

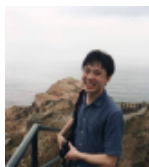
Is it true fewer young Hongkongers took drugs in 2017 compared to the year before?

The number of reported drug users under the age of 21 fell from 518 in 2016, to 455 in 2017

By Joshua Lee | March 22, 2018



Many young people believe their age protects them from drug use.



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The number of reported drug users aged under 21 last year has fallen by 12 per cent compared to 2016, according to the latest data released by the government.

The latest drug use figures for 2017 were released by the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA) on Tuesday. The data reveals the overall number of reported drug users fell 18 per cent compared to 2016.

The number of reported drug users under the age of 21 fell from 518 in 2016, to 455 in 2017. Since 2014, there has been a 44 per cent decrease in the number of reported drug users in this age group.

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The total number of newly reported cases also fell by 24 per cent last year, with 22 per cent of newly reported drug users in 2017 being under 21.

However, despite the reported drop, Sky Siu, Executive Director at KELY Support Group, warned that the statistics may not accurately reflect the drug situation in Hong Kong.

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“There may be hidden populations of youth misusing substances, who are not being reported or included in the overall trends,” she said.

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Siu was also concerned about the increasing number of young people engaging in drug trafficking. She said many young people believe that their age protects them from some of the consequences of dealing or carrying drugs, which is not true.

“We need to strengthen our support in prevention education, and engage young people in honest conversations about drugs – beyond just what they are and what they may do to their bodies,” Siu added.

The Commissioner for Narcotics, Manda Chan, said the government will continue to work to tackle the drug abuse problem by improving publicity of the anti-drug hotline and online messaging service. “With Easter approaching, young people enjoying the holiday should remain vigilant and not be tempted to take drugs out of curiosity or peer influence,” she said.

Edited by Ginny Wong

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