



**NÁRODNÍ
MONITOROVACÍ
STŘEDISKO
PRO DROGY
A DROGOVÉ ZÁVISLOSTI**



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Methamphetamine use in the Czech Republic



History of methamphetamine

- 1950s – Misuse of psychostimulant medicines (Psychoton)
- 1960s – Misuse phenmetrazine
- Since 1970s – methamphetamine (pervitin)
(manufactured home-made in a „kitchen“ labs)
- Pervitin was mostly made either of ephedrine coming from ephedrine company in Roztoky nearby Prague or of Solutan containing pseudoephedrine
- Small group of users/producers with division of roles in the production (glass, precursors, chemicals...)
- Since 1990s – the main problem drug in the Czech Republic



Prevalence of methamphetamine use in the general population

- General population survey (2008)
 - Life time prevalence: 5%
in the age group 25-34: 9 %
 - Last year prevalence: 2%
 - Last month prevalence: 1%
- ESPAD 2007
 - 3,5% - a decline since 1999
- Slight increase in the use of pervitin within nightlife settings
 - Last month prevalence in 2003 – 14%, in 2007 – 16%



Problem drug use of methamphetamine

- In the long term: total estimates of 30 000 PDU
 - 95% injecting users
 - 2/3 - 20 000 PDU preferring pervitin
 - Significant increase in PDU estimates in 2009 to 37 400 (from 32 500 in 2008)

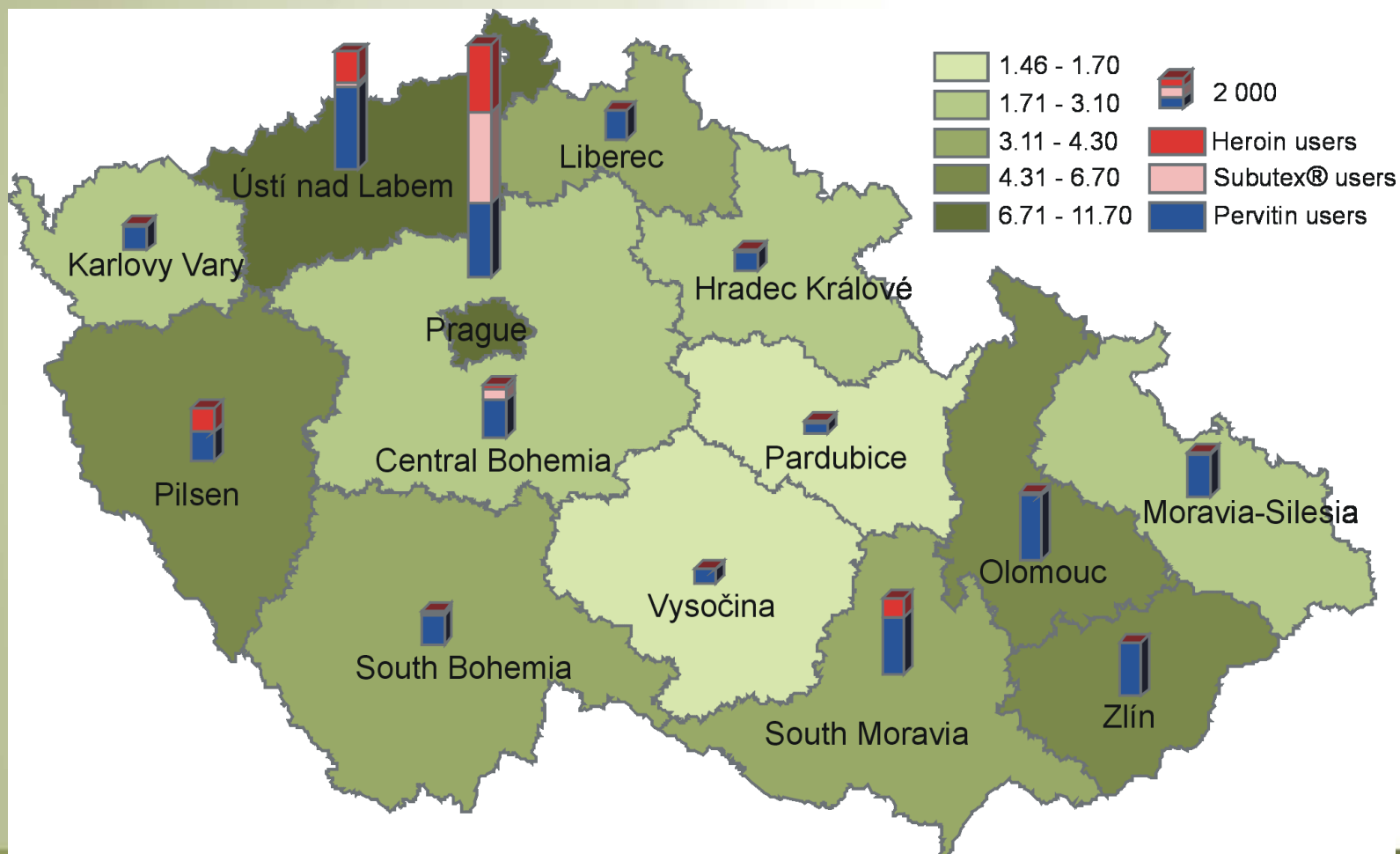
- In 2008 - 21 000 problem pervitin users
- In 2009 – 25 000 problem pervitin users
 - increase by 4 000 in comparison with 2008

