Trends in drug-related hospitalisations, 1999-2020

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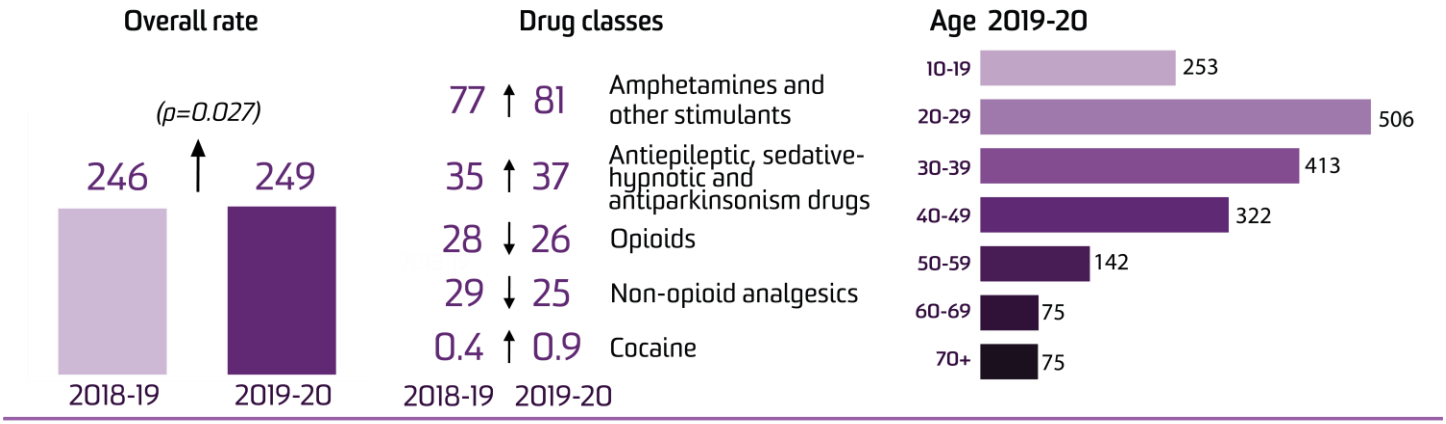
Western Australia

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 6,389 hospitalisations with a drug-related principal diagnosis in Western Australia in 2019-20, equivalent to 0.57% of all hospitalisations in Western Australia.

This is equivalent to 249 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, which was a significant increase from 2018-19 (246 hospitalisations per 100,000 people; *p*=0.027) (Table 1) and higher than reported in 1999-00 (209 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (Figure 1).

Sex

The rate of hospitalisations was higher among females than males in 2019-20 (258 versus 242 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 (506, 413, and 322 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, respectively).

Remoteness Area of Usual Residence

The highest rate of hospitalisations in 2019-20 was observed in outer regional Western Australia (359 hospitalisations per 100,000 people), while the number of hospitalisations was highest in major cities (4,603 hospitalisations) (Figure 2).

External Cause of Drug Poisoning

In 2019-20, 49% of drug-related hospitalisations in Western Australia were due to drug poisoning. Furthermore, 66% of drug poisoning related hospitalisations were intentional (80 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) and 28% were unintentional (33 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 (81 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; and non-opioid analgesics (*p*<0.050) (Table 1).

