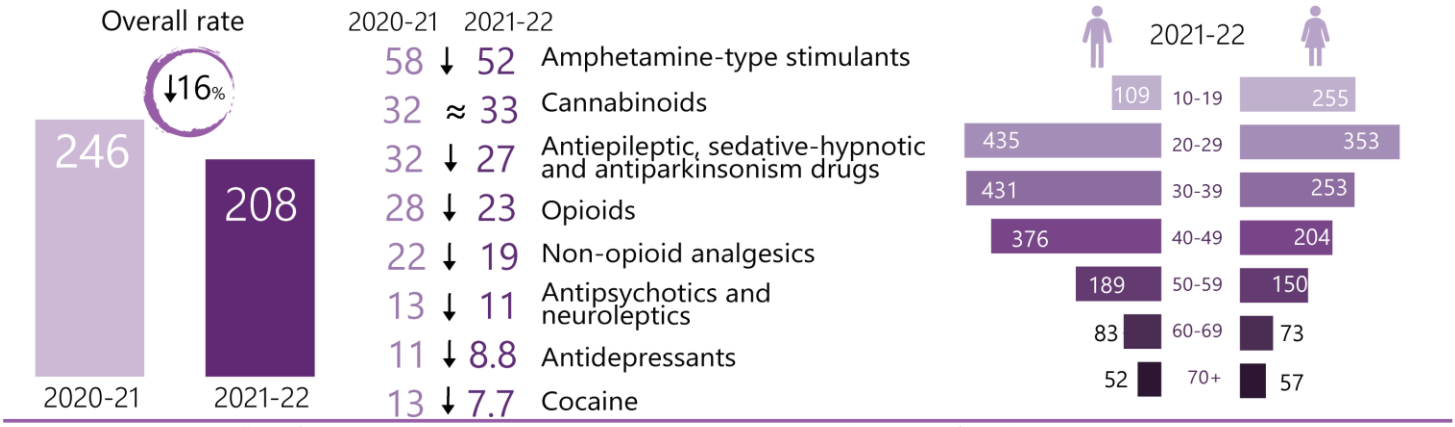
New South Wales

Drug-related hospitalisations per 100,000 people (excluding alcohol and tobacco)



Note: Arrows indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2020-21 and 2021-22 (p<0.05); sign "≈" indicates no significant change.

There were 16,169 hospitalisations with a drug-related principal diagnosis in New South Wales in 2021-22, equivalent to 0.52% of all hospitalisations in New South Wales.

This is equivalent to 208 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, which was 16% lower than the rate in 2020-21 (246 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (Table A18, Appendix), but similar to the rate observed at the beginning of monitoring (**Figure 1**).

Sex

In 2021-22, the rate of hospitalisations was higher among males than females (232 versus 184 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, respectively).

Age

In 2021-22, the rate of hospitalisations was highest among the 20-29 age group, followed by the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups (396, 342, and 289 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, respectively). Among males, the rate of drug-related hospitalisations was highest in the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups, and among females in the 20-29 age group.

Remoteness Area of Usual Residence

The highest rate of hospitalisations in 2021-22 was observed in remote and very remote New South Wales (258 hospitalisations per 100,000 people), while the number of hospitalisations was highest in major city areas (12,614 hospitalisations) (**Figure 2**).

External Cause of Drug Poisoning

In 2021-22, 35% of drug-related hospitalisations in New South Wales were due to drug poisoning. Furthermore, 70% of drug poisoning-related hospitalisations were intentional (50 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) and 21% were unintentional (14 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (**Figure 3**).

Drug Type

In 2021-22, the rate of hospitalisations was highest where there was a principal diagnosis indicating amphetamine-type stimulants (52 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (**Figure 4**).

Compared to 2020-21, there were significant decreases in the 2021-22 rates of hospitalisations related to:

- amphetamine-type stimulants (including methamphetamine),
- antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs (including GHB),
- opioids,
- non-opioid analgesics,
- antipsychotics and neuroleptics,
- antidepressants,
- cocaine, and
- hallucinogens (Table A18, Appendix).

Figure 1. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by sex, New South Wales, 2002-03 to 2021-22.

