

A map showing the outline of China and its surrounding regions, including parts of Central Asia and Southeast Asia. The word "China" is written in a light blue font over the map.

China

CHINA

Summary of major trends and emerging concerns

Methamphetamine

- Seizure amounts of methamphetamine in liquid, powder and crystalline forms rebounded slightly in 2021, while the amount of methamphetamine tablets seized nearly halved in 2021, dropping to its lowest level since 2010 (table 1). The implementation of strict COVID-19 mobility measures complicates the comparability of seizure trends in 2020 and 2021.
- Despite the decrease in number of registered synthetic drug users in 2021, methamphetamine remains a drug of concern and continues to account for the highest proportion of registered drug users.¹
- The number of illicit manufacturing facilities dismantled in China² continued its decline in 2021 (figure 5).
- The purity of crystalline methamphetamine declined compared to previous years but remains at a high level (table 3).

“Ecstasy”³

- The amount of “ecstasy” seizures dropped in 2021 after having increased slightly in the previous two years (table 1).

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and other synthetic drugs

- Since 2018, synthetic cannabinoids have been the most frequently identified group of NPS in China, and in 2021, seizures of this substance group increased exponentially to fifteenfold the amount seized in 2020 (table 1 and figure 6).
- While a large number of synthetic cannabinoids were placed under national control under a generic definition in July 2021, several synthetic cannabinoids which may not be covered by this definition, were identified in China in 2021 for the first time, namely ADB-FUBIATA, 5F-BZO-POXIZID (5F-MDA-19), and BZO-POXIZID.⁴
- The number of synthetic cathinones identified in the country remains low with only eight different substances in a total of 27 samples analysed, though three new substances were identified in 2021 (table 2, and figures 6 and 8).
- Seizures of ketamine have continued to decrease and dropped to a record low in 2021 (table 1).

Other drugs

- A record low amount of heroin was seized in 2021 (table 1). The number of registered users of opiates continued to decrease in 2021 (figure 2).

1 Official communication with the National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC), March 2022.

2 Disaggregated data by drug type is not available.

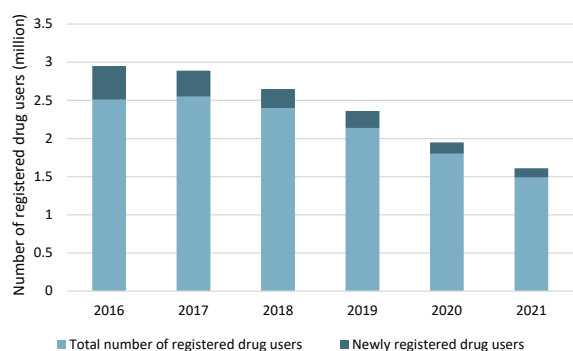
3 “Ecstasy” tablets sold in the country may contain a range of substances in varying composition and quantities in addition or instead of MDMA.

4 Liu C-M, Hua Z-D, Jia W, Li T. Identification of AD-18, 5F-MDA-19, and pentyl MDA-19 in seized materials after the class-wide ban of synthetic cannabinoids in China. *Drug Test Analysis*, 2021; 1-10. doi:10.1002/dta.3185.

Key facts and figures

Drug demand indicators

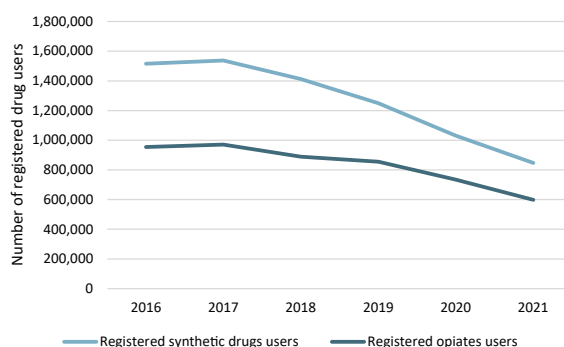
Figure 1. Number of current registered drug users in China, 2016-2021



Source: Official communication with the National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC), March 2022.

Note: The number of current registered drug users is the number of registered drug users, excluding those who have passed away, are out of the country, or have not relapsed for 3 years.

