Trends in drug-related hospitalisations, 1999-2020

NIDIP National Illicit Drug Indicators Project

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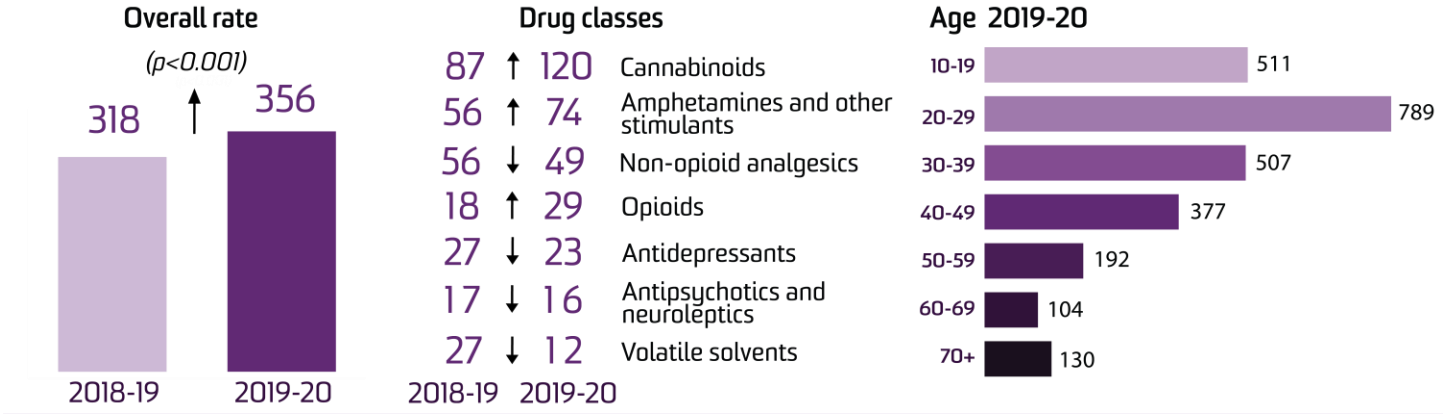
Northern Territory

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 919 hospitalisations with a drug-related principal diagnosis in the Northern Territory in 2019-20.

This is equivalent to 359 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, which was a significant increase from 2018-19 (318 hospitalisations per 100,000 people; p<0.001) (Table 1) and a four-fold increase from 1999-00 (90 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) (Figure 1).

Sex

The rate of hospitalisations was higher among males than females in 2019-20 (397 versus 319 hospitalisations per 100,000 people).

Age

In 2019-20, the rate of hospitalisations was highest among the 20-29 age group, followed by the 10-19 and 30-39 age groups (789, 511, and 507 hospitalisations per 100,000 people, respectively).

Remoteness Area of Usual Residence

The highest rate of hospitalisations in 2019-20 was observed in the remote and very remote Northern Territory (389 hospitalisations per 100,000 people), while the number of hospitalisations was highest in the outer regional Northern Territory (515 hospitalisations; noting there are no major cities or inner regional areas in the Northern Territory) (Figure 2).

External Cause of Drug Poisoning

In 2019-20, 38% of drug-related hospitalisations in the Northern Territory were due to drug poisoning. Furthermore, 70% of drug poisoning related hospitalisations were intentional (96 hospitalisations per 100,000 people) and 24% 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 cannabinoids (120 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 non-opioid analgesics; antidepressants; antipsychotics and neuroleptics and volatile solvents (p<0.050) (Table 1).

In contrast, there were significant increases in the rate of hospitalisations related to cannabinoids; amphetamines and other stimulants; opioids; and multiple drug use (p<0.050) (Table 1).

