

Jamaica's Helpline Experience

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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DRUG ABUSE

HEMISPHERIC HELPLINE MEETING

CICAD DEMAND REDUCTION UNIT

NOVEMBER 4, 2020



Background on NCDA

**Agency established
in 1983**

- Originally focused on public education, drug prevention and research

**Counselling Services
Incorporated in
2011**

- Based on need to expand services island-wide

**Helpline established
in 2013**

- Facilitate island-wide access to services

The Helpline Model

876-564-HELP (4375)



Operator

Western Regional Manager

Central Regional Manager

Eastern Regional Manager

Substance Abuse Officers & Counsellors

Substance Abuse Officers & Counsellors

Substance Abuse Officers & Counsellors



24 HOURS



Helpline Services

Registration & Assignment
to Regions/Parishes



Screening & Assessment



Counselling sessions (virtual
or in-person)

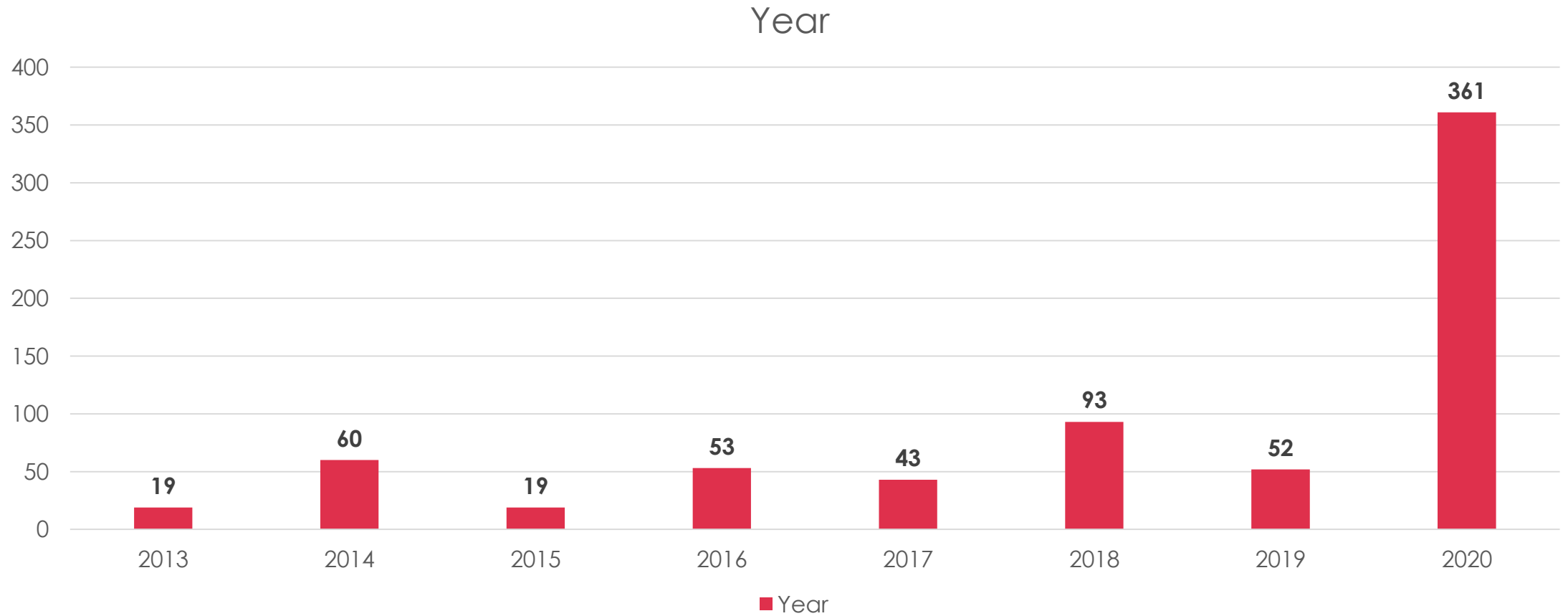


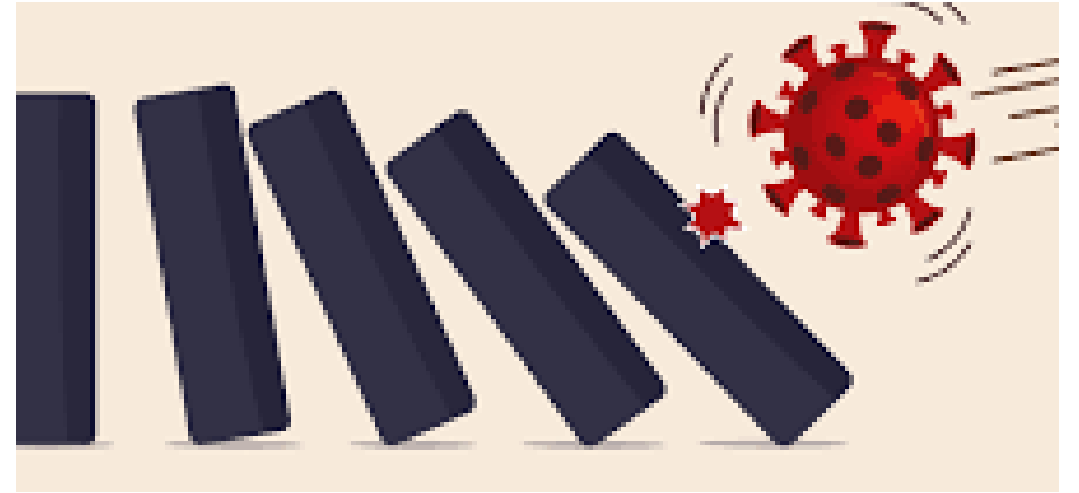
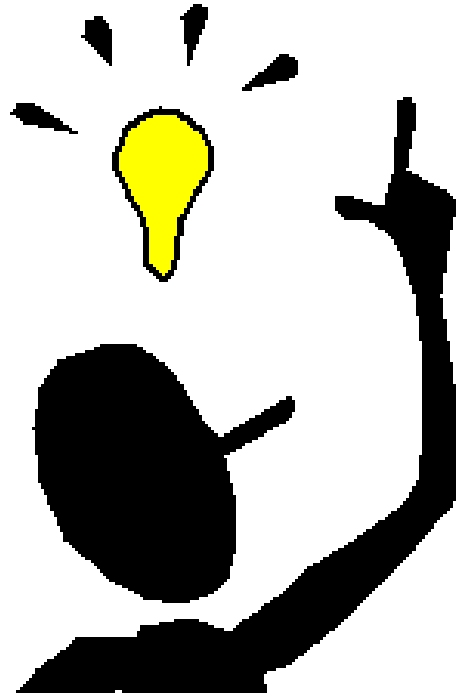
Referrals (if necessary)



Follow-up

Helpline Calls 2013 - 2020





Explanation of the COVID Effect

NCDA Partners With US Embassy To Discourage Smoking And Alcohol Use During COVID-19



The National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) has partnered with the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Section of the United States Embassy on a public education campaign aimed at highlighting the dangers of smoking and alcohol use amid the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Speaking in an interview with JIS News, NCDA Executive Director, Michael Tucker, said that the agency's response to the pandemic has been bolstered by the involvement of the INL.

"We now have in rotation, on radio, some public service announcements (PSAs) that look at the negative consequences of smoking and alcohol use during COVID-19," he said.

"We are looking at how smoking will affect you; how alcohol use will impact your immune system and, in fact, make you more susceptible to catching COVID-19; and recovering successfully," he noted.

"If your immune system is compromised, then your chances of recovery are significantly lessened," he added.

Speaking against the background of the recently observed World No Tobacco Day, Mr. Tucker said that smoking is harmful and is even more lethal when combined with COVID-19.

"It attacks the lungs, reduces lung function and compromises the immune system of a smoker, making it harder to fight off the deadly virus, and places smokers at severe risk for complications," he pointed out.

Mr. Tucker told JIS News that in addition to the PSAs and a presence on social media, there are other

CORONAVIRUS

JUNE 8, 2020

WRITTEN BY: PETA-GAY HODGES



PHOTO: MARK BELL



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NCDA worried about COVID-19 stress as likely trigger for substance abuse

12:05 pm, Tue Mar

Have COVID-19 questions? Talk with our Virtual Assistant.

