



Public Affairs Division
Central Narcotics Bureau
Police Cantonment Complex
393 New Bridge Road
Singapore 088763
FAX : (65) 6224 1686

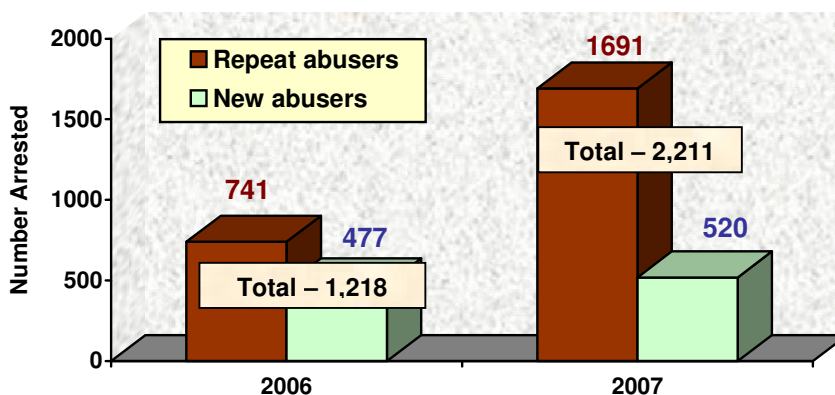
CNB NEWS RELEASE

Drug Situation for 2007

The Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) continues to sustain its intensive enforcement efforts in stemming the flow of drugs coming into Singapore as well as in suppressing the demand for drugs. In 2007, CNB mounted 53 major operations against drug traffickers and abusers, resulting in the breakup of 27 syndicated drug trafficking activities.

2 There is an overall increase in the number of drug abusers arrested in 2007 as compared to 2006. However, the number of new drug abusers remained low and the local synthetic drug abuse situation is also stable.

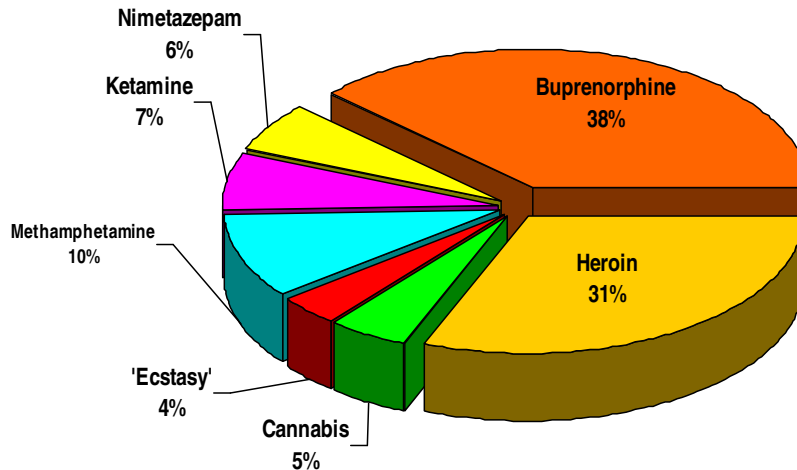
Total and New Abusers arrested



3 2,211 drug abusers were arrested in 2007 as compared to 1,218 in 2006. The increase in drug abusers arrested was confined mainly to repeat abusers, who made up 76% of total abusers arrested.

4 The number of new abusers in comparison remained low and stable at 520 and they formed 24% of total abusers arrested, down from 39% in 2006. This shows that the drug abuse problem is largely confined to the existing pool of repeat and recalcitrant drug abusers.

Abusers by Drug Type



* Due to rounding off, the percentages do not total up to 100%. Due to rounding off the percentages do not total up to 26% for synthetic drugs.

5 With the classification of buprenorphine as a controlled drug in the Misuse of Drugs Act in Aug 2006, CNB has enhanced enforcement against buprenorphine abuse. This has enabled us to rein in a significant number of buprenorphine abusers.

6 Majority (or 38%) of drug abusers arrested in 2007 were buprenorphine abusers, followed by heroin abusers at 31%. Synthetic drugs, which refer to 'Ecstasy', methamphetamine, ketamine and nimetazepam, accounted for 26% of drug abusers arrested.

Impact of Classification of Buprenorphine as a Controlled Drug

7 With the classification, CNB moved swiftly and firmly against the buprenorphine abuse problem and contained it. From August 2006 when buprenorphine was listed as a controlled drug till end 2007, CNB has arrested about 1,300 buprenorphine abusers and removed them from the streets.

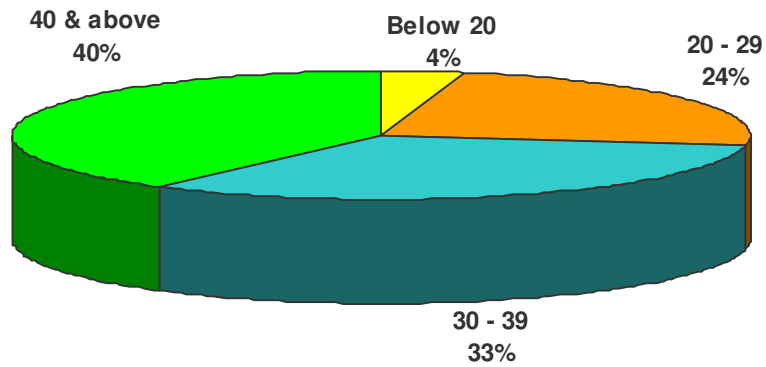
8 Our enhanced enforcement measures against buprenorphine abuse since Aug 2006 have reaped good results. The buprenorphine abuse situation has stabilised, with monthly decline in the number of buprenorphine abusers arrested in the second half of 2007. Furthermore, the price of Subutex has increased since it became a controlled drug and remains high. This is a good indication of the tight supply of buprenorphine in the illicit market.