- Usti nad Labem region (4 000), Prague (3 000)



Problem Drug Use (PDU)

- Number of problem drug users per 1,000 inhabitants aged 15-64





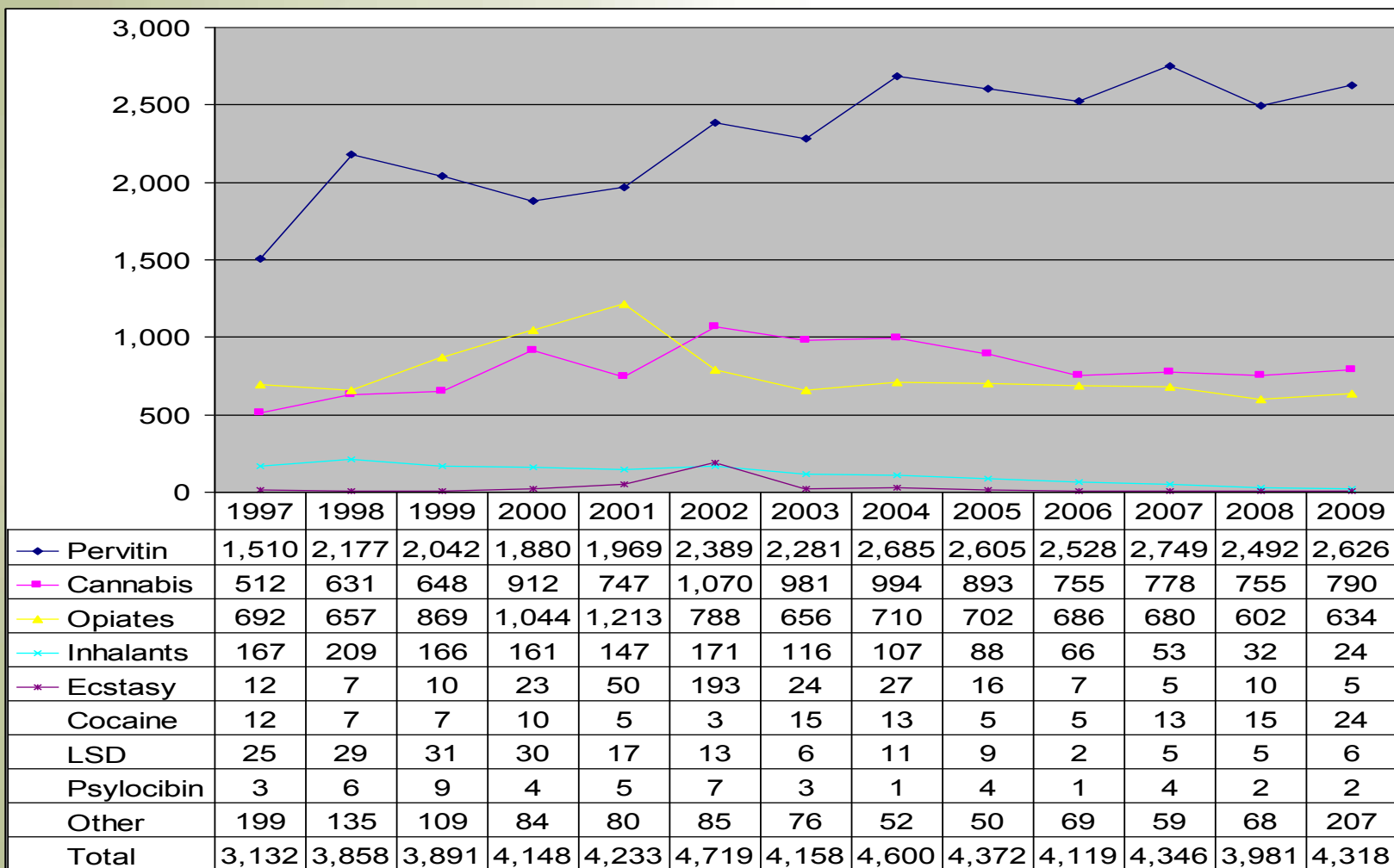
Treatment

- Pervitin users accounted for 60% of all the treatment demands
- 2009:
 - 5 209 in total, 1/3 women
 - the average age: 25 years, 20% people under 19 years
 - secondary drugs: 55% cannabis, 15% opiates.
- Psychiatric co morbidity:
 - acute toxic psychosis, anxious and depressive disorders
 - higher level of irritability (attacks of anger), paranoid syndromes, unexpected mood/emotional changes, pathological jealousy, memory and concentration disorders, social phobia etc.



Treatment

Number of first treatment demands according to drug used, 1997-2009





Pervitin related infections and deaths

- Fatal overdoses – 18 cases (19 in 2008)
(direct drug related deaths) in terms of pervitin
- HIV prevalence in IDUs very low: app. 1 pro mile
 - 7 new HIV positive IDUs
 - At the end of 2009: 1 344 HIV positive cases, 65 out of them IUD (app. 5 %)
- HCV prevalence in IDUs: 20 - 40%
 - univariate analysis: prevalence of HCV lower in pervitin than in opiate users
 - multivariate analysis: after adjustment for duration of injecting and needle sharing no statistical difference



Services for pervitin users

- **No specific interventions for pervitin users are generally implemented in practise nowadays**
- **Harm reduction services**
 - low thresholds programmes (about 95 facilities)
 - Distribution of **gelatine capsules** – per os alternative for pervitin use (drug user put pervitin into capsule and use it by a mouth instead of injecting)
- **Treatment modalities**
 - inpatient and outpatient facilities (various forms)
 - Psycho-pharmacotherapy for treatment of psychiatric comorbidity
 - **Sporadic methamphetamine substitution** by methylphenidate (Ritalin) and/or by vigabatrin (Sabril) - lack of evaluation, just case reports
 - Psychotherapy is based especially on cognitive-behavioral therapy
 - Socioterapy, after treatment care, supportive accommodation and work
- **CA tests incentive therapy based on behavioral therapy**
- **P-centrum tests psychotherapy program based on 12 steps (AA)**



Gelatine capsules for oral use of pervitin





Drug crime

Primary drug related criminality (generally)

