

Drug abuse and drug situation in Hong Kong in first quarter of 2025

â€‹The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) noted at its meeting today (June 12) the figures of the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA) and other drug-related figures for the first quarter of 2025. ACAN noticed that the total number of reported drug abusers in the first quarter of 2025 was lower than that of 2024. However, the figures tend to show greater volatilities in the first quarter of each year. The ACAN will closely monitor the situation in the remaining quarters of 2025, and will at the same time continue to carry out its anti-drug work.

Figures from the CRDA revealed that the total number of reported drug abusers in the first quarter of 2025 was 1 644 while that of the same period in 2024 was 1 738. The most common type of drug abused in the first quarter of 2025 was heroin, followed by cocaine and cannabis.

The number of reported young drug abusers aged under 21 in the first quarter of 2025 was 285, of which 128 abused the "space oil drug". The "Space oil drug", followed by cannabis and cocaine, has replaced cannabis to become the most common type of drug abused among reported young drug abusers.

Regarding the main active ingredients currently found in the "space oil drug", the Government has listed etomidate and its three analogues (metomidate, propoxate and isopropoxate) as dangerous drugs, which are regulated under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (DDO) (Cap. 134). The Government plans to list the remaining etomidate analogues as dangerous drugs, and has consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Security earlier this month.

The Chairman of ACAN, Dr Donald Li, said, "When facing the 'space oil drug', the Government should not lower its guard. ACAN fully supports the Government's proposal to list all etomidate analogues as dangerous drugs under the DDO, with a view to nipping this drug abuse problem in the bud. Apart from the legislation, ACAN will continue to carry out relevant publicity and education work."

On the enforcement front, according to the figures from the law enforcement agencies, the total number of persons arrested for drug offences in the first quarter of 2025 was 940. Among them, 140 of them are youngsters aged under 21. The "space oil drug", cannabis and cocaine were the main drugs involved in these arrests in the first quarter. According to the court cases concluded for the same period, the conviction rate of persons being prosecuted for drug offences was as high as 86 per cent. As for young offenders aged under 21 who were sentenced to imprisonment for drug trafficking, more than half of them were sentenced to over five years in prison, and the longest imprisonment was 20 years.

A spokesman for the Security Bureau (SB) said, "As the summer holidays approach, we remind youngsters not to participate in drug trafficking out of greed or gambling on luck, including giving out their addresses for receiving 'drug parcels' and joining free trips to transport dangerous drugs across borders as 'drug mules'. Young age is not a valid mitigating factor for drug offences. A plea of ignorance is not an excuse to avoid legal liability. Young drug offenders will also be sentenced to lengthy imprisonment."

Moreover, the spokesman reminded youngsters that they need to stay vigilant at all times when travelling outside Hong Kong, with a view to avoiding drug traps when trying something new. Foods and drinks, or even health supplements, skincare products (such as facial masks, massage oil), etc, may contain dangerous drugs. Products that are marked with the words "CBD", "THC", "cannabis", "cannabinoids", "ganja", "hemp extracts" or "marijuana", or with a picture of a cannabis leaf, may contain substances that are illegal in Hong Kong or prohibited for transit at the airport. Members of the public are reminded to pay close attention to product labels during online or in-store shopping. If in doubt, members of the public should not risk purchasing, consuming or bringing these products back to Hong Kong to not to breach the law inadvertently. Information and a video about examples of CBD products have been uploaded onto the Narcotics Division's (ND) dedicated webpage about CBD (www.nd.gov.hk/en/CBD.html) for the public's reference.

The ACAN also noted the findings of the 2023/24 Survey of Drug Use among Students (Survey). The Survey is a triennial research project conducted by a research institute commissioned by the ND of the SB, with the aim of obtaining the latest drug taking trends in students and knowing more about students' knowledge of drugs as well as their attitudes towards drug taking. Such information assists the Government in formulating anti-drug initiatives that would respond better to the actual situation. The Survey successfully surveyed 99 600 students from upper primary to post-secondary levels, accounting for about 15 per cent of the student population in Hong Kong.

The Survey results indicated that the proportion of students who claimed to have taken dangerous drugs rose to 2.7 per cent from 2.5 per cent in the previous survey (i.e. the one conducted in 2020/21). Psychotropic substances are the most common types of drugs abused by these students. These findings are in line with the statistics recorded by the CRDA.

The CRDA figures for the first quarter of 2025 are available on the ND's website (www.nd.gov.hk/en/index.html).

The ND's website, as well as its official accounts (narcotics.divisionhk) on Facebook and Instagram, also contain detailed information about dangerous drugs including the "space oil drug" for reference by the public.