9 The overall increase in drug abusers arrested came from the group of repeat buprenorphine and heroin abusers. Amongst them, more than 70% were liable for long term imprisonment. CNB will continue to conduct vigorous operations to take these hardcore abusers out of circulation and commit them to long-term imprisonment to prevent further abuse or contamination.

10 Notwithstanding the overall increase, abusers of the other drug types such as cannabis, ketamine and nimetazepam had registered some declines. Overall, the

local synthetic drug situation has been stable despite synthetic drug abuse remaining a serious concern in the region.

Abusers by age group

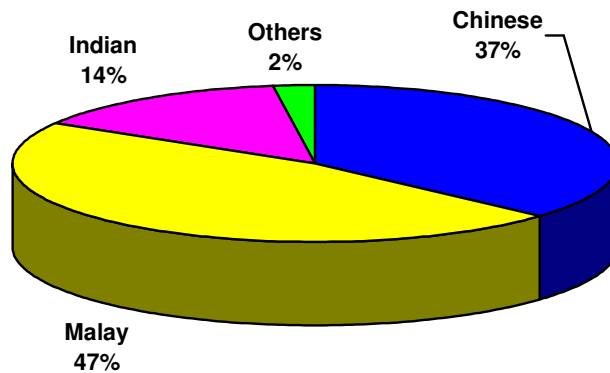


* Due to rounding off, the percentages do not total up to 100%.

11 In terms of age group, 40% of abusers arrested were from the older age group of 40 and above. Most of the abusers in this age group were buprenorphine and heroin abusers.

12 The number of young drug abusers below the age of 20 remained low and made up only 4% of total abusers arrested.

Abusers by Ethnicity



13 Our efforts in containing buprenorphine abuse saw an increase in abusers arrested across all ethnic groups. Malays formed the majority of drug abusers arrested at 47% (1,033 persons), followed by Chinese at 37% (813 persons) and Indians at 14% (313 persons). Overall, most of the Malay abusers were arrested for abuse of buprenorphine while most of the Chinese abusers were arrested for abuse of heroin.

14 While the number of Malay abusers arrested had increased, the rise was contained within the existing pool of older recalcitrant abusers. The community has worked hard to fight the drug problem and achieved good results in educating the young and ensuring that they do not fall prey to the lure of drugs. Young Malay abusers aged below 20 formed only 3% of Malay abusers arrested.

15 In addition to enforcement and preventive measures, concerted community efforts remain a critical component in our strategy to fight the drug problem.

Drug seizures

Drug type	2006	2007
Buprenorphine	2,584 tablets*	3,359 tablets
Cannabis	14.9 kg	30.8 kg
'Ecstasy'	4, 236 tablets	7,035 tablets
Heroin	6.1 kg	17.2 kg
'Ice'	0.54 kg	1.5 kg
Ketamine	5.3 kg	11.0 kg
Nimetazepam	38, 230 tablets	24, 926 tablets
'Yaba'	22 tablets	498 tablets

* Amount seized after buprenorphine became a controlled drug on 14 Aug 06

16 In terms of seizures, there was an increase in the seizure of cannabis, heroin, 'Ecstasy', ketamine and 'Ice' in 2007. For cannabis, the increased seizure was due to a large single seizure of 20 kg of cannabis in an operation conducted in Apr 2007. For heroin, CNB has successfully intercepted several seizures at wholesale level before they reached the retail levels, such as the significant seizure of 3.5 kg of heroin in Dec 2007 and three other major seizures of more than 1 kg of heroin. This has kept the average street price of heroin as high as \$50 per straw. As for ketamine, the increased in seizure was due to a large single seizure of 6.3kg which was made in Nov 2007. There were also a few significant seizures of 'Ecstasy' and 'Ice' in 2007.

17 For the whole of 2007, 3,359 Subutex tablets were seized, as compared to 2,584 seized in Aug to Dec 2006. This means that in terms of monthly average, the amount of buprenorphine seized has decreased by about half in 2007.

18 CNB has prevented a sizeable amount of illicit drugs from reaching the streets through the successful interceptions in 2007. Drug prices are high, indicating that illicit drug supplies remain scarce on the streets.

CNB remains Vigilant; Enforcement, Preventive Drug Education and Community Support continue to be critical in keeping the drug situation under control

19 The increase in drug abusers arrested in 2007 is largely due to the classification of buprenorphine as a controlled drug. This is not an unexpected development given that there was a significant number of a known buprenorphine dependant prior to the classification of the drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

20 CNB's enforcement efforts have kept a tight lid on the supply of drugs and also kept drug prices high. CNB will press on with its rigorous enforcement and take recalcitrant abusers out of circulation as well as keep the number of new abusers low through enforcement and preventive drug education.

21 Community involvement and support is another critical component in our strategy to fight the drug problem. CNB will continue to work closely with the various self-help groups to keep the drug situation under control.

Central Narcotics Bureau
April 2008