

Higher levels of meth purchasing from gangs in Northland and the South Island

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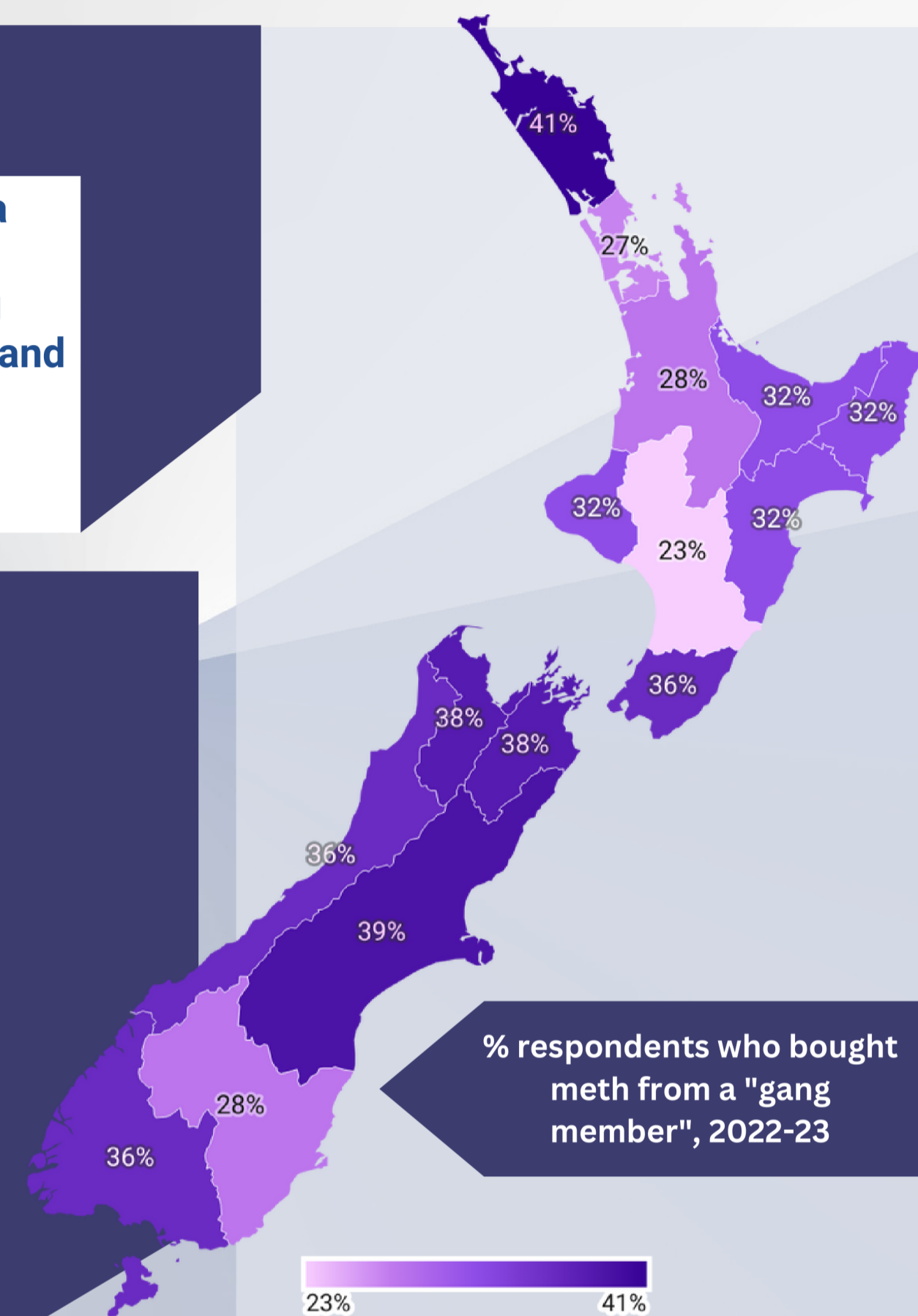
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Key findings

- A larger proportion of respondents reported purchasing meth from a gang member compared to other drug types
- Regions reporting the highest rates of meth purchasing from a gang member were Northland, Canterbury, Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough and Wellington
- Buying meth from a tinny house/street drug market was most commonly reported in Northland, Gisborne/Hawke's Bay and Otago

Methods

The New Zealand Drug Trends Survey (NZDTS) is an anonymous online convenience survey designed to provide an annual snapshot of drug market trends in Aotearoa New Zealand. It surveys a very large number of people with recent experience and knowledge of drug use and drug markets across the country (i.e., key experts). The NZDTS is promoted via a targeted Facebook advertising campaign over a period of several months. Completed surveys are audited based on the extent and quality of completion. The 2022/23 survey ran from August 2022 to February 2023 and achieved a final sample of 13,026. While the NZDTS is not intended to be a representative survey, it has a sample that broadly represents the demographic profile and regional population distribution of NZ (see Bulletin 6 for details). However, related to the aims of the survey, the NZDTS sample reports much higher levels of drug use (see Bulletin 7) and is younger than the general population. For more details on methods see, Wilkins et al. (2020) Determinants of the retail price of illegal drugs in New Zealand. *International Journal of Drug Policy*. 79, 1-10.



Rates of drug purchasing from a "gang member" for different drug types, 2022-23



Discussion

Gangs are said to play a central role in New Zealand's methamphetamine market. There have been reports of North Island gangs expanding into the South Island to take advantage of higher methamphetamine prices and new market opportunities. Deported Australian gang members ("501s") may also be playing a part in increased methamphetamine supply in the South Island. It has been estimated that gangs make approximately NZ\$500 million in profit from the methamphetamine trade every year. Besides incidence of domestic methamphetamine manufacture, international importation, and wholesale distribution, gangs are also sometimes involved in retail sales in local markets via gang run "tinny" houses or local street drug markets. These types of drug markets are more likely to create public nuisance, attract victimisation, and be targets for inter gang violence.