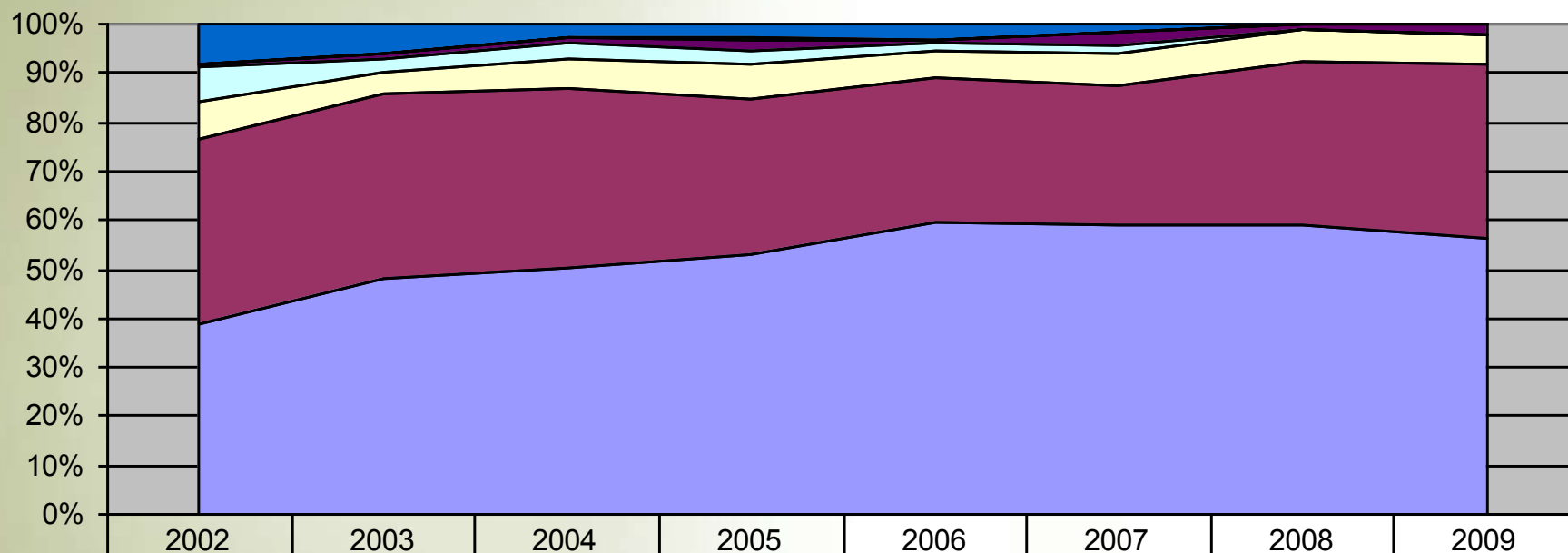
- drug use is not illegal/punished
- possession of drugs for personal use: up to 2g

- 2 500 persons prosecuted
- 90% of them is charged
- 1 400 is sentenced (in total for all types of drugs)

- Proportion of drug crimes related to production and trafficking: 80%
- Proportion of drug crimes related to pervitin: 50%



Drug crime



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Others	160	137	59	62	66	30		
LSD	4	4	3	9	4	4		
Cocaine	10	24	17	50	13	50	23	47
Ecstasy	140	66	66	55	35	38		
Heroin	157	105	134	145	116	127	151	136
Cannabis	748	892	763	682	638	569	746	786
Pervitin	781	1,129	1,058	1,125	1,293	1,178	1,320	1,257



Drug crime

Secondary criminality

- committed by drug users to obtain money for buying drugs
- 20% of total criminality related to drug users, mostly stealing things from cars

Criminality committed under influence of drugs

- 2% of all crime (7000 in total) committed under non alcoholic drugs, mostly influence of pervitin
- For comparison: 18% is committed under influence of alcohol