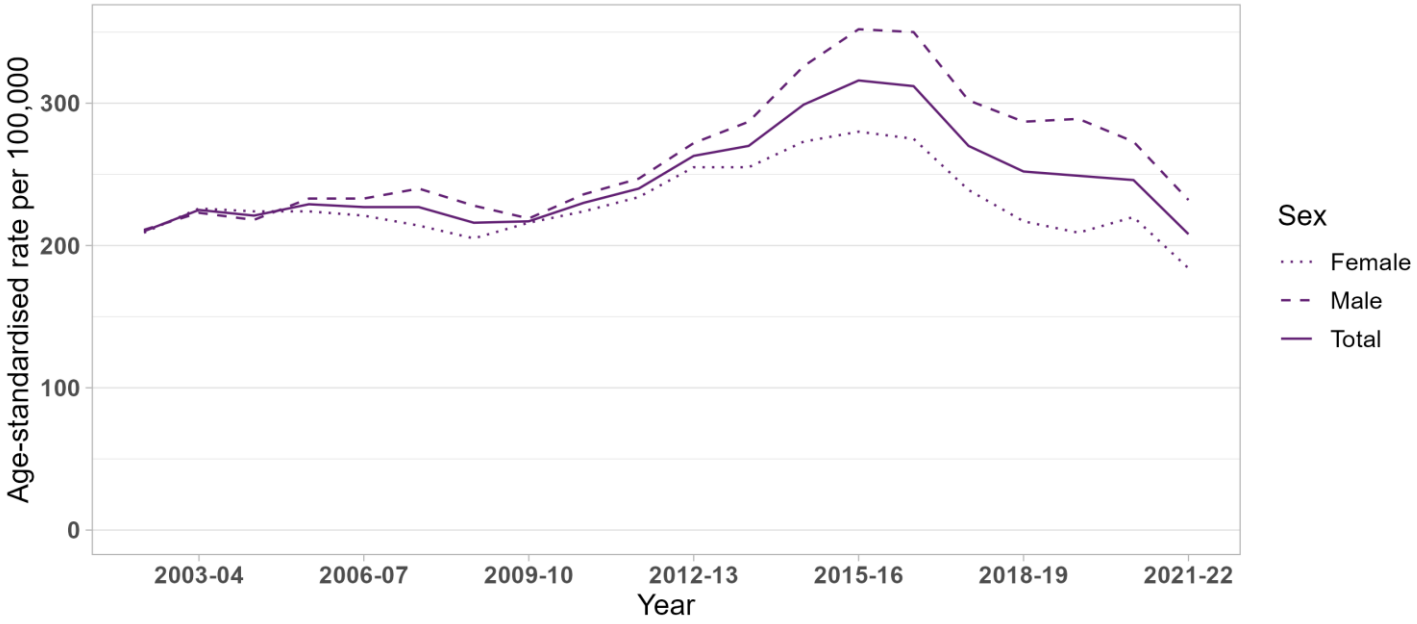
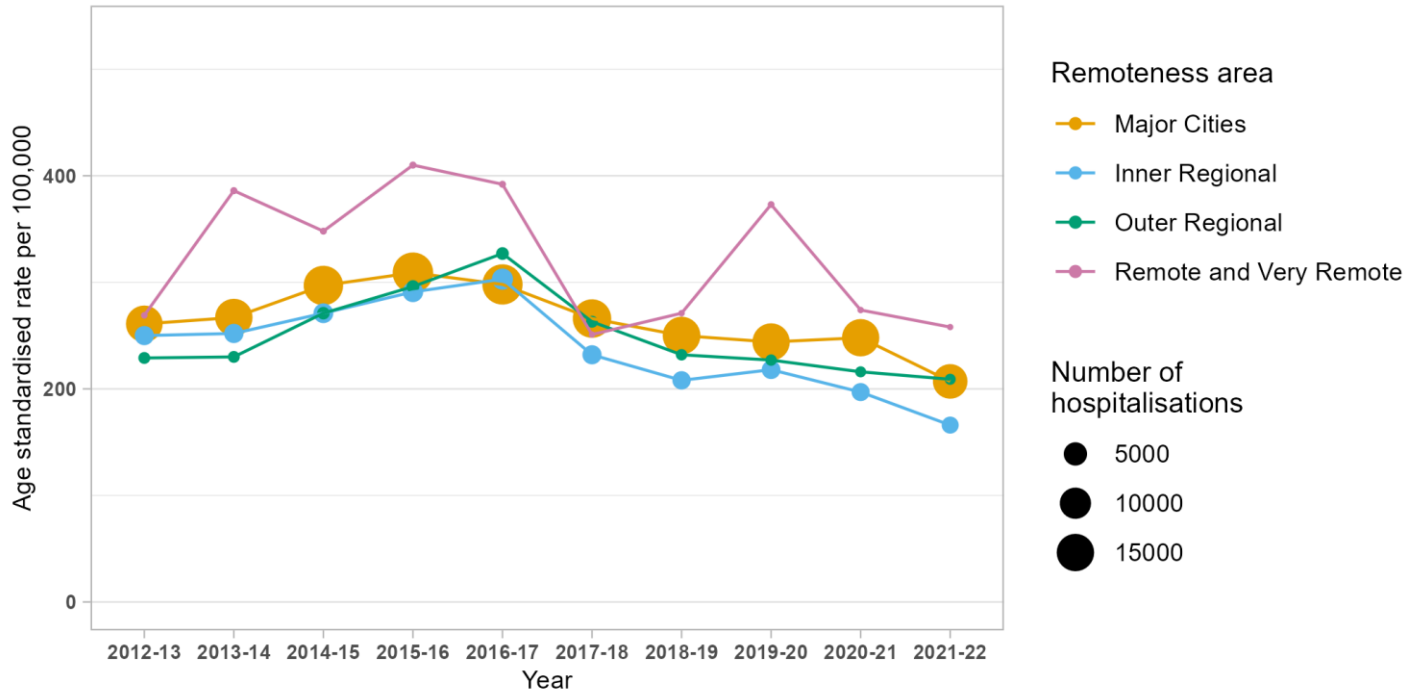


