Trends in drug-related hospitalisations, 1999-2020

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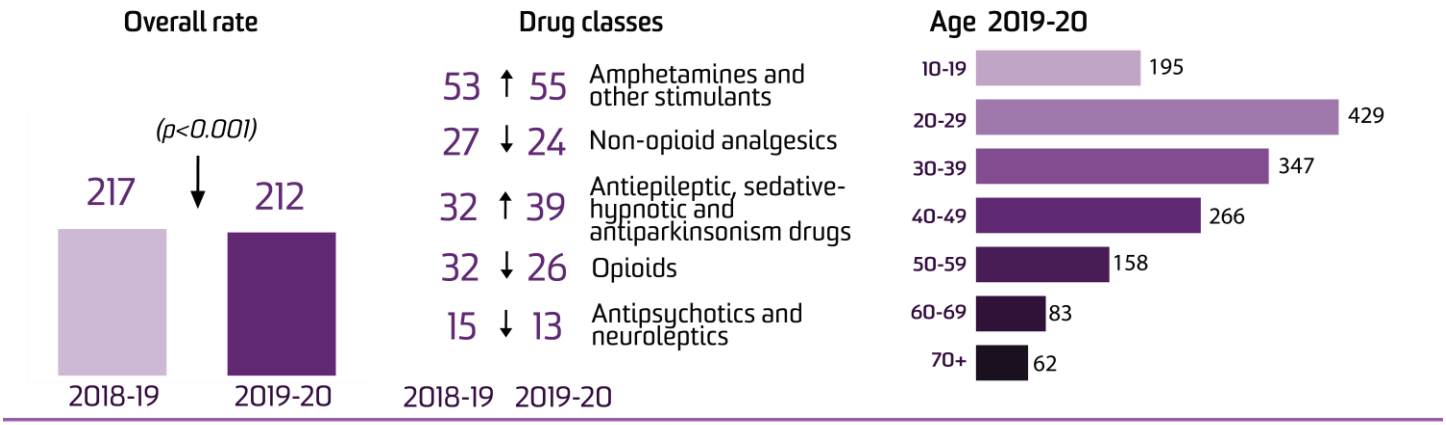
Victoria

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



Note: Arrows indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2018-19 and 2019-20 (p<0.05)

There were 14,086 hospitalisations with a drug-related principal diagnosis in Victoria in 2019-20, equivalent to 0.49% of all hospitalisations in Victoria.

This is equivalent to 212 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, which was a significant decrease from 2018-19 (217 hospitalisations per 100,000 people; $p<0.001$) (Table 1), but higher than the rate reported in 1999-00 (190 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (Figure 1).

Sex

The rate of hospitalisations was higher among males than females in 2019-20 (221 versus 203 hospitalisations per 100,000 people).

Age

In 2019-20, the rate of hospitalisations was highest among the 20-29 age group, followed by the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups (429, 347, and 266 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, respectively).

Remoteness Area of Usual Residence

The highest rate of hospitalisations in 2019-20 was observed in outer regional Victoria (222 hospitalisations per 100,000 people), while the number of hospitalisations was highest in major cities (11,029 hospitalisations) (Figure 2).

External Cause of Drug Poisoning

In 2019-20, 47% of drug-related hospitalisations in Victoria were due to drug poisoning. Furthermore, 65% of drug poisoning related hospitalisations were intentional (67 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) and 21% were unintentional (20 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (Figure 3).

