2024

Key Issues

The Drug Situation and Responses in Malta

National Drug Policy 2023-2033

Key Principles:

- Public Health First: Prevention, treatment and recovery.
- Human Rights and Dignity: Support for vulnerable groups, with non-punitive approaches.
- Evidence-Informed: Policies shaped by reliable data.
- Balanced Approach: Integration of supply reduction (enforcement) and demand reduction (prevention/treatment/recovery).

Strategic Priorities:

- Prevention & Education: Promote healthy lifestyles, especially among youth.
- Treatment & Rehabilitation: Expand access and improve quality of care.
- Harm Reduction: Support safer practices and reduce overdose risks.
- Monitoring & Research: Strengthen data systems.
- International Cooperation: Align with and contribute to EU and UN drug policy framework.

National Drugs and Addictions Unit

Key Functions:

- Acts as a central hub for monitoring, reporting and analysing drug trends in Malta.
- Gathers national data and submits annual reports to the Maltese Government, EUDA, and UN.
- Ensures scientific independence and alignment with UN and EU standards.
- Represents Malta within the Reitox Network, contributing to EU wide discussions and strategies.
- Engages with the Council of Europe (Pompidou Group), United Nations (CND), European Union (HDG)

Outcome:

Evidence-based foundation for national policy development.
Informs strategic reforms in law enforcement, prevention, treatment and recovery.

From Data to Policy

Key Role of Data Collection:

- Accurate, reliable and scientific data on:
  - Prevalence of drug use and problematic use
  - Drug Markets
  - Emerging substances
  - Prevention and treatment effectiveness
  - Law enforcement and harm reduction efforts
- Annual reports inform policy and strategic direction.
- Supports resource allocation, identifies gaps and measures outcomes.

Total number of arraignments

80

2023

	Possession Cases	Trafficking Cases
Heroin	**2**	**5**
Cannabis	9	22
Cocaine	6	32
Other	1	3

Number of Arraignments 2017-2023

Year	Value
2017	570
2018	613
2019	434
2020	262
2021	256
2022	140
2023	80

2023

Total number of Tribunal Cases **88**

Paid cases	Pending Payments
31	**47**
Cases judged Not Guilty	Cases pending judgment
3	**7**

Total number of individuals registered **516**

88%

12%
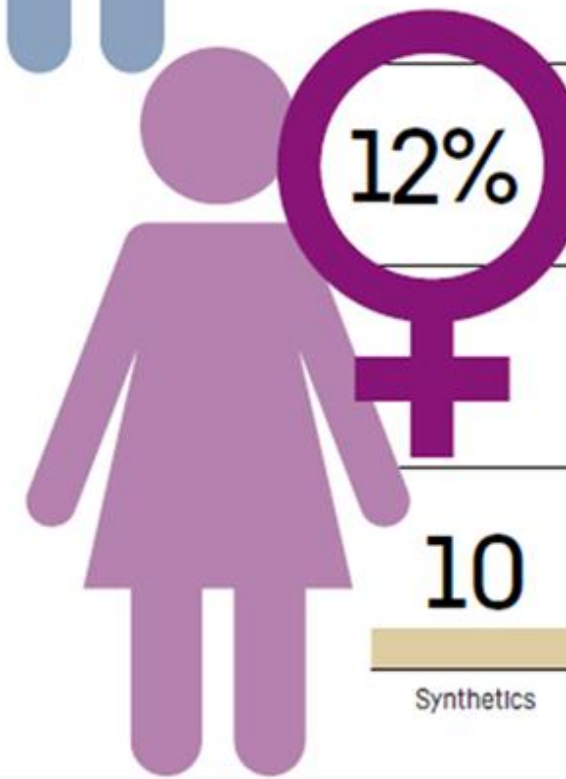
Synthetics	Heroin	Cannabis	Cocaine
10	82	163	261

250
200
150
100
50
0

2023

Arraignments | Tribunal Cases | Probation & Parole | Drugs siezed | Purity levels

