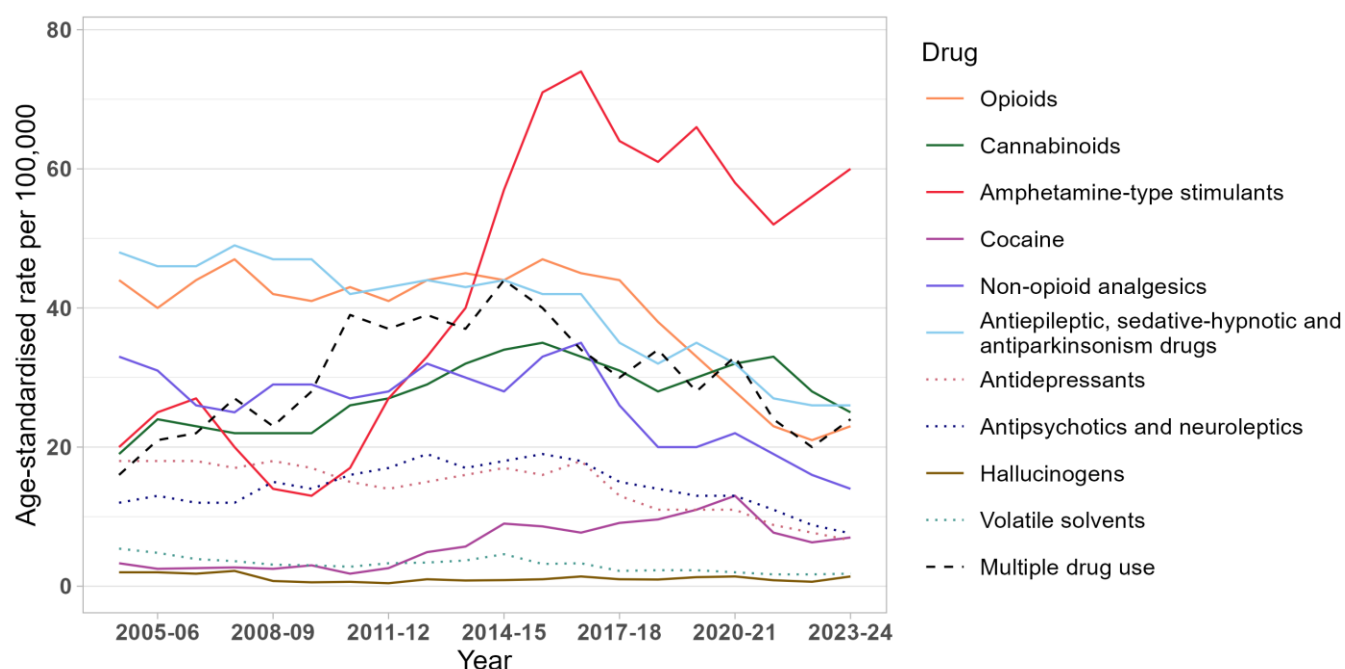


Table A18. Age-standardised rate (per 100,000 people) of drug-related hospitalisations in 2023-24 and average percent change for difference compared to 2022-23, by drug type identified in the principal diagnosis, New South Wales

Drug	Number 2023-24	Age-standardised rate (95% CI)		APC (95% CI)
		2023-24	2022-23	2023-24 vs 2022-23
All drugs	16,166	197 (194, 200)	192 (189, 195)	2.8 (0.6, 5.1)
Amphetamine-type stimulants	4,854	60 (59, 62)	56 (54, 57)	8.1 (3.8, 12.6)
<i>Methamphetamine*</i>	3,987	50 (48, 51)	46 (44, 47)	8.9 (4.1, 13.9)
Antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs	2,233	26 (25, 28)	26 (25, 27)	0.71 (-5.11, 6.89)
Cannabinoids	2,008	25 (23, 26)	28 (27, 29)	-13 (-18, -7)
Multiple drug use	1,973	24 (23, 25)	20 (19, 21)	25 (17, 33)
Opioids	1,976	23 (22, 25)	21 (20, 22)	14 (7, 22)
Non-opioid analgesics	1,103	14 (13, 14)	16 (15, 17)	-16 (-23, -9)
<i>GHB*</i>	648	8.0 (7.4, 8.6)	5.9 (5.4, 6.4)	36 (21, 53)
Antipsychotics and neuroleptics	626	7.6 (7.0, 8.2)	8.8 (8.1, 9.5)	-13 (-22, -4)
Cocaine	570	7.0 (6.5, 7.6)	6.3 (5.7, 6.9)	12 (-1, 26)
Antidepressants	556	6.6 (6.0, 7.1)	7.7 (7.1, 8.4)	-15 (-24, -5)
Volatile solvents	157	1.8 (1.5, 2.1)	1.7 (1.4, 2.0)	7.0 (-14.7, 34.3)
<i>MDMA/ecstasy*</i>	122	1.6 (1.3, 1.9)	1.9 (1.6, 2.2)	-17 (-35, 6)
Hallucinogens	110	1.4 (1.1, 1.6)	0.64 (0.48, 0.85)	112 (52, 197)

Note: 95% confidence intervals for the age-standardised rate and average percent change (APC) are shown in brackets. Please refer to our [methods](#) document on 'Presentation of results' for interpretation of average percent change. Please also refer to our [methods](#) document on 'Scope of the data' and 'Coding of hospitalisations' for specifications of data selected and all exclusions. *Indicates a specific drug type within a broader drug group.

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Please note that as with all statistical reports there is the potential for minor revisions to data in this report. Please refer to the online version at [Drug Trends](#).

Please contact the Drug Trends team with any queries regarding this publication: drugtrends@unsw.edu.au.

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Data source

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this work was undertaken. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that same respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise their continuing connection to Country, culture and community.

Related Links

- Hospitalisations data visualisations: https://drugtrends.shinyapps.io/hospital_separations
- Hospitalisations methods document: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/ndarc/resources/trends-drug-related-hospitalisations-australia-2004-2024>
- For other Drug Trends publications on drug-related hospitalisations and drug-induced deaths in Australia, go to: [National Illicit Drug Indicators Project \(NIDIP\)](#)
- For more information on NDARC research, go to: [National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre | Medicine & Health - UNSW Sydney](#)
- For more information about the AIHW and NHMD, go to: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/>
- For more information on ICD coding go to: [ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS Eleventh Edition | Resources | IHACPA](#)
- For more research from the Drug Trends program go to: [Drug Trends | National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre - UNSW Sydney](#)