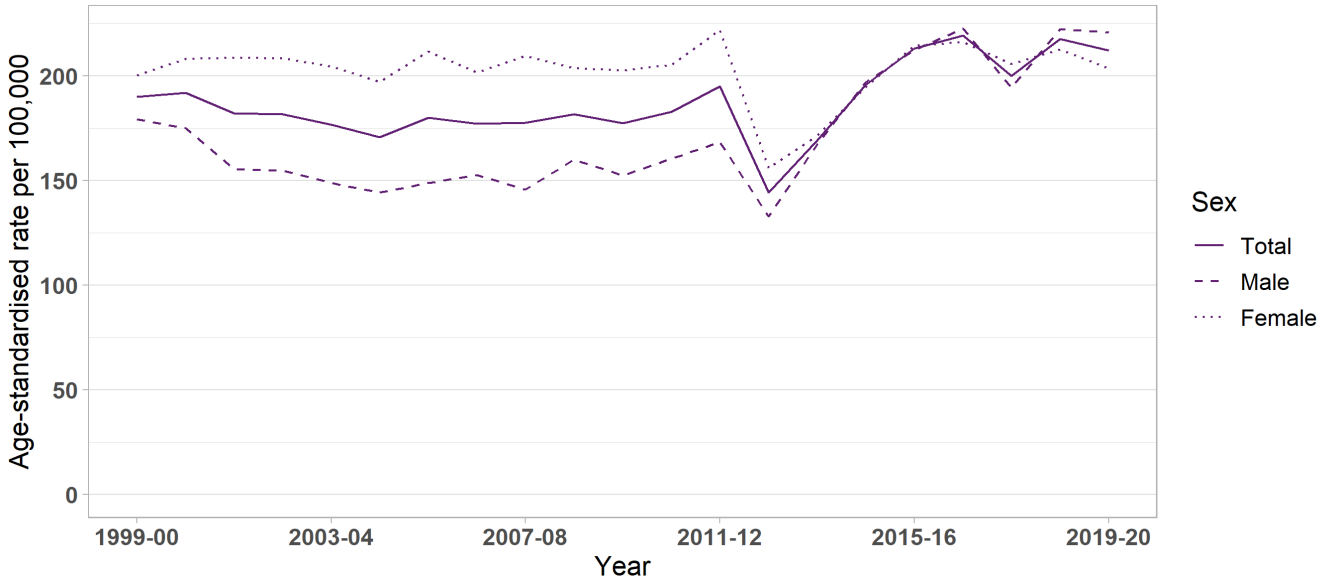
Drug Type

In 2019-20, the rate of hospitalisations was highest where there was a principal diagnosis indicating amphetamines and other stimulants (55 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (Figure 4).

Compared to 2018-19, there were significant decreases in 2019-20 in the rates of hospitalisations related to opioids; non-opioid analgesics; multiple drug use; and antipsychotics and neuroleptics ($p<0.050$) (Table 1).

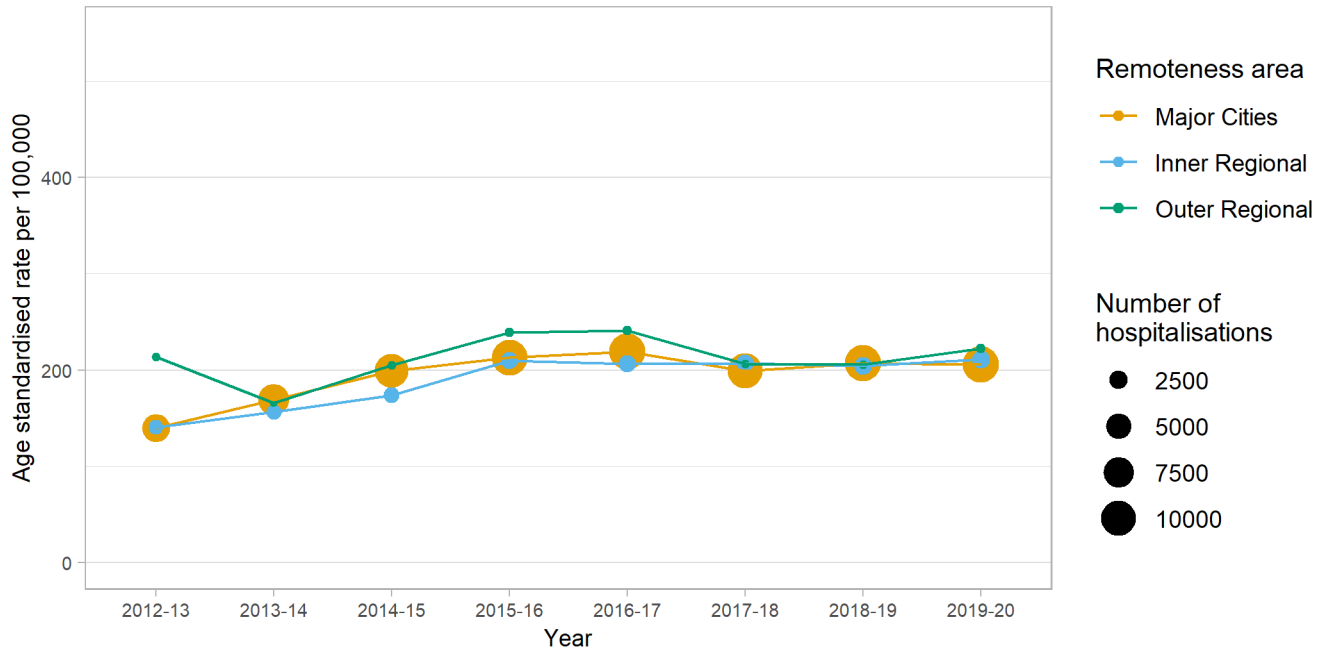
In contrast, there were significant increases in the rate of hospitalisations related to amphetamines and other stimulants; and antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs ($p<0.050$) (Table 1).