Top 3 drugs seized

Cocaine
493kg

Cannabis Grass
154kg

Khat
10kg

Mean Purity / Potency Levels

Cocaine
57%

Heroin
16%

Cannabis Grass
7%
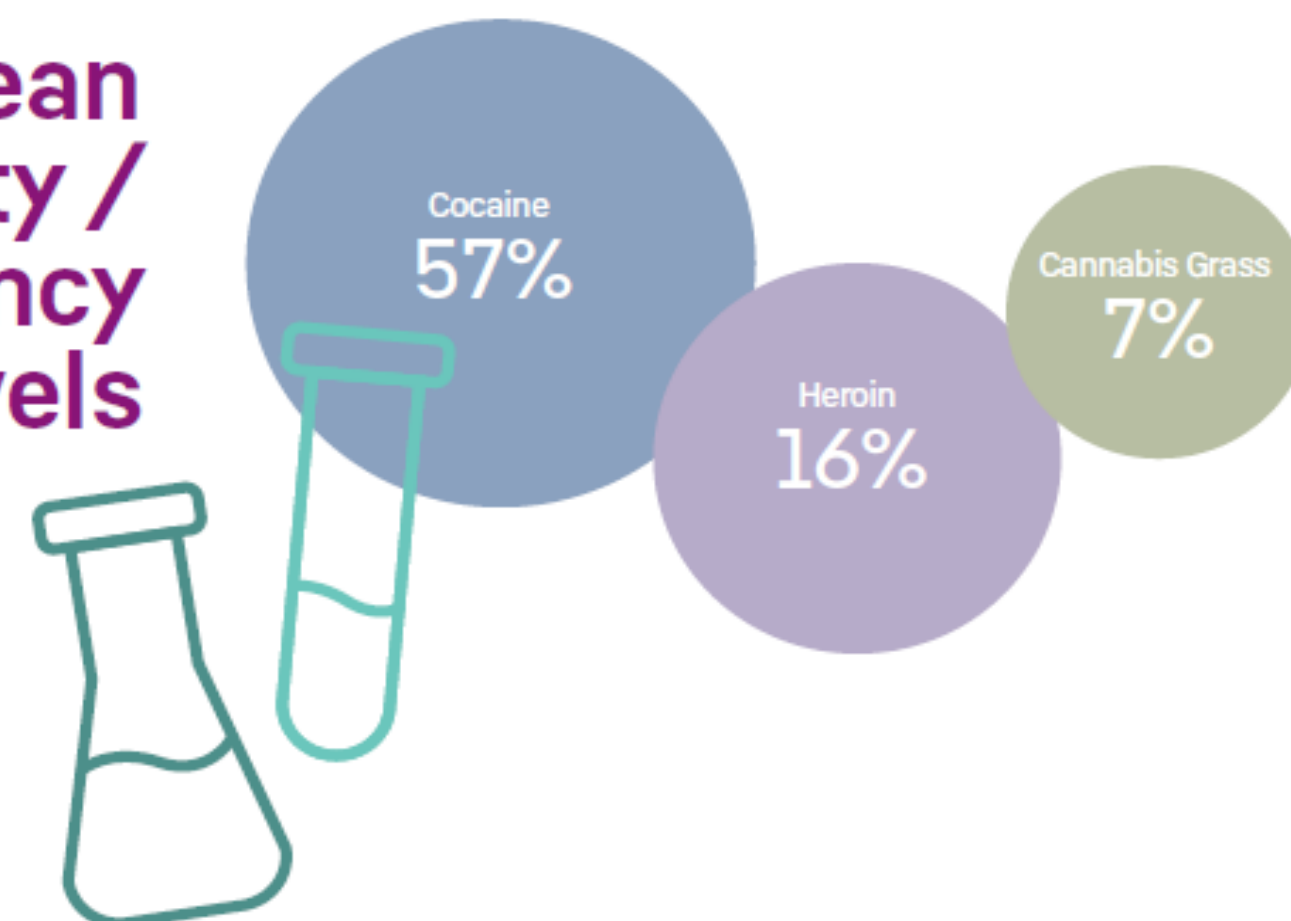
These figures include seizures for both domestic use and transit through Malta.

