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CNB NEWS RELEASE

Vigorous enforcement keeps drug and inhalant abuse situation under control

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 2008, CNB mounted 41 major operations against drug traffickers and abusers, resulting in the breakup of 25 syndicated drug trafficking activities.

2 Vigorous and sustained enforcement have kept the local drug situation stable and under control, and have prevented any further increase in the number of drug abusers arrested.

Drug abuse situation remains stable

(a) Decline in overall abusers arrested

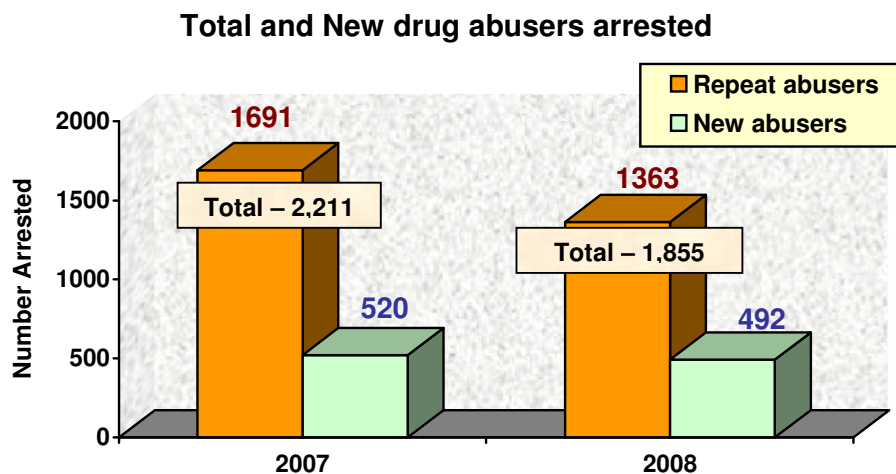


Chart 1: Total and New Drug abusers arrested

3 1,855 drug abusers were arrested in 2008 as compared to 2,211 in 2007, which is a decline of 16% in overall drug abusers arrested. Repeat abusers continued to form the majority at 73%, with 63% of them liable for long term imprisonment.

4 Despite being the majority, the number of repeat abusers had dropped by 19%, while new abusers arrested declined marginally by 5%.

(b) Intensive enforcement efforts brought about decline in buprenorphine abusers

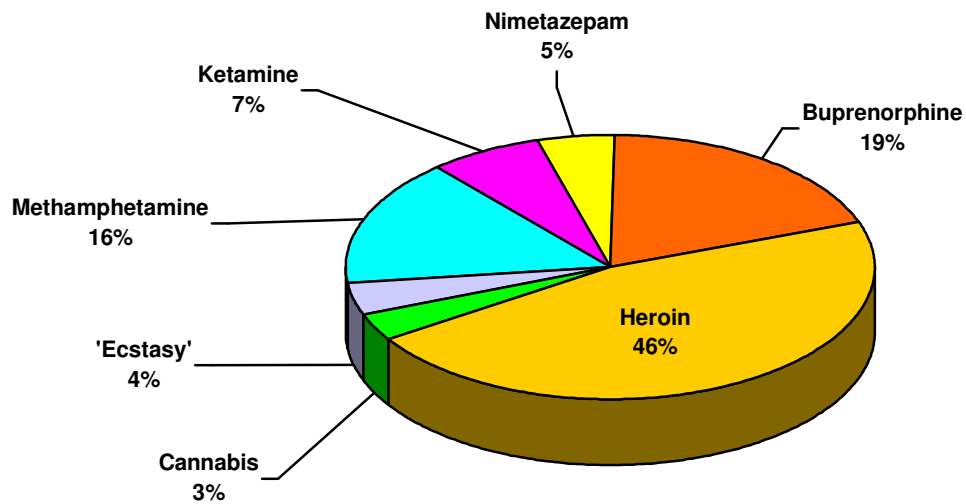


Chart 2: Abusers by drug type

5 Since the classification of buprenorphine as a controlled drug in the Misuse of Drugs Act in August 2006, CNB had carried out intensive enforcement against buprenorphine abuse. Rigorous enforcement and tough legislation have brought down the number of buprenorphine abusers arrested in 2008. This has led to a shift in the composition of abusers arrested. The percentage of abusers who abused buprenorphine fell from 38% in 2007 to 19% in 2008 while the proportion who abused heroin increased from 31% in 2007 to 46% in 2008.

6 Amongst the heroin and buprenorphine abusers, 89% are repeat abusers, out of which 70% are liable for long-term imprisonment. As with the previous years, the figures show that the heroin and buprenorphine abuse problem is largely confined to a group of recalcitrant abusers. These abusers, who are repeat abusers, are not unknown to CNB. With focused and targeted operations, these abusers will eventually be taken off the streets to prevent them from contaminating others with their drug habit.

