

National Drug Treatment Reporting System 2013 – 2019 Alcohol Data

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Introduction

In this bulletin, trends in **treated problem alcohol use** are described for the seven-year period from 2013 to 2019. The data are taken from the **National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS)**, the national surveillance system that records and reports on cases of drug and alcohol treatment in Ireland.

Overview

In this seven-year period, 53,200 cases were treated for **alcohol** as a main problem.

- The number of cases decreased from 7,819 in 2013 to **7,546** in 2019.
- The proportion of *new cases* decreased from 47.4% in 2013 to 43.7% in 2019.

Level of problem alcohol use

- In 2019, the **median age** at which cases first started drinking alcohol was 16 years.
- Almost seven-in-every-ten (68.1%) cases were classified as **alcohol dependent**. *For a definition of alcohol dependence please see page 4.*
- In 2019, 64.6% of new cases were classified as **alcohol dependent** as compared to 50.7% in 2013.
- The proportion of previously treated cases classified as **alcohol dependent** increased from 64.3% in 2013 to 75.3% in 2019.
- In 2019, 69.5% of males were classified as **alcohol dependent**, as compared to 65.9% of females.

Socio-demographics

- In 2019, the **median age** of treated cases was 41 years, similar to previous years.
- Almost two-thirds of cases in 2019 were **male** (64.1%).

- The proportion of cases with an **Irish Traveller** ethnicity was 1.8% in 2013 and 2.4% in 2019.
- Half (49.4%) of cases in 2019 were **unemployed**.
- The proportion of cases that were **homeless** increased from 6.5% in 2013 to 8.7% in 2019.
- In 2019, 10.5% of males and 5.4% of females were recorded as **homeless**.
- Almost one-third (31.5%) of females were aged **50 years** and over compared to one-quarter (25.7%) of males.

Polydrug use

Polydrug use was reported by one-fifth of those treated for problem alcohol use.

- **Cannabis** was the most common additional drug used. The proportion of cases reporting cannabis use declined from 64.6% in 2013 to 56.1% in 2019.
- **Cocaine** was the second most common additional drug recorded. This has increased from 29.3% in 2013 to 53.8% in 2019.
- In 2019, **cocaine** as an additional drug was more common among males (56.8%) than females (45.8%).
- **Benzodiazepines** were the third most common additional drug reported (21.8%) in 2019. The proportion reporting **benzodiazepines** as an additional problem increased from 27.2% in 2013 to 28.6% in 2016 and decreased to 21.8% in 2019.
- In 2019, **opioids** as an additional problem drug were more common among females (18.1%) than among males (11.3%).

NDTRS cases 2013 to 2019

This bulletin presents **alcohol treatment data** from the NDTRS for the period 2013–2019.¹ Included are cases treated in outpatient, inpatient, low threshold services, and those treated in prison.²

Data in this bulletin supersede all previously published data from NDTRS publications.

In the seven-year period, a total of 53,200 cases treated for problem alcohol use reported alcohol as the main problem substance.³

The number of cases treated decreased from 7,819 in 2013 to 7,546 in 2019 (Table 1).^{4,5,6}

The proportion of *new* cases decreased from 47.4% in 2013 to 43.7% in 2019. The proportion of *previously treated* cases remained relatively stable up to 2018, but decreased to 45.1% in 2019.

Analysis by treatment status should be interpreted with caution due to the increase in the proportion of cases where treatment status was unknown (11.3% in 2019). The increase can be partially attributed to issues with data from some external data providers, but it is important that all services ensure that the information returned to the NDTRS is accurate and complete.

Table 1: Number of cases with alcohol as a main problem, by treatment status, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464		7546	
New cases	3708	(47.4)	3772	(48.6)	3553	(46.6)	3678	(48.1)	3500	(47.6)	3230	(43.3)	3296	(43.7)
Previously treated cases	3932	(50.3)	3807	(49.1)	3948	(51.8)	3783	(49.5)	3652	(49.7)	3705	(49.6)	3400	(45.1)
Treatment status unknown	179	(2.3)	181	(2.3)	117	(1.5)	182	(2.4)	198	(2.7)	529	(7.1)	850	(11.3)

Type of service provider

In 2019, over half (54.2%) of cases were treated in outpatient facilities, while more than one-third of cases (37.2%) were treated in residential settings, similar to previous years (Table 2).