Figure 2. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by remoteness, New South Wales, 2012-13 to 2021-22.



Note: The size (area) of the bubble is proportional to the number of hospitalisations. Data on remoteness 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, 2002-03 to 2021-22.

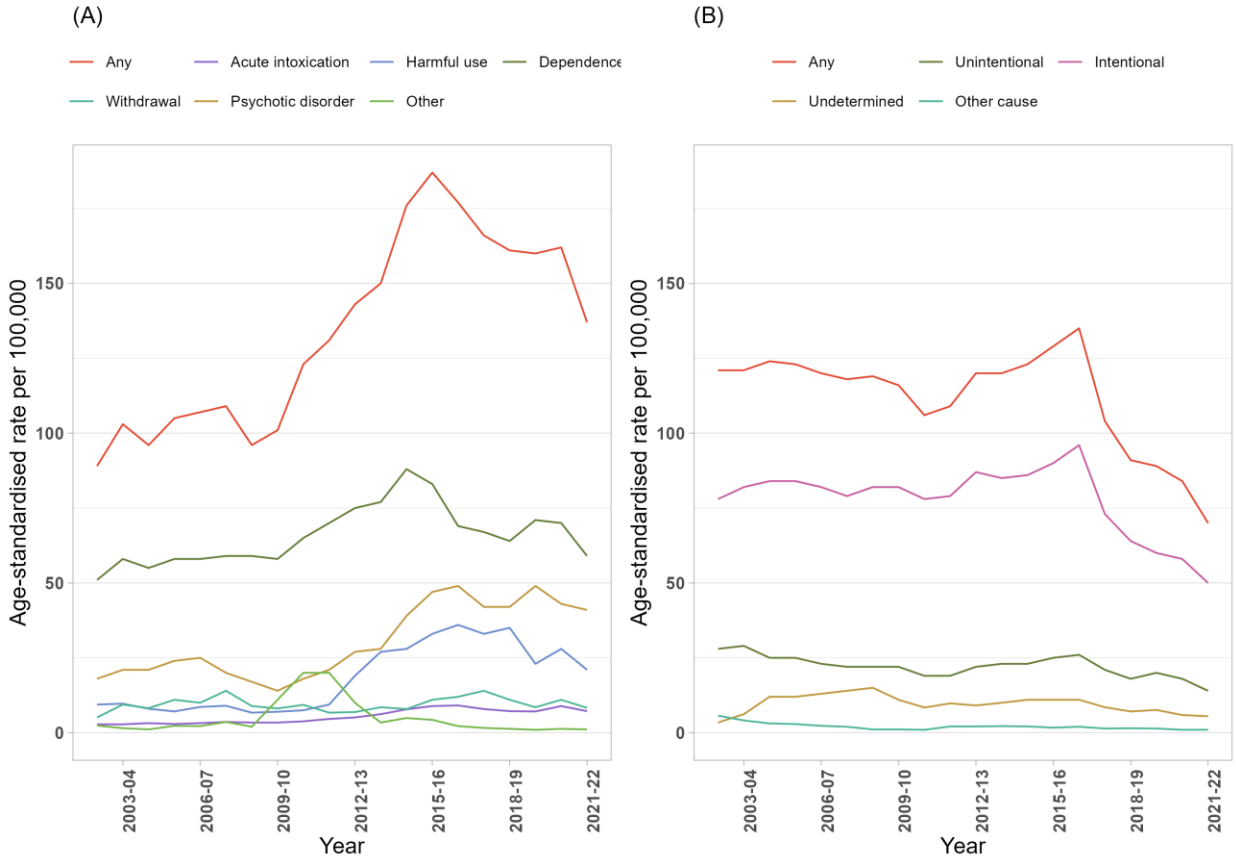


Figure 4. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by drug identified in the principal diagnosis, New South Wales, 2002-03 to 2021-22.