Individuals in Treatment 2017-2023

Year	First Treated Individuals		Previously Treated Individuals		Total Individuals	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
2017	245	13	1600	87	1845	100
2018	390	21	1508	79	1898	100
2019	347	18	1596	82	1943	100
2020	497	25	1487	75	1984	100
2021	411	20	1579	80	1990	100
2022	469	24	1458	76	1927	100
2023	521	23	1790	77	2311	100

Demographics

EMPLOYMENT

45% Employed

EDUCATION COMPLETED

64% Secondary Level

13% Higher Education

MEDIAN AGE IN TREATMENT

Female **38** 18%

Male **40** 82%

PRIMARY DRUG

Overall Treatment

Demographics

Male Female Characteristics

Heroin Cocaine Cannabis

Drug Harms

ATS DDU CSA

Heroin
1019
44%

Cocaine
938
41%

Cannabis
314
14%

77% received treatment before 2023
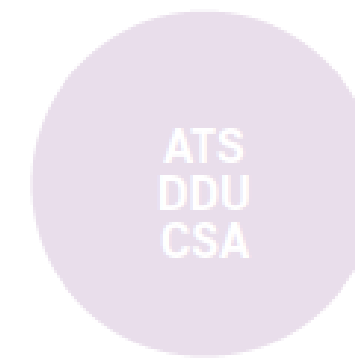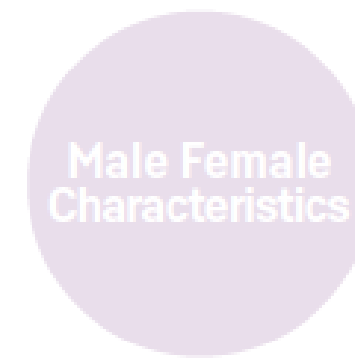
23% never received treatment before 2023

Primary Drug of choice
52% Heroin

Primary Drug of choice
57% Cocaine

Overall Treatment

Demographics

Male Female Characteristics

Heroin Cocaine Cannabis

Drug Harms

ATS DDU CSA

Syringe Distribution
1994-2023

Syringe distribution in 2023
31,172
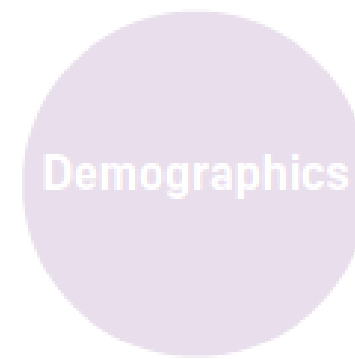
Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% change		-29%	+26%	-7%	-7%	+8%	-2%
Value	1,025	730	920	855	796	857	837