(c) Decline in number of abusers across most age groups

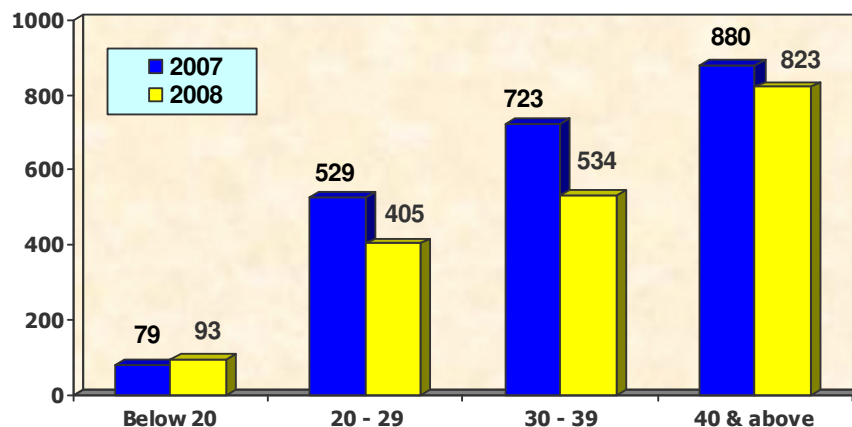


Chart 3: Abusers by age group

7 In terms of age group, abusers across most age groups registered declines, with the most significant decline amongst those in the 30 to 39 age group. In terms of composition, those in the 40 and above age group formed the majority at 44%.

8 Young drug abusers below 20 continue to form a very small proportion of drug abusers arrested, of 5%. In addition, 2008 is the fourth consecutive year that the number of young drug abusers had remained below the 100 mark.

(d) Decline in number of abusers across all ethnicity

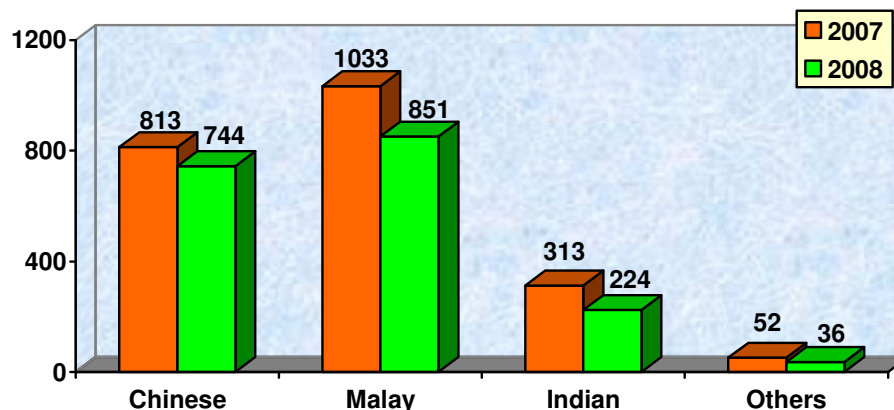


Chart 4: Abusers by Ethnicity

9 Abusers of all ethnic groups registered declines in 2008 as compared to 2007. While this is encouraging, the continued support from the community and concerted efforts from the self-help groups and stakeholders remain a critical component in fighting the drug problem.

Drug seizures

Drug type	2007	2008
Buprenorphine	3,400 tablets	2,092 tablets
Cannabis	30.8 kg	3.3 kg
'Ecstasy'	7,034 tablets	6,948 tablets
Heroin	17.2 kg	44.2 kg
'Ice'	1.5 kg	1.8 kg
Ketamine	11 kg	13.5 kg
Nimetazepam	24,926 tablets	37,181 tablets
'Yaba'	497 tablets	1,130 tablets

10 In terms of seizures, more heroin was seized in 2008 as compared to 2007. CNB had successfully intercepted several seizures of heroin at wholesale level before they reached the retail levels, such as the significant seizure of 10 kg of heroin in February and two seizures of approximately 5 kg of heroin each in June and November respectively. In addition, CNB also seized approximately 11kg of heroin No. 4 which were meant for the overseas market in June 2008.