The proportion of cases treated in prison decreased from 3.4% in 2013 to 2.4% in 2019.

General practitioners do not currently report alcohol treatment figures to the NDTRS.

Table 2: No. of cases in treatment with alcohol as a main problem, by type of service provider, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464		7546	
Outpatient	4221	(54.0)	4133	(53.3)	4018	(52.7)	4005	(52.4)	3894	(53.0)	4087	(54.8)	4093	(54.2)
Inpatient*	2809	(35.9)	2803	(36.1)	2916	(38.3)	2994	(39.2)	2949	(40.1)	2792	(37.4)	2806	(37.2)
Low threshold	521	(6.7)	605	(7.8)	480	(6.3)	495	(6.5)	436	(5.9)	451	(6.0)	469	(6.2)
Prison	268	(3.4)	219	(2.8)	204	(2.7)	149	(1.9)	71	(1.0)	134	(1.8)	178	(2.4)

* Includes any service where the client stays overnight, e.g., in-patient detoxification, therapeutic communities, respite and step down

Polydrug use

In 2019, 20.8% of cases treated for problem alcohol use reported problem use of more than one drug (polydrug use) (Table 3). This proportion has remained similar over the reporting period.

In 2019, cannabis (56.1%) was the most common additional drug reported by cases with polydrug use, followed by cocaine (53.8%) and then benzodiazepines (21.8%). Problem use of cocaine has increased from 29.3% in 2013 to 53.8% in 2019.

The proportion of cases reporting benzodiazepines use decreased from 27.2% in 2013 to 21.8% in 2019.

The proportion of cases reporting **cannabis** decreased from 64.6% in 2013 to 56.1% in 2019.

In 2019, 15 (1.0%) cases reported pregabalin (Lyrica) as a problem in addition to alcohol.

Table 3: Polydrug use in cases treated for problem alcohol use, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464		7546	
Alcohol only	6258	(80.0)	6252	(80.6)	6196	(81.3)	6315	(82.6)	5898	(80.2)	5861	(78.5)	5976	(79.2)
Reported other additional drug(s)	1561	(20.0)	1508	(19.4)	1422	(18.7)	1328	(17.4)	1452	(19.8)	1603	(21.5)	1570	(20.8)