Overall Treatment

Demographics

Male Female Characteristics

Heroin Cocaine Cannabis

Drug Harms

ATS DDU CSA
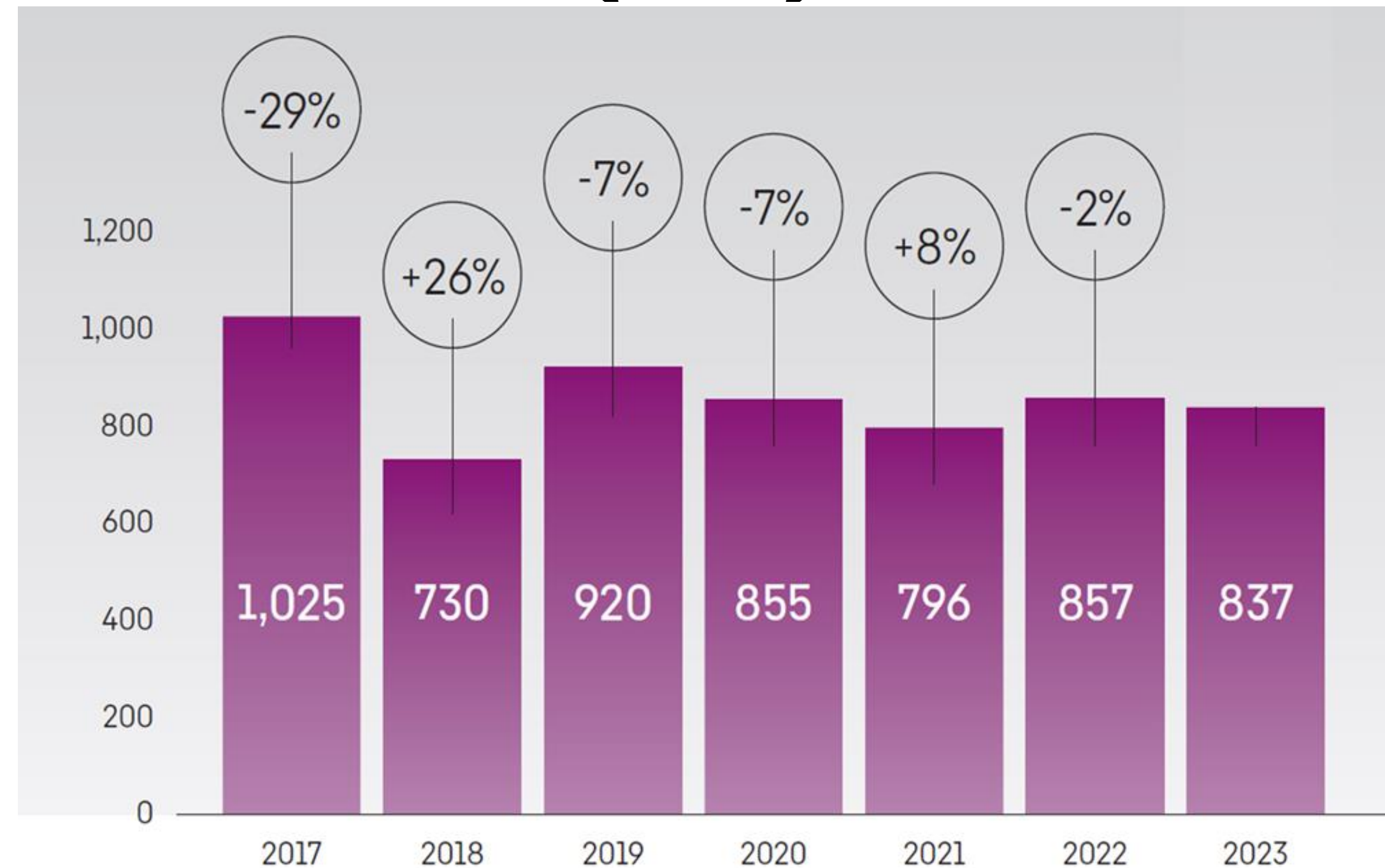