Figure 1. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by sex, Victoria, 1999-00 to 2019-20.



Note: From 1st July 2011 to 30th June 2013 (i.e., between 2011-12 and 2012-13), there was a large decrease in public hospitalisations reported for the Victorian Admitted Episodes Dataset (VAED) because episodes where the patient's entire care is provided in the emergency department were not considered for admission, irrespective of whether a criterion for admission is met. From 2013-14 onwards, "ED-only admissions" were largely replaced with admissions to Short Stay Observation Units.

Figure 2. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by remoteness, Victoria, 2012-13 to 2019-20.



Note: The size (area) of the bubble is proportional to the number of hospitalisations. The number of hospitalisations for remote and very remote Victoria in each year were small (less than or equal to 10) thus age-standardised rates were not calculated. Please refer to our methods document for details. Data on remoteness are only available from 2012-13.

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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), Victoria, 1999-00 to 2019-20.

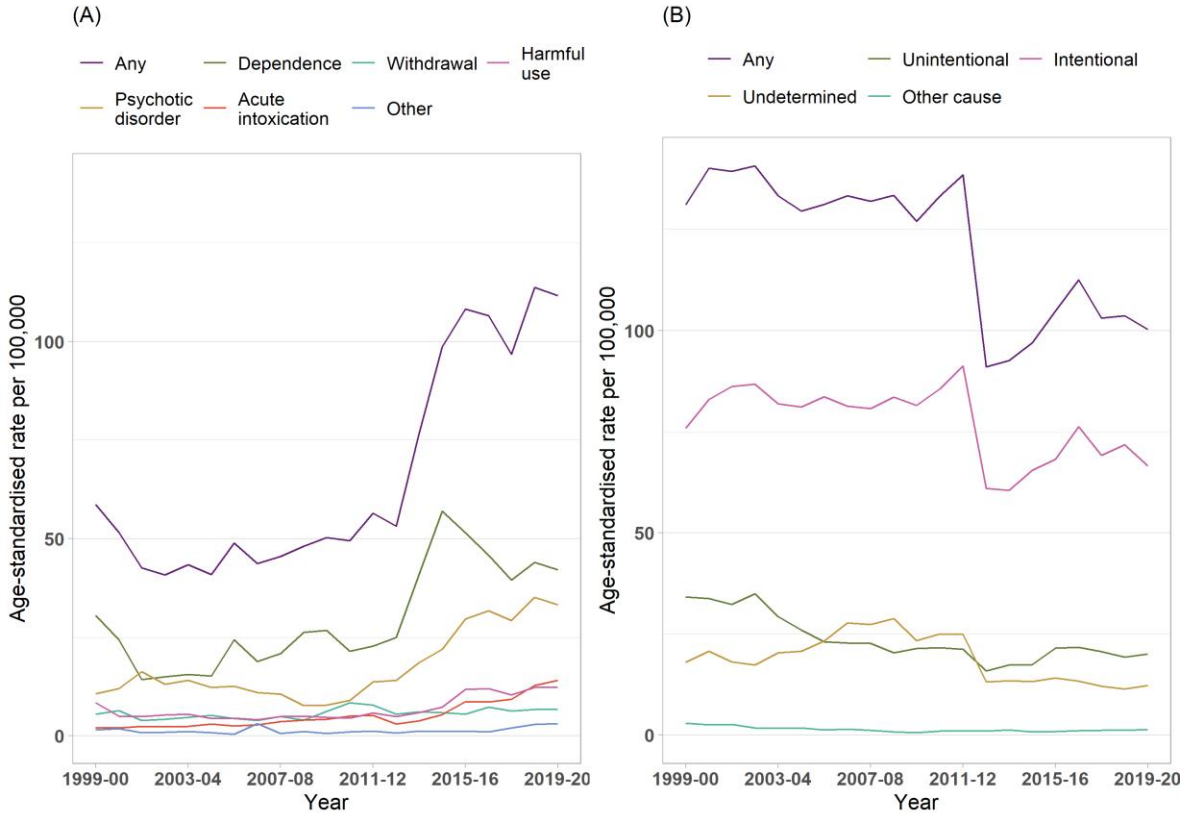
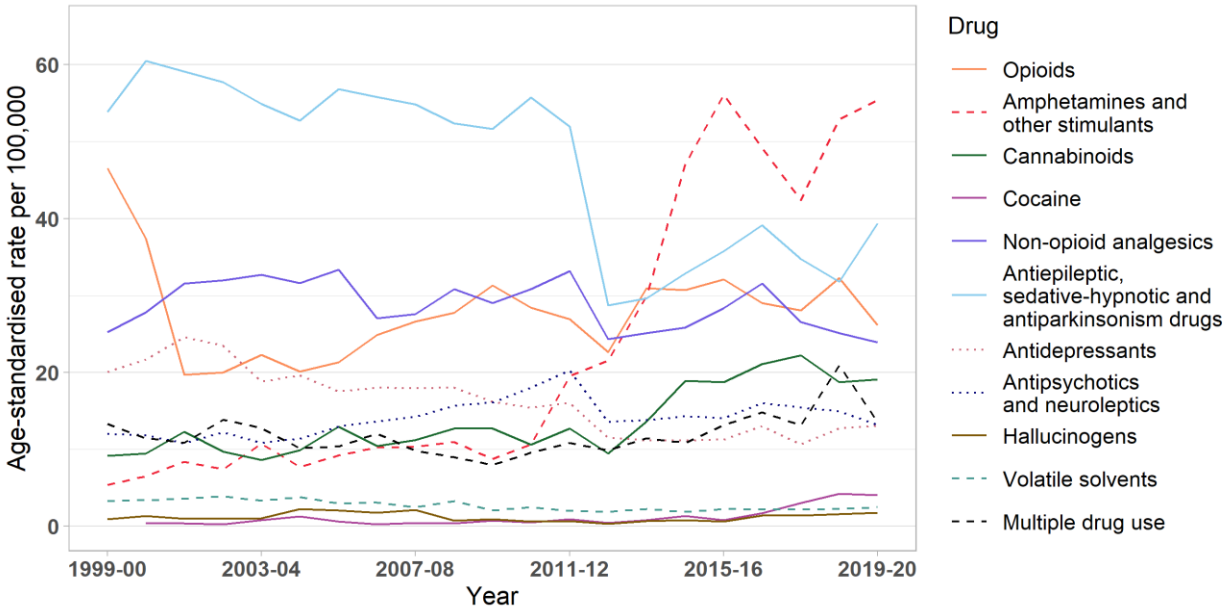