Table 4: Polydrug use - additional problem drugs for all cases and new cases, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	1561		1508		1422		1328		1452		1603		1570	
Cannabis	1008	(64.6)	953	(63.2)	852	(59.9)	766	(57.7)	878	(60.5)	940	(58.6)	881	(56.1)
Cocaine	458	(29.3)	426	(28.2)	462	(32.5)	470	(35.4)	607	(41.8)	772	(48.2)	844	(53.8)
Benzodiazepines	424	(27.2)	421	(27.9)	357	(25.1)	380	(28.6)	332	(22.9)	375	(23.4)	342	(21.8)
Opioids	236	(15.1)	230	(15.3)	200	(14.1)	202	(15.2)	207	(14.3)	212	(13.2)	206	(13.1)
MDMA (ecstasy)	187	(12.0)	173	(11.5)	142	(10.0)	99	(7.5)	134	(9.2)	185	(11.5)	146	(9.3)
Amphetamines	87	(5.6)	57	(3.8)	66	(4.6)	51	(3.8)	49	(3.4)	57	(3.6)	46	(2.9)
NPS	27	(1.7)	18	(1.2)	27	(1.9)	30	(2.3)	18	(1.2)	15	(0.9)	20	(1.3)
Z Drugs*	40	(2.6)	38	(2.5)	39	(2.7)	33	(2.5)	27	(1.9)	19	(1.2)	18	(1.1)
Volatile inhalants	8	(0.5)	7	(0.5)	~	~	~	~	6	(0.4)	~	~	~	~
Other	46	(2.9)	48	(3.2)	27	(1.9)	38	(2.9)	62	(4.3)	71	(4.4)	70	(4.5)
New cases	695		678		625		593		656		635		659	
Cannabis	473	(68.1)	442	(65.2)	385	(61.6)	340	(57.3)	408	(62.2)	390	(61.4)	394	(59.8)
Cocaine	199	(28.6)	201	(29.6)	225	(36.0)	221	(37.3)	290	(44.2)	331	(52.1)	365	(55.4)
Benzodiazepines	139	(20.0)	158	(23.3)	109	(17.4)	149	(25.1)	122	(18.6)	106	(16.7)	111	(16.8)
Opioids	61	(8.8)	75	(11.1)	50	(8.0)	62	(10.5)	63	(9.6)	45	(7.1)	46	(7.0)
MDMA (ecstasy)	90	(12.9)	84	(12.4)	72	(11.5)	57	(9.6)	57	(8.7)	77	(12.1)	64	(9.7)
Amphetamines	39	(5.6)	21	(3.1)	28	(4.5)	19	(3.2)	22	(3.4)	22	(3.5)	21	(3.2)
NPS	12	(1.7)	~	~	14	(2.2)	10	(1.7)	8	(1.2)	~	~	6	(0.9)
Z Drugs*	11	(1.6)	13	(1.9)	9	(1.4)	7	(1.2)	13	(2.0)	~	~	~	~
Volatile inhalants	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0	~	~
Other	18	(2.6)	21	(3.1)	10	(1.6)	18	(3.0)	29	(4.4)	21	(3.3)	27	(4.1)

* Z-Drugs are non-benzodiazepine hypnotic sedative drugs, e.g., zolpidem, zopiclone

~ Cells with five cases or fewer

Level of problem alcohol use

In 2019, the median age at which cases commenced alcohol use was 16 years (Table 5).

Over the period, the majority (64.9%) were classified as **alcohol dependent** (by the health care professional treating them). The proportion of cases classified as dependent increased from 56.9% in 2013 to 68.1% in 2019.

Likewise, the proportion of *new cases* (those who have never been treated for problem alcohol use before) which were classified as alcohol dependent increased from half (50.7%) in 2013 to almost two-thirds (64.6%) in 2019.

Hazardous: a pattern of alcohol use that increases the risk of harmful consequences for the user. The term describes drinking over the recommended limits by a person who has no apparent alcohol-related health problems. Includes experimental drinking. [AUDIT score 8 – 15: Increasing risk]⁷

Harmful: a pattern of use that results in damage to physical or mental health; can include negative social consequences. [AUDIT score 16 – 19: High risk]⁷

Dependent: a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological symptoms. Typically, includes a strong desire to consume alcohol, impaired control over its use, persistent drinking despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drinking than to other activities and obligations, increased alcohol tolerance. Also, notably a physical withdrawal reaction when alcohol use is discontinued. [AUDIT score 20+: Possible dependence]⁷