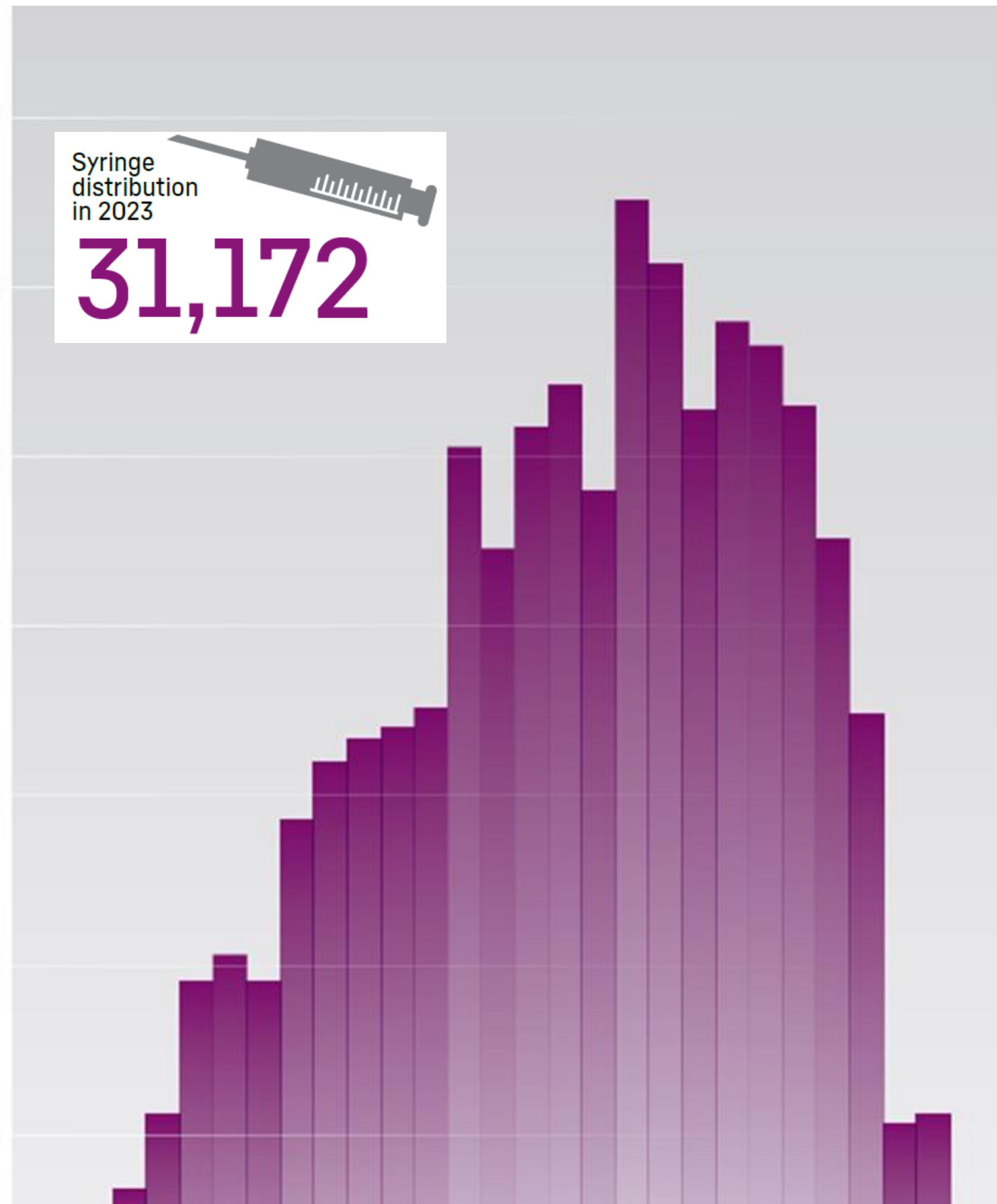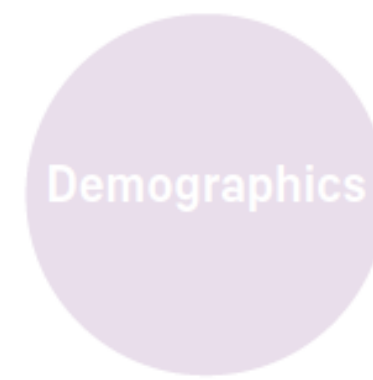
Emergency Department Admissions
2016-2023