Production and market with pervitin nowadays

- Estimated consumption in 2008
 - 4,5 tons with 80% purity, 0,1 tons for export mainly to Germany
- Until 2004 pervitin made of ephedrine
 - afterwards – stopped production of ephedrine in Roztoky
 - ephedrine replaced by pseudoephedrine only (e.g. Modafen, Neurofen Stop Grip)
- In 2009
 - restriction for sales of medicaments containing pseudoephedrine in pharmacies
 - due to this measure higher level of import of medicaments containing pseudoephedrine especially from Poland
 - estimation: 95% of all medicines intended for pervitin production at present
- Increased illegal import of pharmaceuticals containing pseudoephedrine from abroad (Poland)



Meth Lab

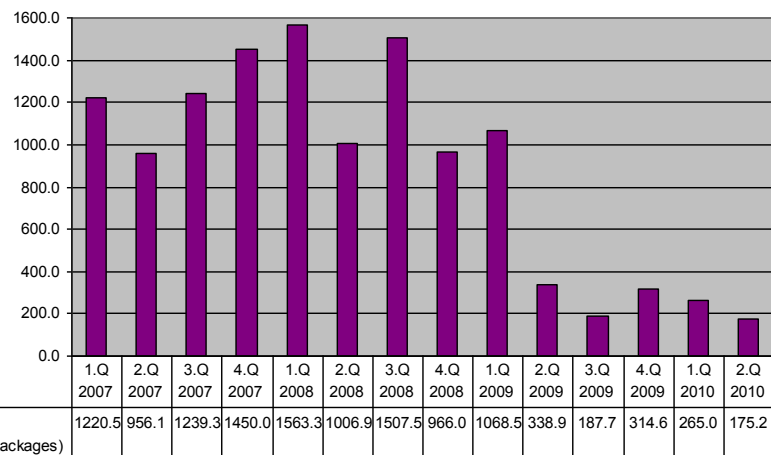




Methamphetamine production

Seizures of laboratories, precursors and methamphetamine

Sales of pharmaceuticals containing pseudoephedrine in the Czech pharmacies – decrease in 2009



Seizures	2007	2008	2009
Ephedrine (g)	1,185	1,677	6,023
Pseudoephedrine (g)	218	–	–
Modafen® (tablets)	3,480	7,876	840
Nurofen® StopGrip (tablets)	11,948	21,785	876
Panadol® Plus Grip (tablets)	72	17,021	1,224
Paralen® Plus	–	–	1,440
Acatar® (tablets)	–	–	3,508
Cirrus® (tablets)	–	–	6
Ibuprofen® (tablets)	–	–	80
Ibuprom® (tablets)	–	–	22,080
Sudafed® (tablets)	–	–	12,231
Cooking labs	388	434	342
Pervitin (g)	5,978	3,799	3,599



Price and purity of methamphetamine

- Only/mostly retail market level
- Average price stable:
 - 1 000,- CZ crowns (about 40 €) per 1g
- Average purity:
 - 70% (in the long term) pervitin is often cut by piracetam
- Sporadically wholesale market level
 - 500 000,- CZ crowns (about 20 000 €) per 1kg



Medicines containing pseudoephedrine in illicit lab





Summary and prospects

- In 2008 the Government Council for Drug Policy Coordination established the **methamphetamine working group**, an inter agency, multidisciplinary body with representatives from important state authorities, institutions, academic bodies, NGO s etc.

Discussed topics:

- **Treatment** (new specific interventions: e.g. contingency management therapy, substitution)
- **Harm reduction** (eg. gelatine capsules)
- **Supply reduction** (measures to decrease of availability of precursors and other chemicals (e.g. red phosphorus))



Conclusion

- Methamphetamine (pervitin) is historically the main problem drug in the Czech Republic
- Produced and consumed (almost exclusively) domestically
- Made of ephedrine in past and pseudoephedrine from medicines nowadays
- Though sale of medicines containing pseudoephedrine has been limited and decreased since 2009, it has had practically NO IMPACT on supply, price, level of use of pervitin
- Import of medicines containing pseudoephedrine from abroad as source for pervitin production
- Measures in neighbouring countries? At EU level?
- Risk of increased use of other stimulants? Cocaine? New synthetic cathinones and phenethylamines?



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Thanks 😊

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