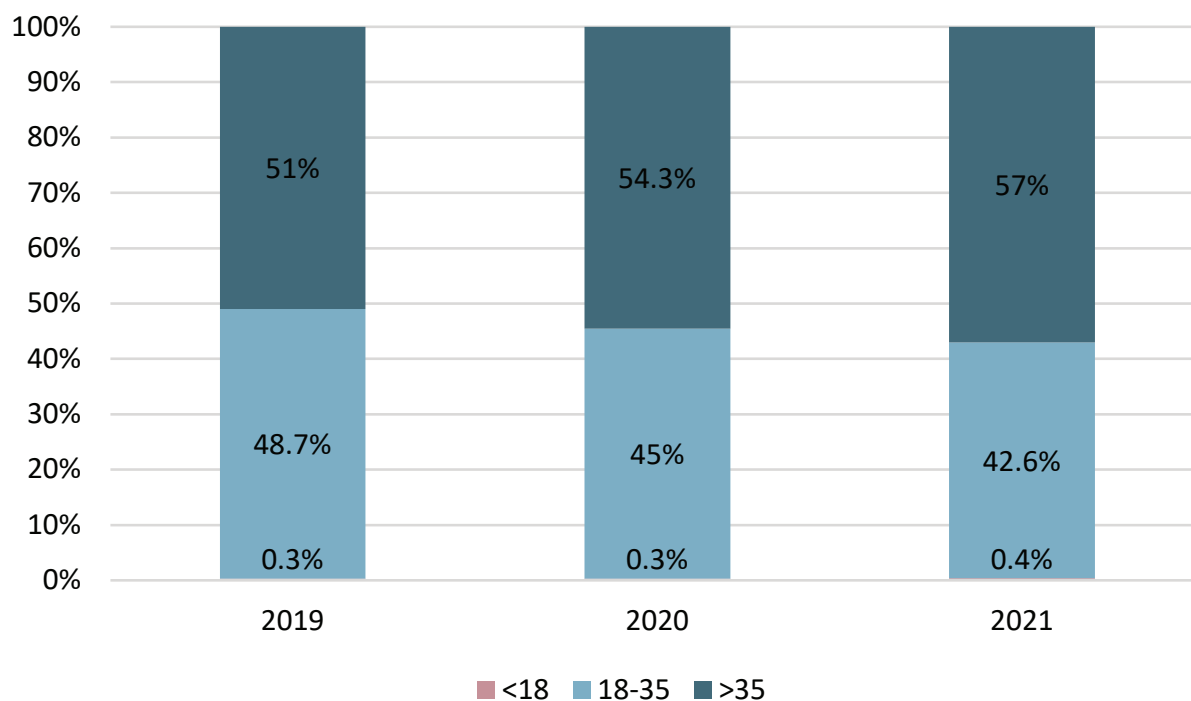
Figure 2. Number of current people who were registered for using synthetic drugs and opiates in China, 2016-2021



Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Note: The number of current registered drug users is the number of registered drug users, excluding those who have passed away, are out of the country, or have not relapsed for 3 years.

Figure 3. Proportion of current registered drug users in China, by age group, 2019-2021



Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Note: The number of current registered drug users is the number of registered drug users, excluding those who have passed away, are out of the country, or have not relapsed for 3 years.

Drug supply indicators

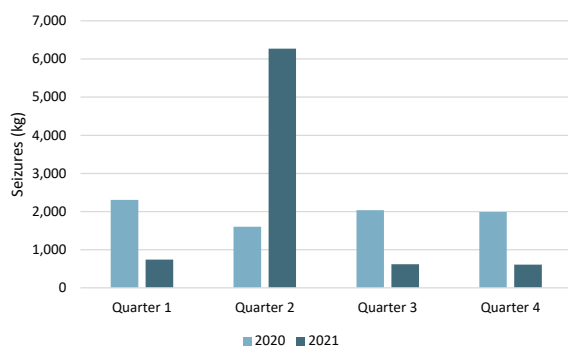
Table 1. Seizures of selected drugs in China, 2016-2021*