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

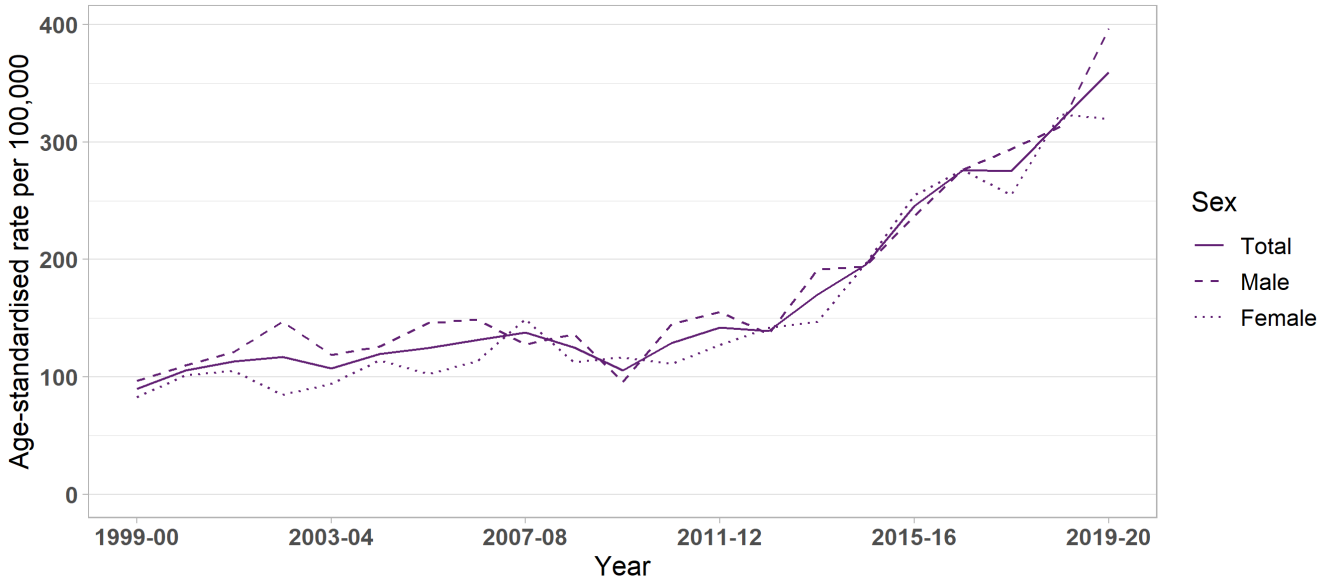
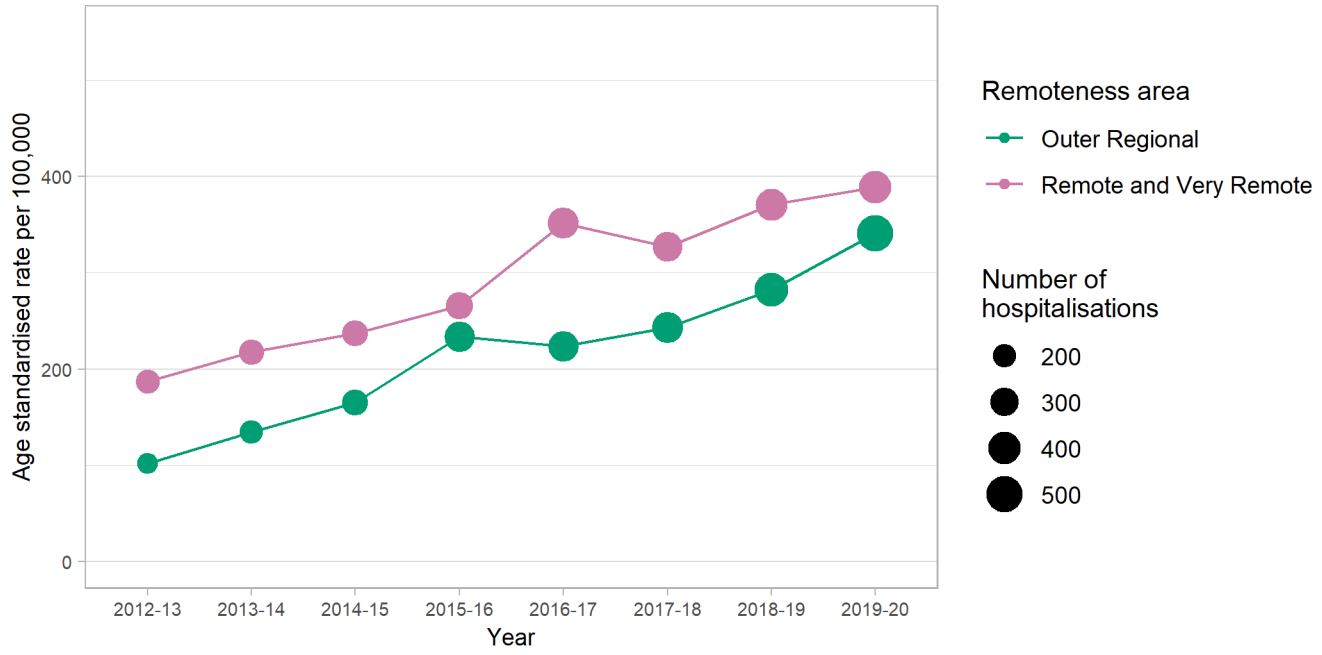