Figure 4. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by drug identified in the principal diagnosis, Victoria, 1999-00 to 2019-20.



Note: Age-standardised rates were not calculated if the number of hospitalisations was less than or equal to 10 (please refer to our methods document for details). Suppressed data are visible as gaps in the data series.

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Table 1. Age-standardised rate (per 100,000 people) of drug-related hospitalisations in 2019-20 and rate ratio and p-value for difference compared to 2018-19, in Victoria by drug type identified in the principal diagnosis

Drug	Rate in 2019-20 (95% CI)	Rate in 2018-19 (95% CI)	Rate ratio	P-value
All drugs	212 (208.5,215.5)	217 (214,221)	0.97 (0.96,0.99)	<0.001
Amphetamines and other stimulants	55 (53.6, 57.2)	53 (51,55)	1.05 (1.02,1.08)	<0.001
Antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs	39 (37.9, 40.9)	32 (30,33)	1.24 (1.20,1.28)	<0.001
Opioids	26 (24.9, 27.4)	32 (31,34)	0.81 (0.78,0.84)	<0.001
Non-opioid analgesics	24 (22.7, 25.1)	25 (24,26)	0.95 (0.91,0.99)	0.015
Cannabinoids	19 (18.0, 20.2)	19 (18,20)	1.02 (0.97,1.07)	0.446
Multiple drug use	14 (12.7, 14.5)	21 (20,22)	0.65 (0.62,0.68)	<0.001
Antipsychotics and neuroleptics	13 (12.3, 14.1)	15 (14,16)	0.88 (0.84,0.93)	<0.001
Antidepressants	13 (12.2, 14.0)	13 (12,14)	1.03 (0.97,1.09)	0.302
Cocaine	4.1 (3.58, 4.57)	4.2 (3.8, 4.8)	0.95 (0.87,1.05)	0.354
Volatile solvents	2.5 (2.12, 2.90)	2.2 (1.9, 2.6)	1.12 (0.98,1.27)	0.089
Hallucinogens	1.8 (1.44, 2.11)	1.6 (1.3, 1.9)	1.12 (0.96,1.31)	0.150

Note: 95% confidence intervals for the age-standardised rate and rate ratio are shown in brackets. Please refer to our methods document on 'Presentation of results' for interpretation of rate ratios. 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 over its life. Please refer to the online version at Drug Trends.

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Related Links

- Hospitalisations data visualisations: https://drugtrends.shinyapps.io/hospital_separations
- Hospitalisations methods document: https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/resource-analytics/trends-drug-related-hospitalisations-australia-1999-2020
- For other Drug Trends publications on drug-related hospitalisations and drug-induced deaths in Australia, go to: https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/project/national-illicit-drug-indicators-project-nidip
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