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

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

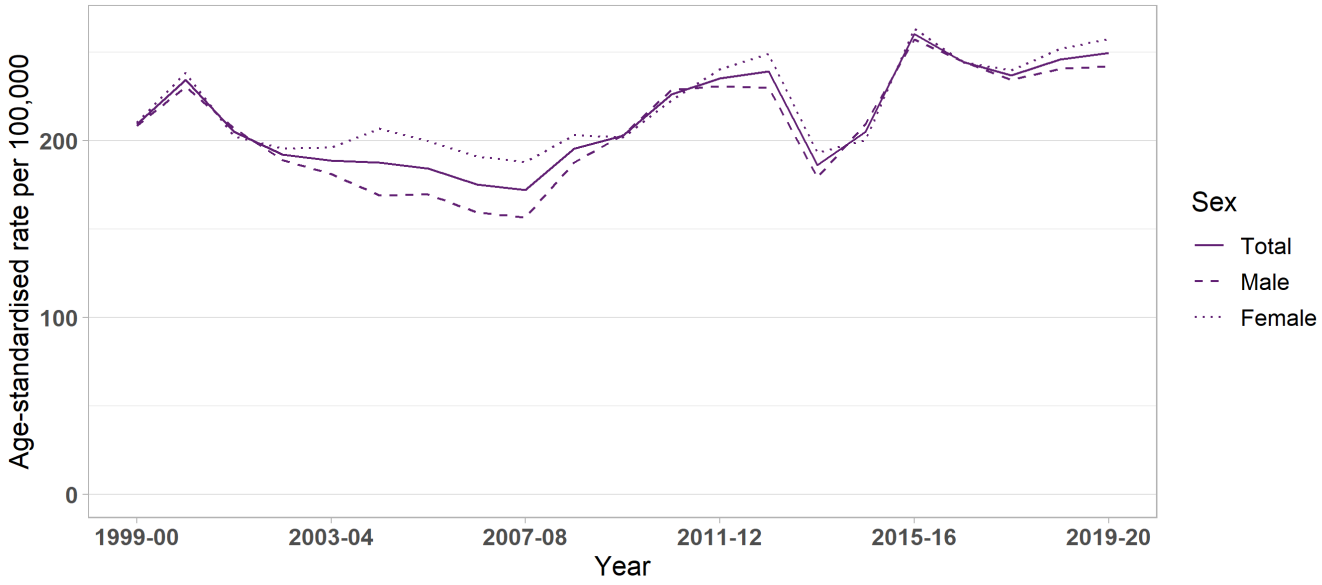
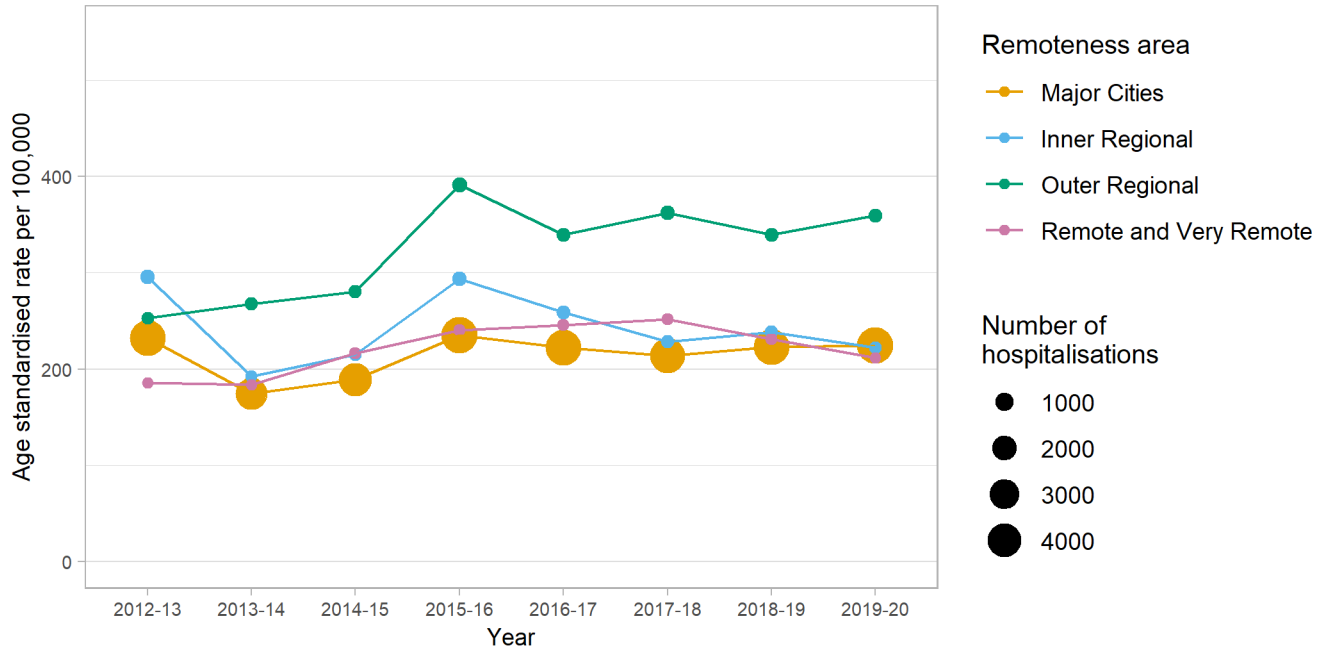


