

## Summary of major trends and emerging concerns

### Methamphetamine

- Crystalline methamphetamine continues to be the main drug of concern in the Philippines, forming the largest proportion of drug-related arrests and treatment admissions (figure 3).
- Drug treatment admissions for methamphetamine rebounded slightly in 2021 after declining in 2020 due to COVID-19-related restrictions and measures (figure 1).
- Methamphetamine users who are over 40 years old continued to account for the largest proportion of users admitted to treatment centres in the country in 2021 (figure 2).
- Seizures of crystalline methamphetamine continue to increase in the Philippines. The country recorded the highest amount of crystalline methamphetamine seized since 2004 (table 2).

### “Ecstasy”<sup>1</sup>

- Seizures of “ecstasy” increased again in 2021, however its use remains limited (table 2).

### New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and other emerging synthetic substances

- Two emerging substances were reported in 2021: 4-fluoromethamphetamine and phenacetin (table 5).

### Other drugs

- Seizures of benzodiazepines increased significantly in 2021 to over sixfold the amount seized in the previous five years combined (table 2). This is in line with the rise in benzodiazepine use indicated by expert perception, as well as the number of drug treatment admissions for benzodiazepines, which represent the third highest number of treatment admissions following methamphetamine and cannabis respectively.<sup>2</sup>

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

2 Official communication with the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), March 2022.

## Key facts and figures

### Drug demand indicators

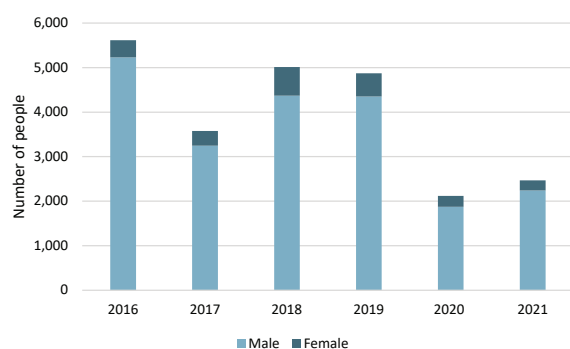
**Table 1. Trend in use of selected drugs in the Philippines, 2016-2021**

Drug type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Benzodiazepines	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Cannabis herb	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Inhalants	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑

Sources: Drug Abuse Information Network for Asia and the Pacific (DAINAP); Official communication with the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), March 2022.

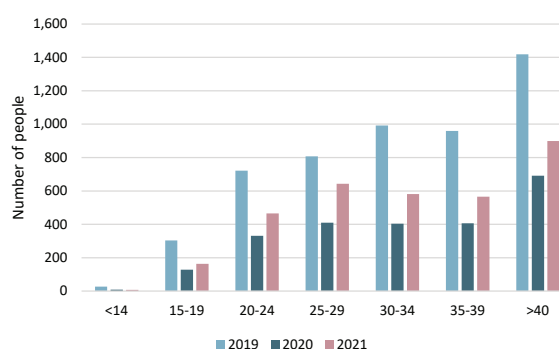
Note: Based on expert perception provided by DDB; ↑ = Increasing, ↓ = Decreasing, ↔ = Stable, ● = Not reported.

**Figure 1. Number of methamphetamine-related treatment admissions in the Philippines, by gender, 2016-2021**



Sources: DAINAP; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

**Figure 2. Number of treatment admissions in the Philippines, by age group, 2019-2021**



Sources: DAINAP; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

### Drug supply indicators

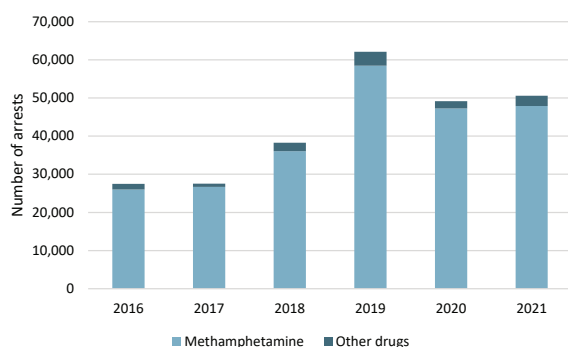
**Table 2. Seizures of selected drugs and precursor chemicals in the Philippines, 2016-2021**