The Gleaner

Drug council calls for Jamaicans to reduce substance use during COVID

Published: Tuesday | March 31, 2020 | 1:42 PM

Executive Director of the National Council on Drug Abuse, Michael Tucker - File photo

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Loop

NCDA raises concern for youth exposed to tobacco smoke

LOOP NEWS | CREATED : 9 MAY 2020 | JAMAICA NEWS

In an effort to continue educating the public on the threat of COVID-19 to persons who smoke, drink alcohol or use narcotics, the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) is zeroing in on children who are potentially exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke.

Smoking is one of the largest challenges to



Significant Public Education

Mass & Social Media (June – Present)

SOMEONE
IN YOUR
FAMILY IS
hurting



There's help



Call us
876-564-HELP (4357)



IS YOUR
FUTURE
GOING
UP IN
smoke?



There's help



Call us
876-564-HELP (4357)



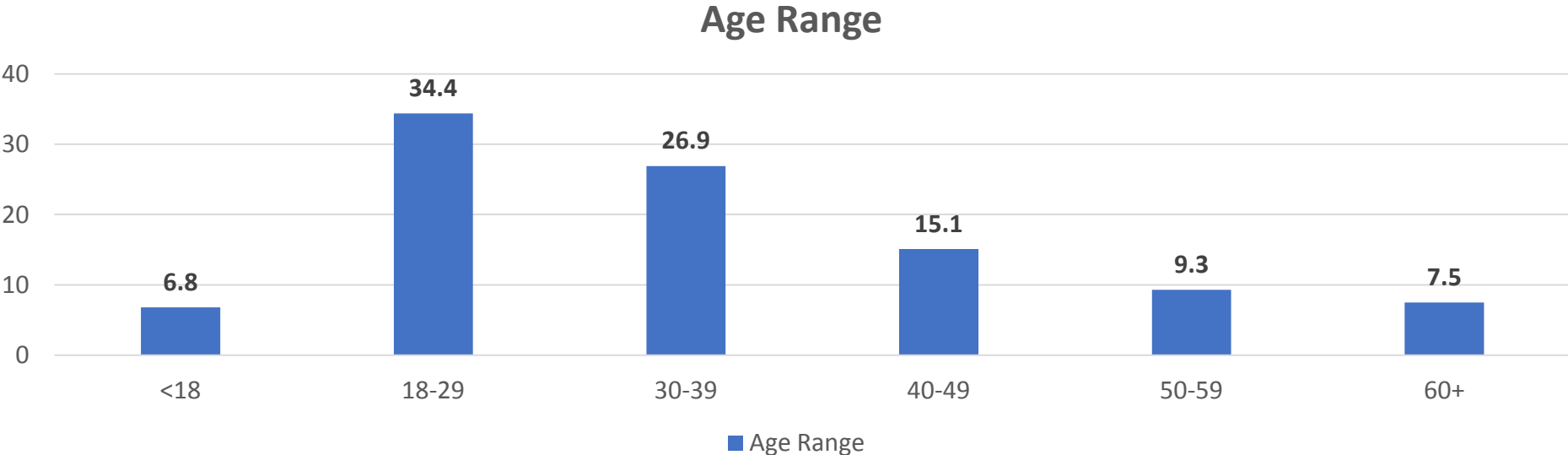
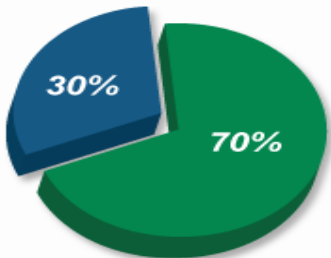
Importance of Capturing Helpline Data

- ❖ Data gathering mechanism established to determine and track socio-demographic characteristics of callers:
 - ✓ Date of call
 - ✓ Age & Sex of caller/client
 - ✓ Parish of residence
 - ✓ Drug of impact
 - ✓ Source of helpline awareness
 - ✓ Previous drug treatment