Figure 2. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by remoteness, Western Australia, 2012-13 to 2019-20.



Note: The size (area) of the bubble is proportional to the number of hospitalisations. 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), Western Australia, 1999-00 to 2019-20.

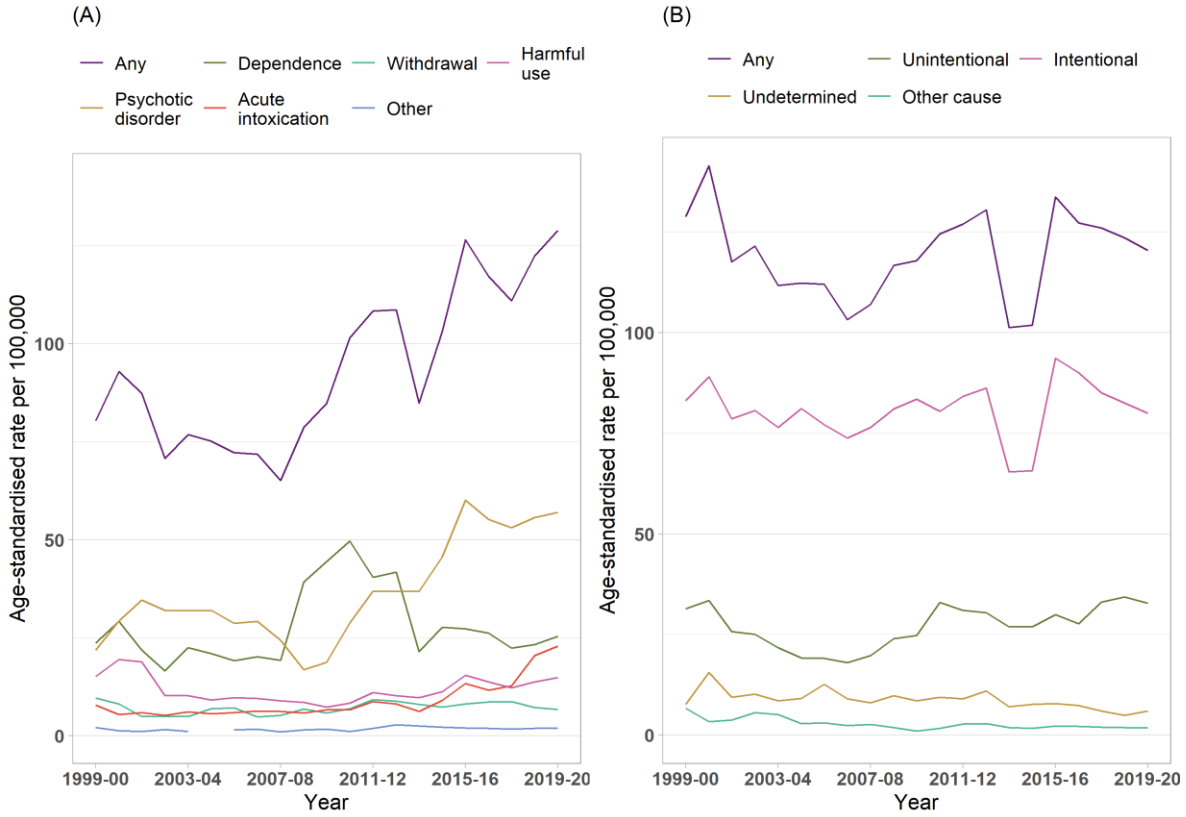
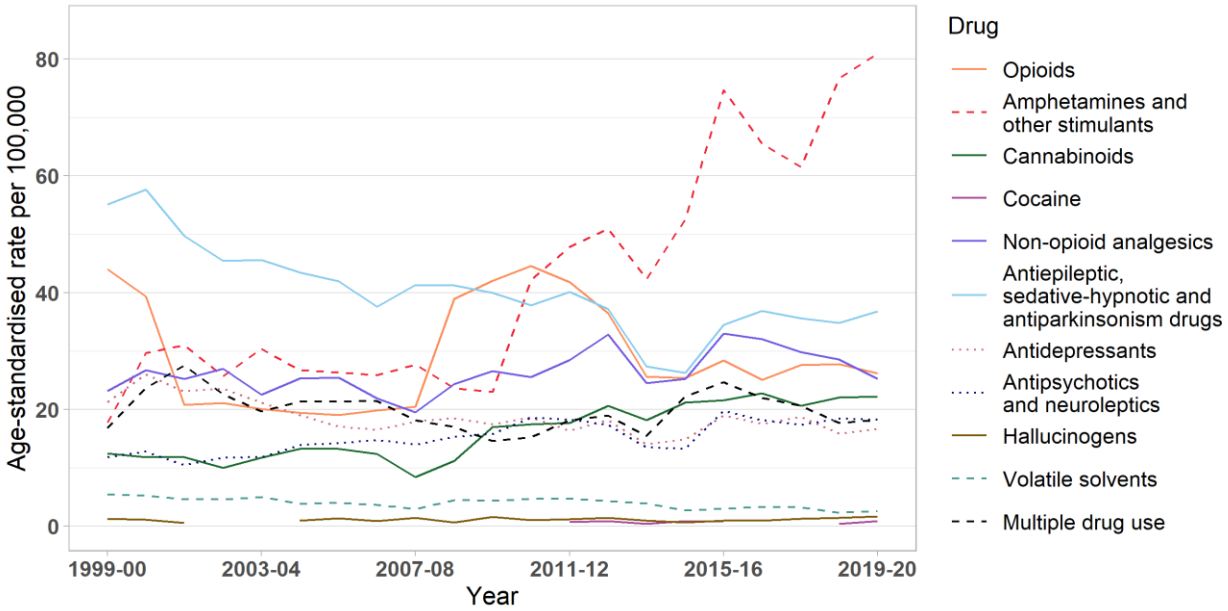


Figure 4. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by drug identified in the principal diagnosis, Western Australia, 1999-00 to 2019-20.



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 Western Australia 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	249 (243.4,255.7)	246 (240,252)	1.01 (1.00,1.03)	0.027
Amphetamines and other stimulants	81 (77.5, 84.5)	77 (73,80)	1.06 (1.03,1.08)	<0.001
Antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs	37 (34.5, 39.2)	35 (33,37)	1.06 (1.02,1.09)	<0.001
Opioids	26 (24.2, 28.2)	28 (26,30)	0.94 (0.91,0.98)	0.002
Non-opioid analgesics	25 (23.3, 27.3)	29 (26,31)	0.88 (0.85,0.92)	<0.001
Cannabinoids	22 (20.4, 24.1)	22 (20,24)	1.00 (0.96,1.05)	0.824
Antipsychotics and neuroleptics	18 (16.6, 20.0)	18 (17,20)	0.99 (0.95,1.04)	0.677
Multiple drug use	18 (16.5, 19.9)	18 (16,19)	1.03 (0.98,1.08)	0.239
Antidepressants	17 (15.1, 18.4)	16 (14,17)	1.05 (1.00,1.11)	0.036
Volatile solvents	2.5 (1.97, 3.23)	2.3 (1.8, 3.0)	1.10 (0.97,1.25)	0.133
Hallucinogens	1.7 (1.23, 2.31)	1.5 (1.0, 2.0)	1.17 (1.00,1.37)	0.055
Cocaine	0.9 (0.54, 1.32)	0.4 (0.2, 0.8)	2.01 (1.55,2.62)	<0.001

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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