Drug type	Unit	2016	2017	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	kg	30,706 kg	30,766.4 kg	12,155.32	7,935.5	8,239.7
Methamphetamine tablets ^a	tablets			129,464,300	132,360,700	67,254,459
Methamphetamine powder	kg			235.8	364.5	808.9
Methamphetamine liquid	lt			1,174	437.8	611.7
"Ecstasy" ^b	tablets	1,200,267	3,481,233	240,667	490,667	292,667
Ketamine	kg	10,361.1	7,292.6	1,761.8	1,406.8	456.6
Cannabis herb	kg	5,833	4,927	621.7**	406.1	344.9
Cannabis resin	kg	34.4**	7.9	2,559.7	3	0.4
Cocaine	kg	430.6	311.7	155.1	582.2	690.5
Heroin	kg	8,777.4	9,519.9	6,136.4	3,771.5	1,805.6
Opium	kg	3,104.3	3,909.3	2,908.4	2,770.8	2,031.5
Synthetic cannabinoids	kg	●	●	6	11.7**	179.2

Sources: UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) China for 2020 and previous years; Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

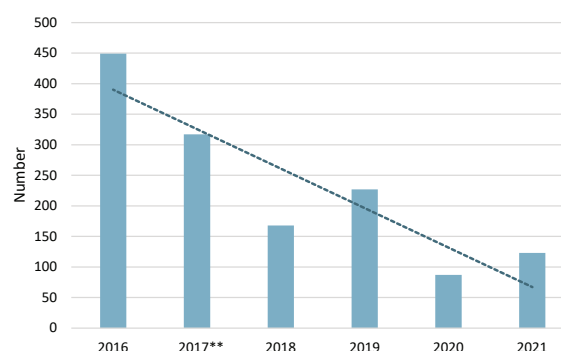
Note: * Data for 2018 is undergoing verification and is not included in the table; data for 2021 are from official communication with NNCC, while data for previous years are from the UNODC ARQ China unless otherwise stated; ** Data from official communication with NNCC, March 2022; ^a Figures not reported as number of tablets converted into estimated tablet equivalent at 100 mg per tablet. ^b Figures not reported as number of tablets converted into estimated tablet equivalent at 300 mg per tablet; ● = Not reported.

Figure 4. Seizure amounts of crystalline methamphetamine in China, by quarter, 2020-2021



Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

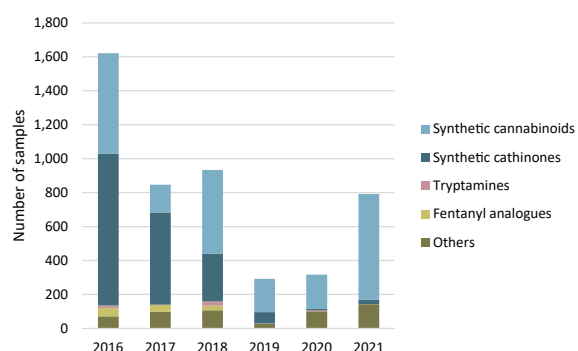
Figure 5. Number of illicit drug manufacturing facilities dismantled in China, 2016-2021*



Sources: UNODC ARQ China for 2020 and previous years; Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

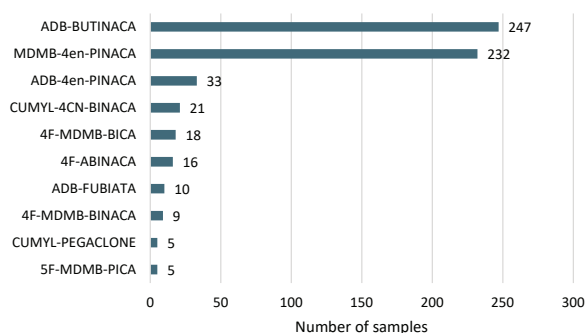
Note: * Data for 2021 is from official communication with NNCC, while data for previous years are from the UNODC ARQ China unless otherwise stated; ** Data from official communication with NNCC, March 2022; Disaggregated data by drug type is not available.