Figure 2. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by remoteness, Northern Territory, 2012-13 to 2019-20.



Note: There are no major cities and inner regional areas in Northern Territory. The size (area) of the bubble is proportional to the number of hospitalisations.

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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), Northern Territory, 1999-00 to 2019-20.

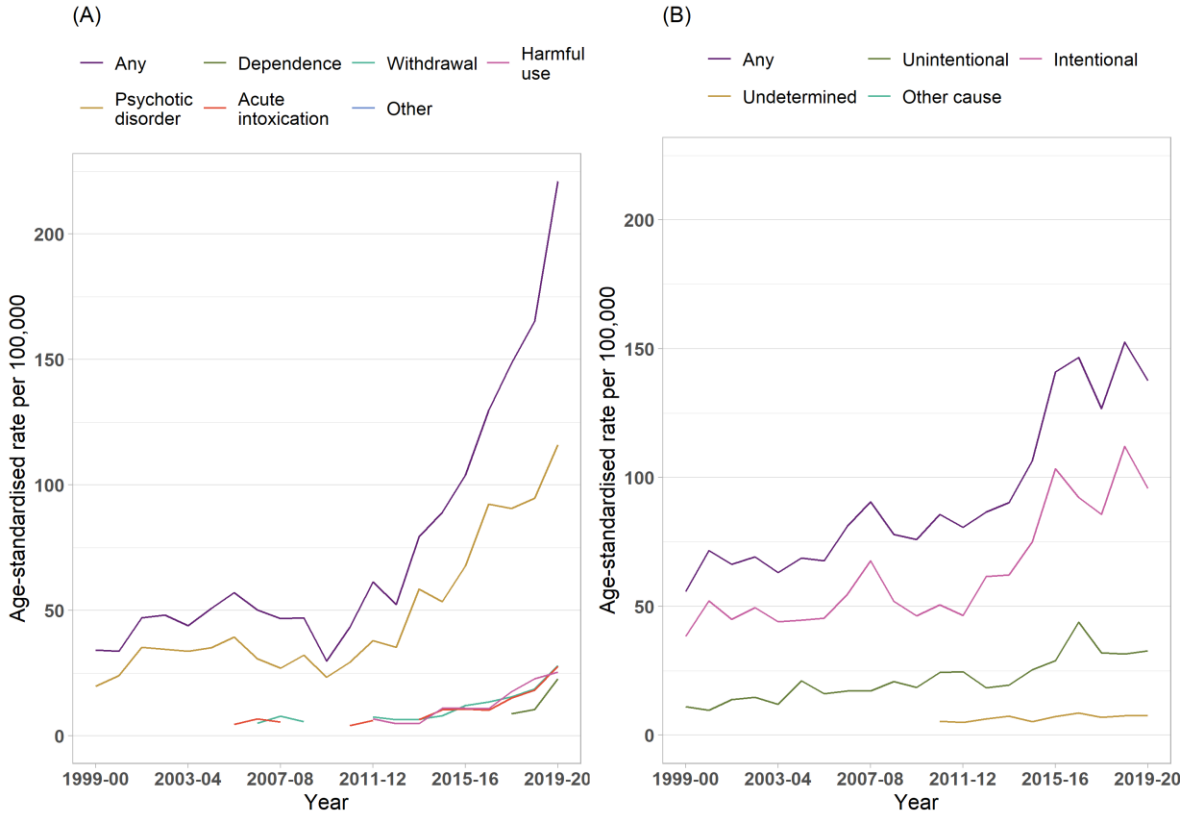
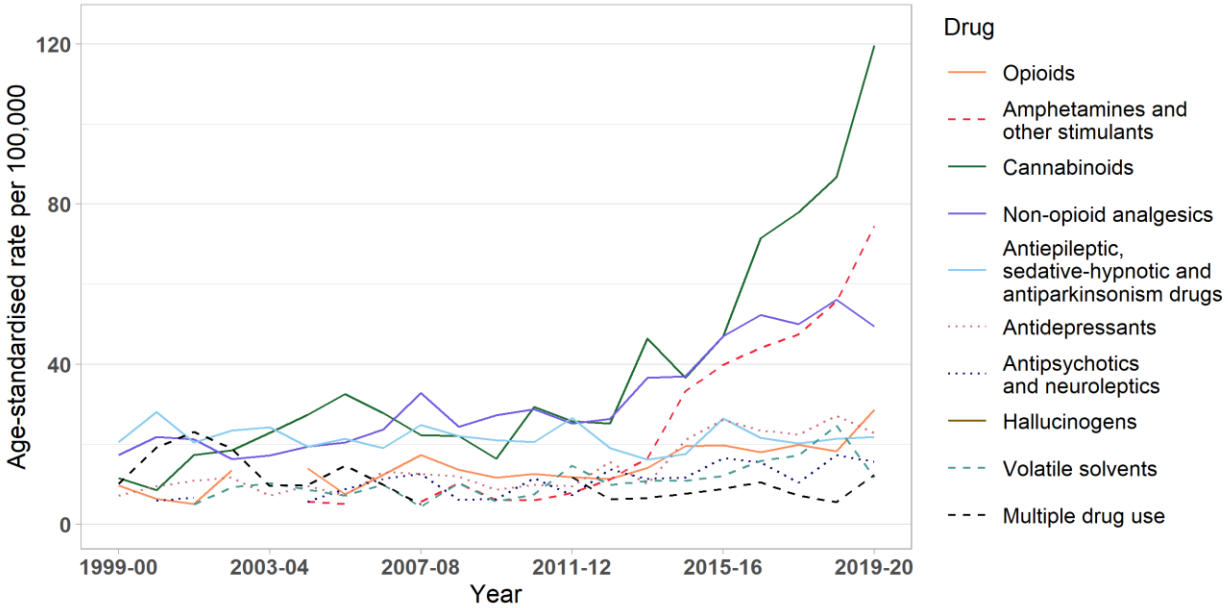