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
218	369	490	563	579	568	1135	1266
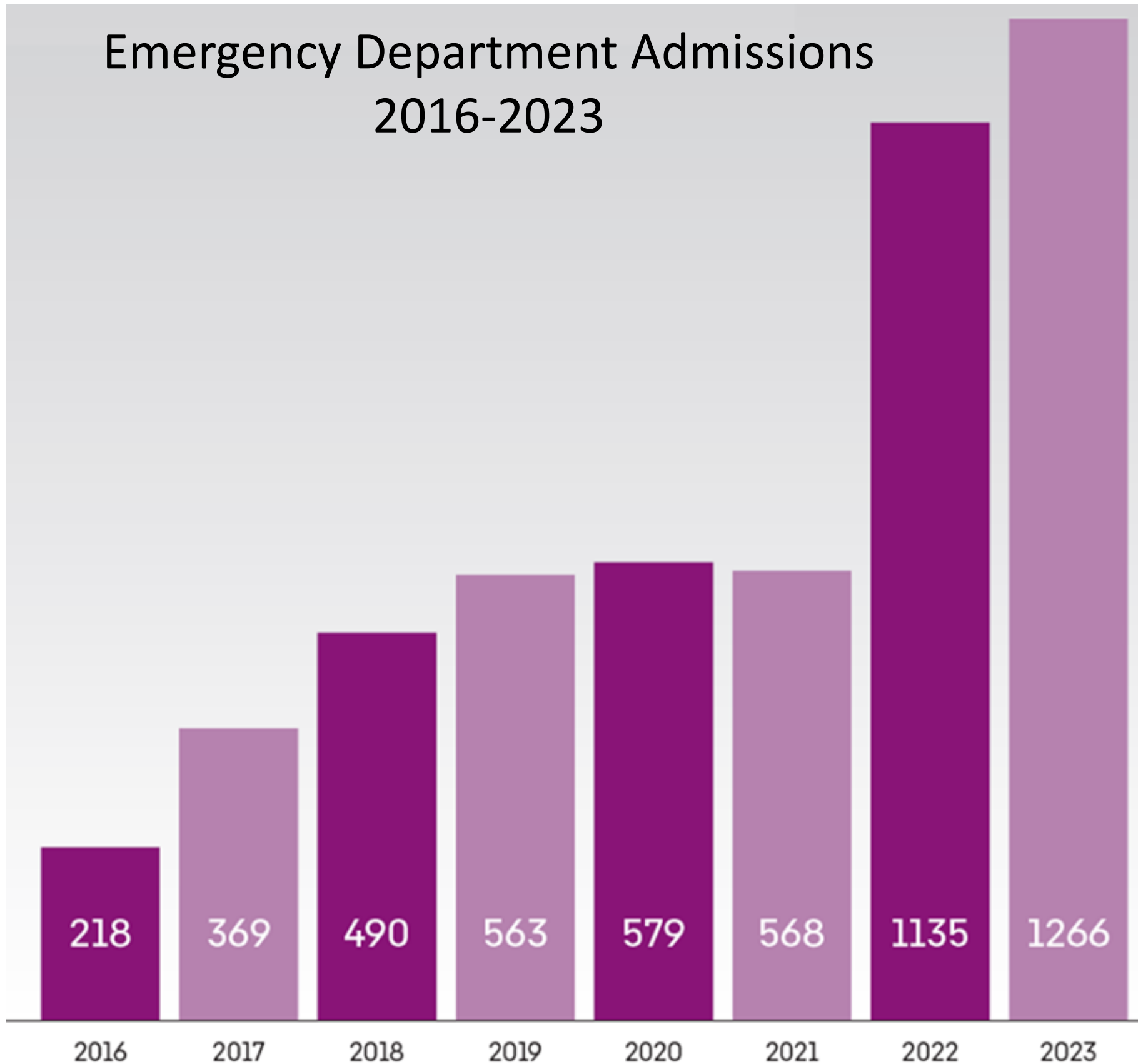
DRUG RELATED DEATHS 18
HEROIN 5 / COCAINE 13