Table 5: Age first started drinking and level of problem alcohol use, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464		7546	
Median age first started drinking (range ⁸)	15	11-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	15	12-22	16	12-21
<i>Level of problem alcohol use*</i>														
Hazardous	872	(11.2)	851	(11.0)	673	(8.8)	748	(9.8)	711	(9.7)	746	(10.0)	864	(11.4)
Harmful	1483	(19.0)	1417	(18.3)	1396	(18.3)	1279	(16.7)	1174	(16.0)	1236	(16.6)	1374	(18.2)
Dependent	4450	(56.9)	4644	(59.8)	4719	(62.0)	4957	(64.9)	5290	(72.0)	5300	(71.0)	5142	(68.1)
New cases	3708		3772		3553		3677		3500		3230		3296	
Median age first started drinking (range ⁸)	16	12-21	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22
<i>Level of problem alcohol use*</i>														
Hazardous	573	(15.5)	494	(13.1)	370	(10.4)	426	(11.6)	412	(11.8)	385	(11.9)	406	(12.3)
Harmful	911	(24.6)	858	(22.7)	802	(22.6)	731	(19.9)	674	(19.3)	677	(21.0)	714	(21.7)
Dependent	1881	(50.7)	2008	(53.2)	2026	(57.0)	2212	(60.2)	2339	(66.8)	2118	(65.6)	2129	(64.6)
Previously treated	3930		3807		3946		3783		3652		3705		3400	
Median age first started drinking (range ⁸)	15	11-22	15	11-23	15	12-22	15	12-22	15	12-22	15	11-22	15	12-21
<i>Level of problem alcohol use*</i>														
Hazardous	284	(7.2)	324	(8.5)	285	(7.2)	300	(7.9)	277	(7.6)	297	(8.0)	330	(9.7)
Harmful	544	(13.8)	543	(14.3)	572	(14.5)	515	(13.6)	445	(12.2)	479	(12.9)	450	(13.2)
Dependent	2528	(64.3)	2537	(66.6)	2633	(66.7)	2649	(70.0)	2865	(78.5)	2847	(76.8)	2561	(75.3)
Treatment status unknown	179		181		117		182		198		529		850	

* Where recorded. The proportion of cases where level of alcohol use is not known is not shown in the table.

Socio-demographic characteristics

The **median age** at which cases entered treatment has remained stable since 2015, at 41 years (Table 6). The **median age** of new cases rose from 38 years in 2013 to 40 years in 2019.

The proportion of cases **aged 17 years or younger** has decreased from 2.8% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2019.

The majority of cases in 2019 were **male** (64.1%), similar to previous years.

The proportion of cases recorded as **homeless** increased from 6.5% in 2013 to 8.7% in 2019.

In 2019, 2.4% of cases identified as Irish Traveller.⁸

In 2019, 23.0% of cases reported ceasing education (for the first time) before the age of 16 years.

Just under half of reported cases were **unemployed**, this rate decreased over the reporting period from 55.7% in 2013 to 49.4% in 2019.

Unemployment rates were higher among previously treated cases (56.3%) compared with new cases (44.2%).

Table 6: Socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for problem alcohol use, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464		7546	
Median age (range ⁹)	40	19-64	40	20-63	41	21-64	41	21-64	41	21-64	41	21-65	41	22-64
Under 18	220	(2.8)	163	(2.1)	103	(1.4)	124	(1.6)	112	(1.5)	114	(1.5)	107	(1.4)
Male	5072	(64.9)	4966	(64.0)	4961	(65.1)	4884	(63.9)	4769	(64.9)	4812	(64.5)	4835	(64.1)
Homeless	507	(6.5)	494	(6.4)	572	(7.5)	613	(8.0)	620	(8.4)	713	(9.6)	654	(8.7)
Traveller	144	(1.8)	208	(2.7)	141	(1.9)	161	(2.1)	118	(1.6)	145	(1.9)	178	(2.4)
Education ceased before 16 years	2066	(26.4)	1991	(25.7)	1965	(25.8)	1808	(23.7)	1726	(23.5)	1727	(23.1)	1739	(23.0)
In paid employment	1545	(19.8)	1628	(21.0)	1724	(22.6)	1889	(24.7)	2056	(28.0)	2067	(27.7)	2125	(28.2)
Unemployed	4356	(55.7)	4377	(56.4)	4215	(55.3)	4110	(53.8)	3827	(52.1)	3783	(50.7)	3731	(49.4)
Retired/unable to work including disability	986	(12.6)	912	(11.8)	925	(12.1)	964	(12.6)	887	(12.1)	958	(12.8)	1004	(13.3)
New cases	3708		3772		3553		3678		3500		3230		3296	
Median age (range ⁹)	38	18-64	39	19-63	39	20-64	40	20-64	40	19-64	39	19-65	40	20-65
Under 18	176	(4.7)	125	(3.3)	83	(2.3)	87	(2.4)	90	(2.6)	87	(2.7)	83	(2.5)
Male	2368	(63.9)	2420	(64.2)	2279	(64.1)	2290	(62.3)	2234	(63.8)	2087	(64.6)	2080	(63.1)
Homeless	154	(4.2)	156	(4.1)	148	(4.2)	160	(4.4)	166	(4.7)	191	(5.9)	207	(6.3)
Traveller	73	(2.0)	104	(2.8)	60	(1.7)	78	(2.1)	50	(1.4)	59	(1.8)	73	(2.2)
Education ceased before 16 years	902	(24.3)	882	(23.4)	815	(22.9)	768	(20.9)	768	(21.9)	639	(19.8)	716	(21.7)
In paid employment	949	(25.6)	962	(25.5)	1014	(28.5)	1176	(32.0)	1209	(34.5)	1165	(36.1)	1116	(33.9)
Unemployed	1772	(47.8)	1916	(50.8)	1725	(48.6)	1690	(45.9)	1587	(45.3)	1417	(43.9)	1458	(44.2)
Retired/unable to work including disability	451	(12.2)	410	(10.9)	384	(10.8)	404	(11.0)	367	(10.5)	354	(11.0)	390	(11.8)
Previously treated	3932		3807		3948		3783		3652		3705		3400	
Median age (range ⁹)	41	22-64	41	22-63	42	23-64	43	24-64	43	24-64	42	23-65	42	24-65
Under 18	42	(1.1)	33	(0.9)	19	(0.5)	20	(0.5)	17	(0.5)	20	(0.5)	15	(0.4)
Male	2570	(65.4)	2420	(63.6)	2599	(65.8)	2480	(65.6)	2394	(65.6)	2382	(64.3)	2249	(66.1)
Homeless	342	(8.7)	325	(8.5)	405	(10.3)	433	(11.4)	432	(11.8)	473	(12.8)	378	(11.1)
Traveller	69	(1.8)	96	(2.5)	77	(2.0)	70	(1.9)	62	(1.7)	67	(1.8)	81	(2.4)
Education ceased before 16 years	1129	(28.7)	1072	(28.2)	1124	(28.5)	1003	(26.5)	912	(25.0)	957	(25.8)	847	(24.9)
In paid employment	570	(14.5)	638	(16.8)	688	(17.4)	674	(17.8)	804	(22.0)	778	(21.0)	744	(21.9)
Unemployed	2485	(63.2)	2357	(61.9)	2423	(61.4)	2331	(61.6)	2145	(58.7)	2109	(56.9)	1914	(56.3)
Retired/unable to work including disability	513	(13.1)	482	(12.7)	527	(13.3)	540	(14.3)	498	(13.6)	535	(14.4)	502	(14.8)
Treatment status unknown	179		181		117		182		198		529		850	

Focus on gender

This section focuses on gender and socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for alcohol as the main problem in 2019.

Table 7: Socio-demographic and polydrug characteristics by gender, NDTRS 2019

	Male		Female	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	4835	(64.1)	2702	(35.8)
Median age (range ⁹)	40	(22-63)	43	(22-67)
Under 35	1560	(32.3)	688	(25.5)
35-49	2024	(41.8)	1153	(42.7)
50+	1242	(25.7)	850	(31.5)
Median age (first used alcohol)	15	(12-20)	16	(12-24)
Traveller	139	(2.9)	39	(1.4)
Education ceased before 16	1263	(26.1)	476	(17.6)
In paid employment	1357	(28.1)	764	(28.3)
Unemployed	2542	(52.6)	1186	(43.9)
Homeless	508	(10.5)	146	(5.4)
Dependent alcohol use	3360	(69.5)	1780	(65.9)
<i>Reported other additional drug(s)</i>	1137	(23.5)	432	(16.0)
<i>Cannabis</i>	667	(58.7)	213	(49.3)
<i>Cocaine</i>	646	(56.8)	198	(45.8)
<i>Benzodiazepines</i>	235	(20.7)	107	(24.8)
<i>Opioids</i>	128	(11.3)	78	(18.1)
New cases	2080	(43.0)	1215	(45.0)
Median age (range ⁹)	38	(20-62)	42	(20-67)
Under 35	797	(38.3)	352	(29.0)
35-49	814	(39.1)	494	(40.7)
50+	469	(22.5)	369	(30.4)
Median age (first used alcohol)	15	(12-20)	16	(12-25)
Traveller	59	(2.8)	14	(1.2)
Education ceased before 16	517	(24.9)	199	(16.4)
In paid employment	726	(34.9)	389	(32.0)
Unemployed	988	(47.5)	470	(38.7)
Homeless	157	(7.5)	50	(4.1)
Dependent alcohol use	1381	(66.4)	748	(61.6)
<i>Reported other additional drug(s)</i>	481	(23.1)	178	(14.7)
<i>Cannabis</i>	293	(60.9)	101	(56.7)
<i>Cocaine</i>	282	(58.6)	83	(46.6)
<i>Benzodiazepines</i>	76	(15.8)	35	(19.7)
<i>Opioids</i>	33	(6.9)	13	(7.3)

The **median age** when entering treatment was higher for females (43 years) than males (40 years). Among new cases specifically, the median age entering treatment was also higher for females (38 years for males and 42 years for females).

Among females, 31.5% were aged **50 years or over** compared to 25.7% of males.

Homelessness was more prevalent among males (10.5%) than females (5.4%).

The proportion of cases who reported **other drugs in addition to alcohol** was higher for males (23.5%) than for females (16.0%). The four most common additional drugs were the same for both males and females (cannabis, cocaine, benzodiazepines, and opioids). There are, however, differences in the proportion reporting use of these drugs by gender.

Higher proportions of males reported **cannabis and cocaine** compared to females. Conversely, rates of **benzodiazepines and opioid** use are more common among females.

In 2019, 69.5% of males were classified as **alcohol dependent**, as compared to 65.9% of females.

The **preferred types of alcohol** used also varied by gender. In 2019, the three most common preferred types of alcohol for males were beer (43.3%), spirits (36.5%), and wine (9.0%). Among females the preferred types of alcohol were wine (35.1%), spirits (34.9%), and beer (18.6%).

The majority of cases (72.2%) had used alcohol in the month prior to treatment. Of these, the median number of **standard drinks** consumed on a typical drinking day was 20 (range 6-40) for males and 15 (range 5-30) for females. The risk of harm from alcohol use increases in line with the amount consumed. The low-risk drinking guidelines are: up to 11 standard drinks in a week for women, and up to 17 standard drinks in a week for men. Drinks should be spaced out over the week, with two to three alcohol free days per week.¹⁰

Among those previously treated for alcohol, 73.5% of males had previously received an **alcohol detox** as compared to 67.5% of females.

Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area of residence

In 2019, the highest number of cases treated for problem alcohol use **resided**¹¹ in CHO 4 (Table 8) (see below for reference to areas included in each CHO). The number of cases fluctuated for all CHOs over the period.

It should be noted, however, that poor levels of participation in the NDTRS by alcohol services in some CHOs affects this geographic analysis.

Table 8: Number of cases treated for problem alcohol use, by CHO area of residence, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
All cases	7819	7760	7618	7643	7350	7464	7546
CHO 1	864	765	870	945	952	896	1000
CHO 2	449	400	430	452	395	398	438
CHO 3	456	504	489	507	487	536	570
CHO 4	1613	1617	1365	1411	1242	1293	1290
CHO 5	1413	1311	1349	1264	1316	1356	1280
CHO 6	318	345	314	245	298	341	329
CHO 7	1028	976	873	800	842	912	894
CHO 8	844	971	880	856	727	635	649
CHO 9	673	707	852	912	882	933	999
Other/unknown	161	164	196	251	209	164	97
New cases	3708	3772	3553	3678	3500	3230	3296
CHO 1	462	402	430	487	434	303	446
CHO 2	209	198	188	227	216	158	215
CHO 3	190	248	247	256	234	253	294
CHO 4	770	749	646	694	641	579	569
CHO 5	672	624	619	586	630	632	570
CHO 6	150	183	154	108	152	174	141
CHO 7	485	445	383	360	355	366	378
CHO 8	436	533	440	435	360	306	332
CHO 9	278	335	379	427	404	391	319
Other/unknown	56	55	67	98	74	68	32
Previously treated	3932	3807	3948	3783	3652	3705	3400
CHO 1	399	359	431	434	477	489	476
CHO 2	237	198	240	218	177	195	195
CHO 3	235	238	236	247	248	246	257
CHO 4	812	846	710	690	594	654	668
CHO 5	730	675	723	661	658	638	632
CHO 6	155	147	150	127	134	157	132
CHO 7	521	488	468	412	453	490	381
CHO 8	376	405	427	411	339	290	252
CHO 9	367	350	445	447	447	468	363
Other/unknown	100	101	118	136	125	78	44

LHO areas in each Community Healthcare Organisation area:

CHO 1 – Donegal LHO, Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan LHO and Cavan/Monaghan LHO

CHO 2 – Galway LHO, Roscommon and Mayo LHO

CHO 3 – Clare LHO, Limerick LHO, North Tipperary/East Limerick LHO

CHO 4 – Kerry LHO, North Cork LHO, North Lee LHO, South Lee LHO and West Cork LHO

CHO 5 – South Tipperary LHO, Carlow/Kilkenny LHO, Waterford LHO and Wexford LHO

CHO 6 – Wicklow LHO, Dun Laoghaire LHO and Dublin South East LHO

CHO 7 – Kildare/West Wicklow LHO, Dublin West LHO, Dublin South City LHO and Dublin South West LHO

CHO 8 – Laois/Offaly LHO, Longford/Westmeath LHO, Louth LHO and Meath LHO

CHO 9 – Dublin North LHO, Dublin North Central LHO and Dublin North West LHO

Incidence and prevalence of treatment

Annual rates for the incidence (new cases) and prevalence (all cases) of treated problem alcohol use were calculated per 100,000 of the population age 15 to 64 years based on census figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO)¹² (Figure 1).

Incidence decreased from 115.0 cases per 100,000 in 2013, to 96.7 cases in 2019.

Prevalence, which includes both new cases and those cases returning to treatment, also decreased from 243.1 cases per 100,000 in 2013 to 221.7 cases per 100,000 in 2019.

Changes in incidence and prevalence should be interpreted with caution for recent years due to the increase in the proportion of cases where treatment status was unknown (11.3% in 2019).