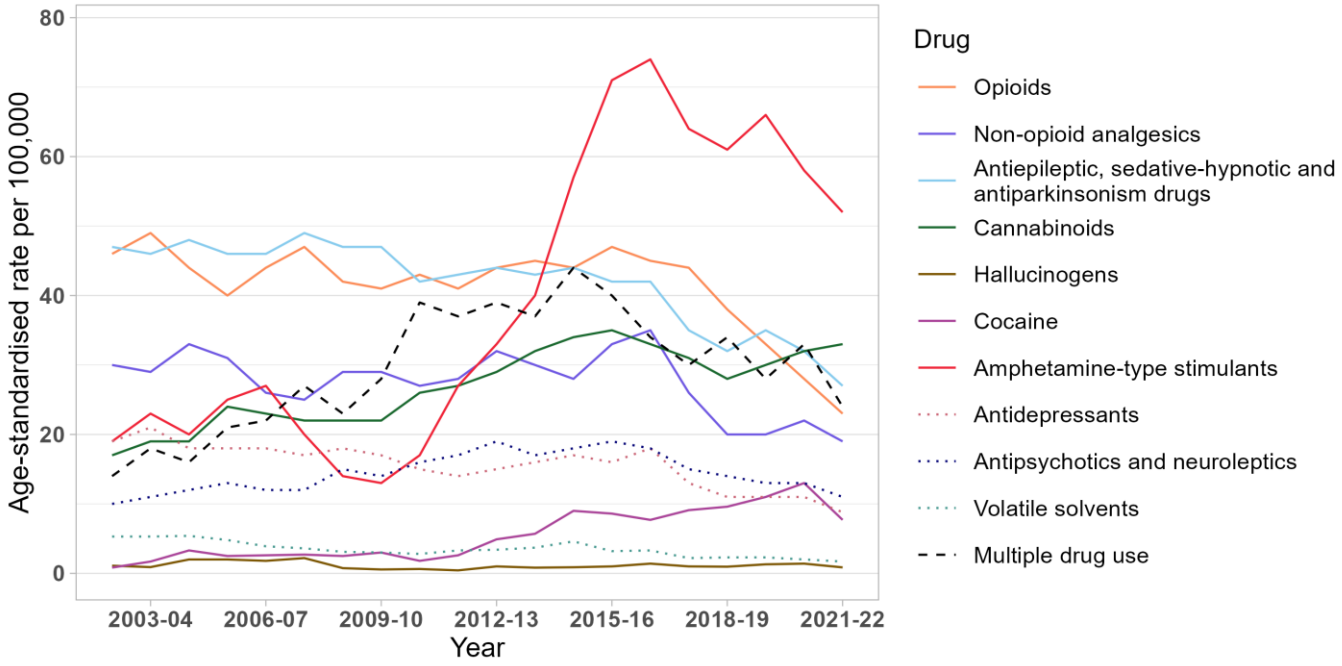


Table A18. Age-standardised rate (per 100,000 people) of drug-related hospitalisations in 2021-22 and average percent change for difference compared to 2020-21, in New South Wales by drug type identified in the principal diagnosis

Drug	Rate in 2021-22 (95% CI)	Rate in 2020-21 (95% CI)	APC (95% CI)
All drugs	208 (204, 211)	246 (243, 250)	-16 (-17, -14)
Amphetamine-type stimulants	52 (50, 53)	58 (56, 60)	-11 (-15, -7)
Methamphetamine	42 (40, 43)	47 (45, 48)	-11 (-15, -7)
Cannabinoids	33 (32, 34)	32 (31, 34)	2.7 (-2.8, 8.6)
Antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs	27 (26, 28)	32 (31, 33)	-15 (-20, -10)
Multiple drug use	24 (23, 25)	33 (32, 35)	-28 (-32, -23)
Opioids	23 (22, 24)	28 (27, 29)	-20 (-24, -14)
Non-opioid analgesics	19 (18, 20)	22 (21, 23)	-14 (-20, -7)
Antipsychotics and neuroleptics	11 (10, 11)	13 (12, 14)	-17 (-25, -9)
Antidepressants	8.8 (8.1, 9.5)	11 (10, 12)	-20 (-27, -11)
Cocaine	7.7 (7.1, 8.3)	13 (12, 14)	-40 (-46, -34)
GHB	4.2 (3.8, 4.7)	6.7 (6.2, 7.4)	-37 (-46, -28)
Volatile solvents	1.7 (1.4, 2.0)	2.0 (1.7, 2.3)	-12 (-30, 11)
Hallucinogens	0.86 (0.67, 1.10)	1.4 (1.1, 1.6)	-36 (-53, -13)

Note: 95% confidence intervals for the age-standardised rate and average percent change 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.

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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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Related Links

- Hospitalisations data visualisations: https://drugtrends.shinyapps.io/hospital_separations
- Full report and the methods document: https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/ndarc/resources/trends-drug-related-hospitalisations-australia-2002-2022
- 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