Containment of the inhalant abuse situation

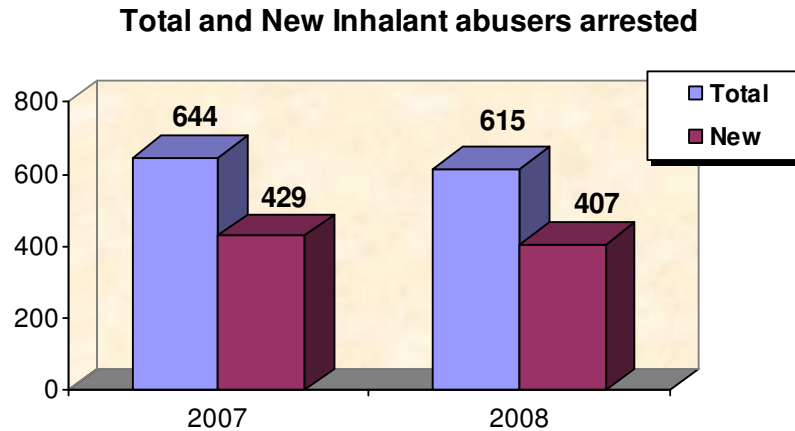


Chart 5: Total and new inhalant abusers arrested

11 Moving on to the inhalant abuse situation, the rise in inhalant abuse has tapered in 2008 with a 5% decrease in the number of abusers arrested. 615 inhalant abusers were arrested in 2008 as compared to 644 arrested in 2007. In addition, the number of new inhalant abusers arrested registered a drop of 5%.

(a) Inhalant abusers aged 20 and below continue to form the bulk

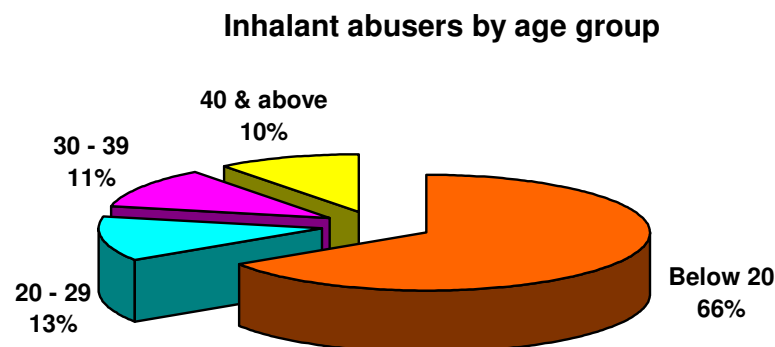


Chart 6: Inhalant abusers by age group

12 Although youths continued to form the majority of inhalant abusers arrested at 66%, the numbers arrested had dropped by 8% as compared to 2007.

Garnering cooperation of community and commitment from stakeholders

13 CNB continues to tackle this issue from both the demand and supply side. CNB has stepped up and sustained its preventive education talks at schools to reach out to the general student population. In addition, CNB has also collaborated with the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) to launch an inhalant abuse media campaign in December 2008. The campaign includes a series of filmlets and outdoor poster-ads depicting real letters from real people relating their experiences with inhalant abuse, through which viewers are reminded that *when you sniff glue, it's not only you who suffers*.

14 To address the supply side of the problem, CNB officers have made many site visits to advise shopkeepers to exercise caution in the sale of any inhalant products, especially to young persons. Since August 2007, CNB has visited more than 350 shops. CNB had also been visiting shops that came to its attention for having sold inhalant products to suspected abusers. Errant shopkeepers who persist in selling inhalant products to inhalant abusers can face a fine up to \$5,000, a jail term up to 2 years, or both, if convicted under the Intoxicating Substances Act.

15 CNB has also gone beyond mounting enforcement action and preventive education in fighting the inhalant abuse problem. Recognising that the problem was a multi-faceted one, CNB had strengthened its working relationships with various agencies and stakeholders.

CNB presses on with vigorous enforcement and forges partnership with agencies and the community to keep the drug and inhalant abuse situation under control

16 The local drug situation is stable and under control, with a 16% decline in overall abusers arrested. While the number of heroin abusers arrested had increased, this was more than off-set by the fall in the number of buprenorphine abusers.

17 CNB remains vigilant in keeping a close watch on the drug situation. CNB will press on with its vigorous enforcement efforts to take drug abusers out of circulation, so as to prevent them from contaminating the community with their drug habit. CNB will also sustain its close cooperation with foreign counterparts to stem the flow of drugs into Singapore, and work closely with our partner agencies and the community to keep the drug abuse situation in Singapore under control.

18 On the inhalant abuse situation, the enhanced measures and tougher approach adopted since September 2007 have contained the inhalant situation and prevented any further rise in inhalant abusers in 2008.

19 Nevertheless, the easy availability of inhalant products and its common use for household and commercial purpose means that enforcement effort alone will not completely control the problem. This underscores the importance of sustained inter-agency collaboration and continued community support. CNB will continue to work closely with the various stakeholders to keep the drug and inhalant abuse situation under control.

Central Narcotics Bureau
29 January 2009