Figure 4. Age-standardised rate per 100,000 people of drug-related hospitalisations, by drug identified in the principal diagnosis, Northern Territory, 1999-00 to 2019-20.



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 the Northern Territory 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	359 (336.2,383.6)	318 (296,341)	1.13 (1.12,1.14)	<0.001
Cannabinoids	120 (106.7,133.7)	87 (76,99)	1.38 (1.35,1.41)	<0.001
Amphetamines and other stimulants	74 (64.4, 85.7)	56 (47,65)	1.34 (1.30,1.37)	<0.001
Non-opioid analgesics	49 (41.0, 59.1)	56 (47,66)	0.88 (0.86,0.90)	<0.001
Opioids	29 (22.0, 36.6)	18 (13,25)	1.57 (1.51,1.64)	<0.001
Antidepressants	23 (17.3, 29.8)	27 (21,34)	0.84 (0.81,0.88)	<0.001
Antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic and antiparkinsonism drugs	22 (16.4, 28.5)	21 (16,28)	1.02 (0.98,1.07)	0.300
Antipsychotics and neuroleptics	16 (11.1, 21.3)	17 (13,23)	0.90 (0.86,0.94)	<0.001
Multiple drug use	12 (8.3, 17.6)	5.6 (3.2, 9.0)	2.22 (2.06,2.38)	<0.001
Volatile solvents	12 (7.7, 16.8)	25 (19,32)	0.47 (0.45,0.49)	<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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