Figure 6. Frequency of NPS identified in samples analysed by the NPS Monitoring Programme of China, by substance group, 2016-2021



Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Figure 7. Top 10 synthetic cannabinoids identified by the NPS Monitoring Programme of China, 2021



Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Table 2. Newly identified NPS and other emerging synthetic substances in China, 2020-2021

Substance Type	2020	2021
Synthetic cannabinoids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adamantyl-CHMINACA ADB-BUTINACA 5F-EMB-PICA 4F-ABINACA 5F-EDMB-PICA 4F-MDMB-BICA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADB-FUBIATA 5F-BZO-POXIZID (5F-MDA-19) BZO-POXIZID
Synthetic cathinones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metamfepramone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N-butylbutylone N-propylbutylone N-cyclohexylmethylone
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-Methoxy-alpha-methyltryptamine (5-MeO-AMT) 	-

Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

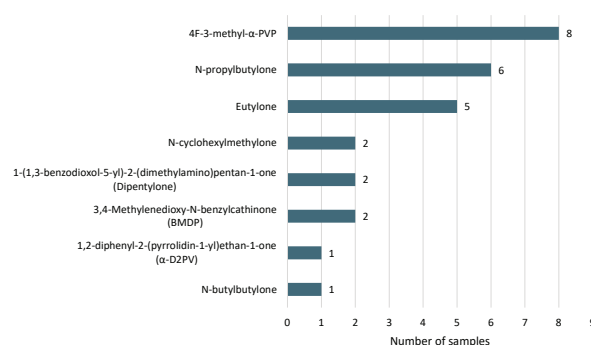
Table 3. Typical retail purities of methamphetamine and ketamine in China, 2016-2021 (percentage)*

Drug type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	95	87	90	72	82	74
Methamphetamine tablet	15	16	17**	17**	17	16
Ketamine**	69	74	74	72	69	65

Sources: UNODC ARQ China for 2019 and previous years; Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Note: * Data for 2020 and 2021 are from official communication with NNCC, while data for previous years are from the UNODC ARQ China unless otherwise stated; ** Data from official communication with NNCC, March 2022; Data in this table refers to the weight/weight (w/w) % expressed as the hydrochloride salt of these substances.

Figure 8. Top 8 synthetic cathinones identified by the NPS Monitoring Programme of China, 2021*



Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Note: * These are all the synthetic cathinones identified by the NPS Monitoring Programme of China in 2021.

Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China)

Summary of major trends and emerging concerns

Methamphetamine

- The number of methamphetamine users brought into formal contact with authorities has declined annually since 2016 (figure 1).
- In contrast, seizure amounts of crystalline methamphetamine reached another record level in 2021, while wholesale and retail prices of the drug increased compared to the previous year (tables 1 and 2). This may indicate that the large amount of methamphetamine seized might not have been for the local market, but rather transiting through Hong Kong, China.

“Ecstasy”⁵

- “Ecstasy” use remains limited, accounting for only 0.8 per cent of reported drug users.⁶

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and other synthetic drugs

- The amount of ketamine seized increased exponentially in 2021, nearly sevenfold the record amount seized in 2020 (table 1). Though the number of reported persons with non-medical use of ketamine has been increasing for the past two years, it is only a slight increase, indicating that, similarly to methamphetamine, Hong Kong, China is likely to be a transit for ketamine as well (figure 1).

Other drugs

- Heroin remains the most commonly reported substance of use, though users of the drug have decreased every year for the past 11 years (figure 1).
- A record amount of cocaine was seized in 2021, while the retail price of the drug dropped (tables 1 and 2). The number of cocaine users reached over 1,000 people for the first time (figure 1). Together, this shows possible increased availability of cocaine in the local market.
- The number of cannabis users has increased year-on-year for the past five years (figure 1).

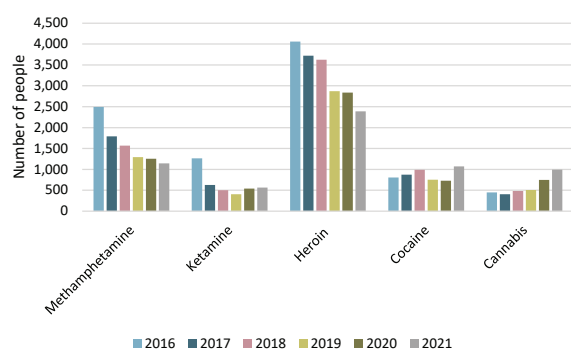
5 “Ecstasy” tablets sold in the country may contain a range of substances in varying composition and quantities in addition or instead of MDMA.