An additional 8 death certificates from 2023 are still awaiting toxicology results and are considered provisional.
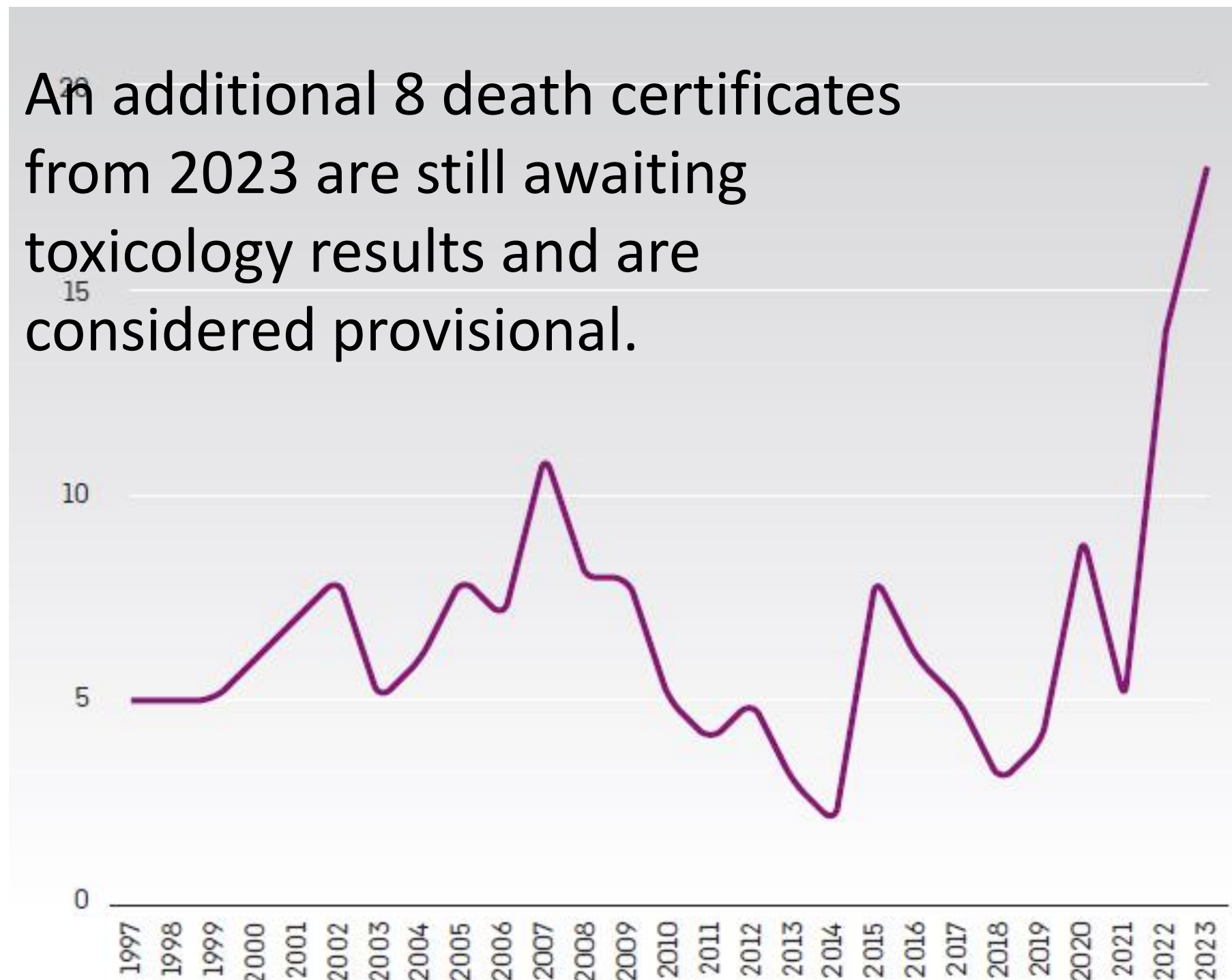
National Drugs and Addictions Unit

Future Direction - National Addictions Advisory Board

- Establish a Prevention Coordination Body to enhance national prevention efforts.
- Create a Law Enforcement Coordination Body to improve inter-agency collaboration.
- Launch an Early Warning System to flag high-purity drugs & emerging threats.
- Establish task forces & stakeholder working groups to tackle complex issues (e.g. culture of drug use, homeless clients, drug related mortality, foreign nationals).

2024

Key Issues

The Drug
Situation and
Responses
in Malta

THANK YOU