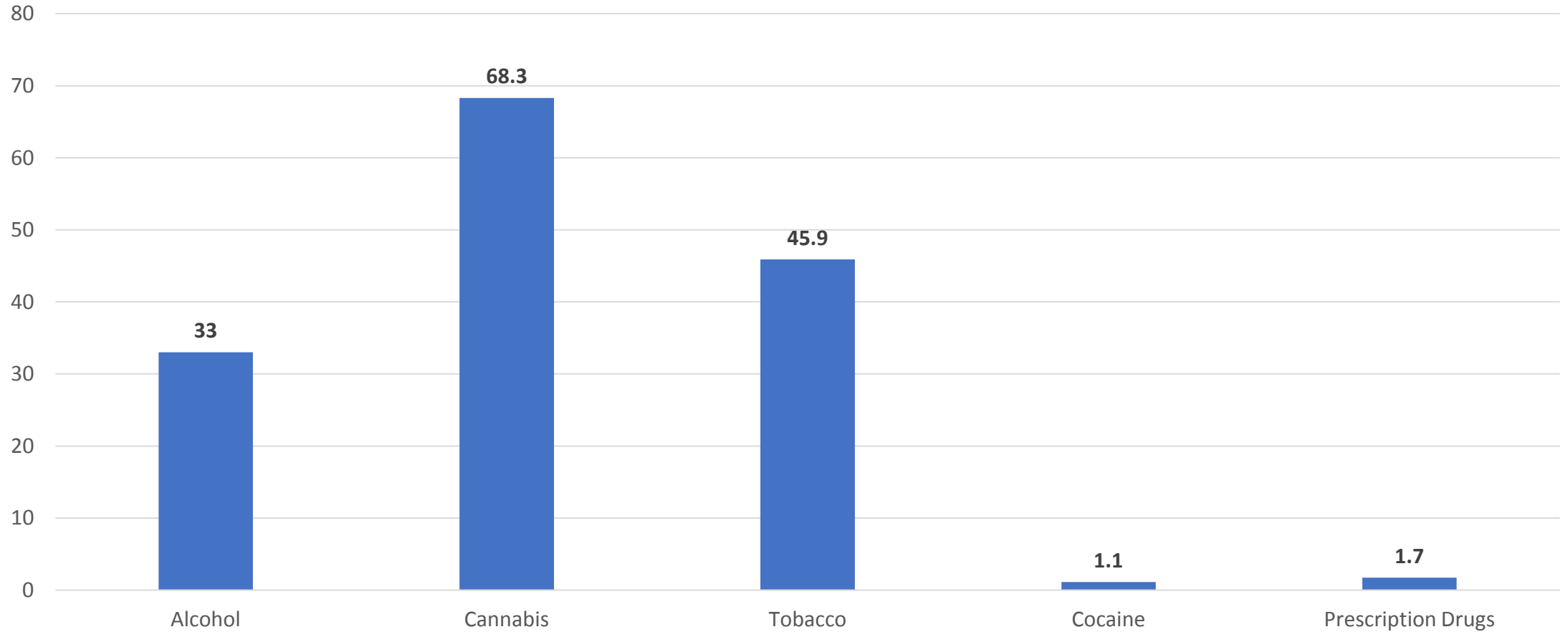
Characteristics of Callers

(June to October 2020)

Significantly more males than females



Drug of Impact



Characteristics of Callers

- ❖ 80% were aware of the helpline by radio and television – direct association between spikes on calls and media placement
- ❖ 43% of callers were relatives or friends calling on problematic users' behalf
- ❖ 3% had received treatment for problematic drug use in the past

Helpline Dynamics

- ❖ Distressed family members – problematic user unwilling to address drug use
- ❖ Mental health and other challenges - unwilling to seek formal treatment due to stigma
- ❖ Unrealistic expectations - seeking a quick fix “magic pill” to address drug use
- ❖ Approximately 50% of callers adhere to consistent treatment
- ❖ Possibility of falling through the cracks

Considerations for Improvement



Expansion of helpline capacity: network & 24 hr. access



Counsellor as first point of contact – build therapeutic alliance and address crisis calls



Standard protocols and referral linkages for high-risk groups



Continuous capacity building of counsellors re telephone and virtual counselling



Sustain public education



Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of outcomes

Thank You