6 Narcotics Division, Security Bureau (NDSB), Hong Kong, China, “Newly/previously reported drug abusers by age group by common type of drugs abused (T3)” (Accessed at https://www.nd.gov.hk/en/crda_main_charts_and_tables.html).

Key facts and figures

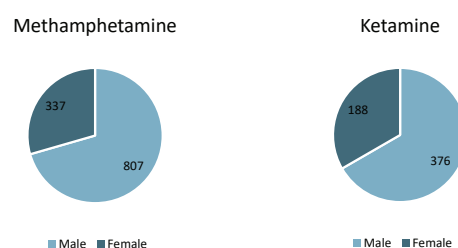
Drug demand indicators

Figure 1. Number of people who use methamphetamine, ketamine, heroin, or cocaine brought into formal contact with authorities in Hong Kong, China, 2016-2021



Source: Narcotics Division, Security Bureau (NDSB), Hong Kong, China, “Newly/previously reported drug abusers by age group by common type of drugs abused (T3)” (Accessed at https://www.nd.gov.hk/en/crda_main_charts_and_tables.html).

Figure 2. Number of people who use methamphetamine and ketamine, brought into formal contact with authorities in Hong Kong, China, by gender, 2021



Source: NDSB, “Reported drug abusers by sex by common type of drugs abused (T12)” (Accessed at https://www.nd.gov.hk/en/crda_main_charts_and_tables.html).

Drug supply indicators

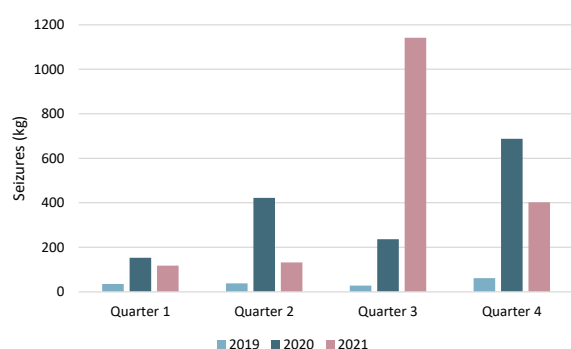
Table 1. Seizures of selected drugs in Hong Kong, China, 2016-2021*

Drug type	Unit	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	kg	359	144	164.1	143.4	1,498.6	1,794
“Ecstasy” ^a	tablets / kg	1,592 / 1.4 kg	11,694 / 2.9 kg	19,789 / 25.5 kg	77,602 / 72.4 kg	332,094 / 97.8 kg	62,955
Ketamine	kg	281.7	94.5	153.1	260.9	472.86	3,296
Cannabis	kg	346.7	1,377.6	354.5	467.3	1,141.2	1,985
Cocaine	kg	433.5	454	827.5	1,556.4	1,272.2	2,869
Heroin	kg	73.5	29.5	43.9	46.8	367.8	554

Sources: UNODC ARQ Hong Kong, China for 2020 and previous years; Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Note: * Data for 2021 are from official communication with NNCC, while data for previous years are from the UNODC ARQ Hong Kong, China; ^a Figures reported other than the number of tablets converted into estimated tablet equivalent at 300 mg per tablet.

Figure 3. Seizure amounts of crystalline methamphetamine in Hong Kong, China, by quarter, 2019-2021



Source: Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Table 2. Wholesale and retail prices of selected drugs in Hong Kong, China, 2016-2021 (US\$)*

Drug type	Unit	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	per kg	8,866.38	12,240.05	22,402.37**	18,845.18	23,199.00	26,641.00
Crystalline methamphetamine	per g	42.39	45.96	70.29**	76.42	65.90	80.47
“Ecstasy”	per tablet	7.73	10.27	10.08	9.54**	5.70	7.40
Heroin	per g	95.99	97.56	107.58	116.36	125.70	165.00
Ketamine	per g	28.48	49.04	65.64**	79.04	58.10	77.02
Cocaine	per g	140.57	121.44	171.14**	150.23	144.60	150.72

Sources: UNODC ARQ Hong Kong, China for 2020 and previous years; Official communication with NNCC, March 2022.

Note: * Data for 2021 are from official communication with NNCC, while data for previous years are from the UNODC ARQ Hong Kong, China unless otherwise stated; ** Data from official communication with NNCC, March 2022.