Drug type	Unit	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	kg	2,210.5	1,053.9	785.8	2,071.1	2,196	2,302.7
Liquid methamphetamine	lt	1,805.7	50.2	110.8	203.2	0.7	7.9
“Ecstasy”	tablets	21,736	591	16,713	13,108	42,794	74,786
Benzodiazepines	tablets	120	83	876	236	●	8,453
Cannabis herb	kg	1,334.6	431.7	257.8	900.4	1,474.4	6,286.7
Heroin	kg	0	0	0	0	●	0
Cocaine	kg	70.6	9.9	94.6	347	1.4	1.2
Ketamine	kg / tablet	0.0 <sup>a</sup>	•	0.0 <sup>a</sup>	0.2	●	0.8
GHB	lt	●	0 <sup>a</sup>	•	0 <sup>a</sup>	•	0
GBL	lt	●	0.9	0.7	2.3	3.5	0.5
Pseudoephedrine	kg	●	209.5	0	●	10.8	0
Ephedrine	kg	9.9	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.01	6.3

Sources: DAINAP; UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) Philippines for 2020 and previous years; DDB and Philippines Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), “Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in the Philippines”, presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

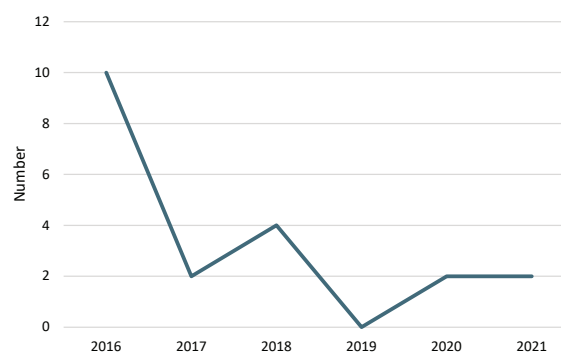
Note: ● = Not reported; <sup>a</sup> Reported as less than 10 grams seized.

**Figure 3. Number of drug-related arrests in the Philippines, by drug type, 2016-2021**



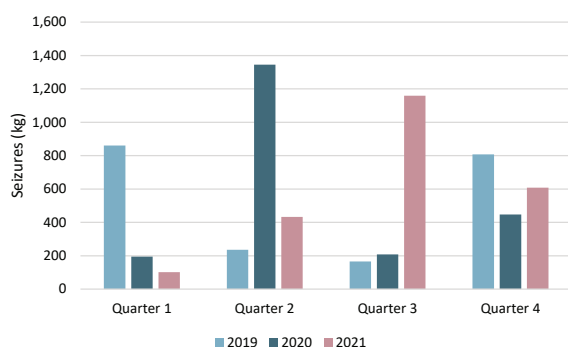
Sources: DAINAP; DDB and PDEA, "Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in the Philippines", presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

**Figure 5. Number of illicit methamphetamine facilities dismantled in the Philippines, 2016-2021**



Sources: DAINAP; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

**Figure 4. Seizure amounts of crystalline methamphetamine in the Philippines, by quarter, 2019-2021**



Sources: DAINAP; DDB and PDEA, "Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in the Philippines", presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

**Table 3. Retail prices of selected drugs in the Philippines, 2016-2021 (US\$)**

Drug type	Unit	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	per g	25.8-236.6	163.7	130.1	136	130.8	134.6
"Ecstasy"	per tablet	30	37.7	32.5	34	32.7	33.7
Cocaine	per g	●	99.3	101.4	106	106	99
Cannabis herb	per g	●	3.2	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4

Sources: DAINAP; DDB and PDEA, "Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in the Philippines", presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

Note: ● = Not reported.

**Table 4. Typical purity of selected drugs in the Philippines, 2016-2021 (percentage)**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	82.4	87.7	72.5	67.99	58.29	82.56
MDMA ("Ecstasy")	47.5	31.4	45.5	25.56	23.42	43.03

Sources: DAINAP; DDB and PDEA, "Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in the Philippines", presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with DDB, March 2022.

Note: Data in this table refer to the weight/weight (w/w) % expressed as the hydrochloride salt of these substances.

**Table 5. Types of NPS and other emerging synthetic substances identified in the Philippines, 2020-2021**

Substance name	2020	2021
Phenethylamines	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-Fluoromethamphetamine</li> <li>• Phenacetin</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gamma-Butyrolactone (GBL)</li> </ul>	-

Sources: Official communication with DDB and PDEA, March 2022; UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS.