

## The SACENDU project: Monitoring drug abuse trends in South Africa

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The SACENDU Project is an alcohol and other drug (AOD) sentinel surveillance system that monitors trends in AOD use and associated consequences on a six-monthly basis from specialist treatment centers in six regional sites in South Africa. This paper will focus on findings from data collected on heroin use between January and June 2012 and compare them to findings of previous years. To identify changes in the nature and extent of heroin and other drug abuse in South Africa. Data were collected on admissions for drug abuse treatment from 67 treatment centres, using a one-page form. A total of 10 059 forms were collected and data were analyzed using SPSS statistical package. Alcohol remains the dominant substance of abuse across all sites. Treatment admissions for cocaine-related problems have generally decreased over the years. Cannabis remained the most common primary drug for persons younger than 20 years across all sites. Heroin admissions remained fairly stable, from a high level, in three sites but increased significantly in one of the sites. Proportions of Black/African and 'Coloured' heroin patients have increased significantly in three sites and proportions of female patients remain low. Treatment admissions for methamphetamine (MA) were low except in the Western Cape where MA remained the most common primary drug reported by a third of patients, mostly less than 25 years. An increase in admissions for methamphetamine has been noted in Port Elizabeth. These findings highlighted that a broad range of globally abused substances is present in South Africa and that the burden of illicit substance including heroin and methamphetamine is increasing alarmingly.

### Biography

A. Pluddemann currently working as a Specialist Scientist at Alcohol & g Abuse Research Unit of Medical Research Council of South Africa from 2011.

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