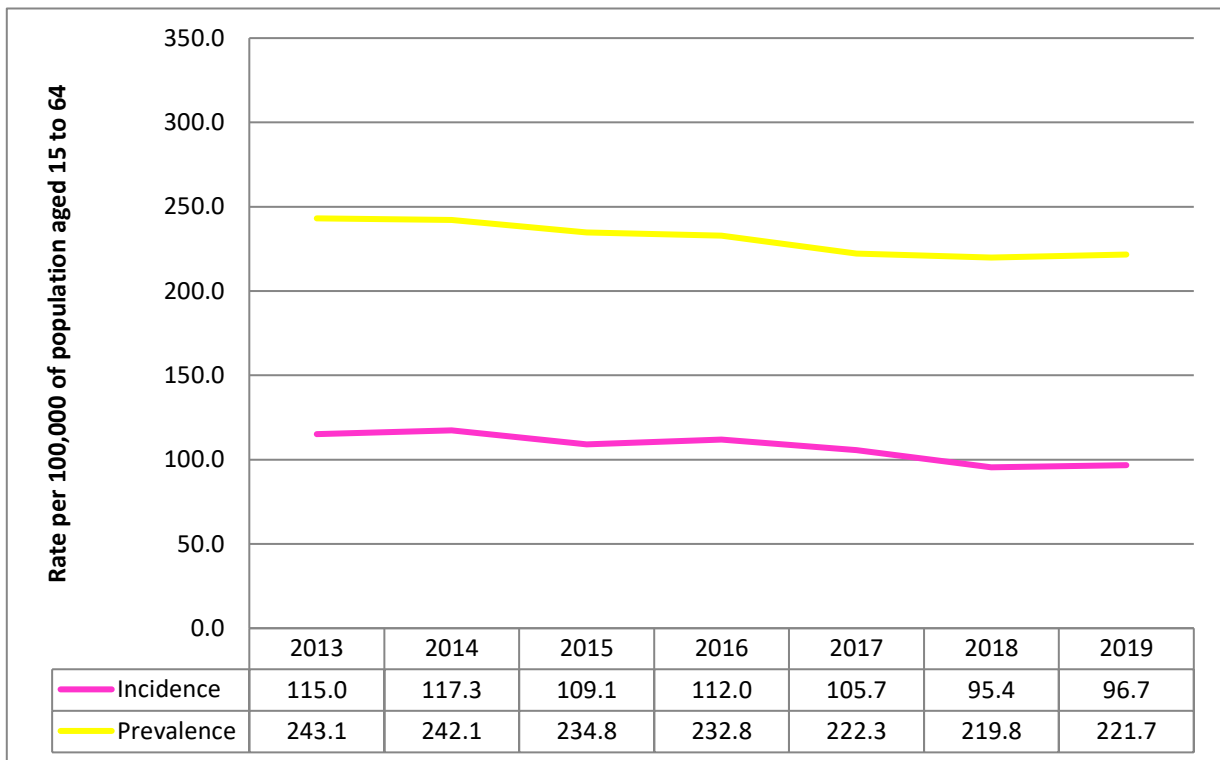


Figure 1: Incidence and prevalence of treated problem alcohol use per 100,000 of the 15 to 64-year-old population, NDTRS 2013 to 2019

Notes

1. This document may be cited as: Condrón I, Carew AM, and Lyons S (2020) *Drug Treatment in Ireland 2013 to 2019*. Dublin: Health Research Board. Available at: <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/32093> and at www.hrb.ie/publications.
2. More detailed information on the NDTRS methodology can be found in previously published HRB Trends Series papers at www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/alcohol-and-drug-treatment/publications/
3. NDTRS data are case-based which means there is a possibility that individuals appear more than once in the database; for example, where a person receives treatment at more than one centre, or at the same centre more than once in a calendar year.
4. The NDTRS interactive tables will be updated to reflect the changes at: www.drugsandalcohol.ie/tables/
5. It must be noted that not all alcohol treatment services were participating in the NDTRS during the period under review. Therefore, it may be assumed that the data presented in this bulletin underestimates the true extent of treated alcohol use in Ireland.
6. The NDTRS make every attempt to ensure as complete coverage of services as possible. However, the number of services participating in the reporting system varies annually, making small fluctuations in the numbers of cases more difficult to interpret. Coverage of services was 69.6% for 2019.
7. Babor Thomas, Higgins-Biddle John, Saunders John, and Monteiro Maristela (2001) *AUDIT The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test Guidelines for Use in Primary Care: Second Edition*. Geneva: World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/audit-the-alcohol-use-disorders-identification-test-guidelines-for-use-in-primary-health-care>
8. Based on the 2016 Census, the proportion of Irish Travellers in the general population is 0.7% (Central Statistics Office, 2019) www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8e/
9. Age range presented is 5th percentile to 95th percentile (90% of cases are included within this range).
10. Drink guidelines are taken from the Health Service Executive (HSE) at www.hse.ie/eng/health/hl/change/alcohol/
11. Area of residence relates to the service user's place of residence in the 30 days prior to commencing treatment, for all service types excluding prison. Where a service user is treated in prison and have been in prison for less than six months prior to starting treatment, area of residence is the place of residence prior to imprisonment. Otherwise, the prison location is recorded.
12. Population data is taken from the Central Statistics Office at <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2019/>

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