THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S ANNUAL STATISTICS REPORT 2024

The Corporate Area Coroners
and
The Special Coroners Court
(January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024)

OVERALL QUANTITATIVE HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY 1, 2024 – DECEMBER 31, 2024			
Court	Case Disposal Rate (%)	Case Clearance Rate (%)	Average time to Disposition (months)
Corporate Area Coroners Court	95.90	116.49	0.59
Corporate Area Special Coroners Court	35.82	222.39	46.66
Weighted Average	88.95	128.67	10.26

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CHIEF JUSTICE'S MESSAGE FOR SPECIAL CORONERS AND CORPORATE AREA CORONERS COURT

This report confirms the continued high performance of the Corporate Area Coroner's Court. The average time to disposition was approximately 6 months supported by a clearance rate of 116.41%. It is obvious that the Coroner for the Corporate Area has organised the court in an efficient manner. As part of its effort at ongoing efficiency across the island, consideration is now being given to extend the jurisdiction of the Corporate Area Coroner across the island so that the matters there get the needed attention to reduce the backlog of those case types. In addition, the Coroner may conduct training sessions in the other parishes so that other judges of the Parish Courts can learn the practices that have led to this sterling performance of the court.

Of particular significance is the high disposal rate of 95.90% which means that 9 out of 10 new cases filed are disposed of within the year. This efficiency has a positive impact on person being able to receive the death certificates of their relatives and place them in a position to probate or administer estates or commence civil action in cases of wrongful death or negligence. The resolution of estate matters unlocks capital that persons can use to generate investment, pay debts, educate family members, contribute to charities and the like.

The performance of the Special Coroner is commendable with a clearance rate of 222.39% but it is still cause for concern that it is taking almost 48 months (about 4 years) on average for the matters to be resolved. This data require further examination to determine where the delays are and how they can be ameliorated. Also, the case disposal rate is only 35.82% which means that there is difficulty in keeping up with new cases. Again, this requires a systemic review to find out the causes and nature of the delay.

The analysis referred to in the immediately preceding paragraph is particularly important in the case of the Special Coroner because the cases there are on investigation into the lawfulness of conduct of state actors that result in death. It is important that matters of this nature be completed as early as possible so that liability or otherwise can be established quickly, fairly, and impartially.

The trend is towards greater efficiency and timeliness in disposition of matters. The driver of improvement is high quality strategic leadership reflected in high level strategic thinking and transforming the thinking into actionable initiatives.

I wish to thank the stakeholders – internal and external – for their contribution this past year to improved service delivery. The Judiciary remains committed to making your experience with this arm of government as seamless and easy as possible.

The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD
Chief Justice of Jamaica

Executive Summary

This report provides a detailed analysis of case activity within the Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Court during the year ended December 31,2024. Key performance indicators such as case disposal rate, case clearance rate, and average time to disposition were examined to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of these courts.

The Corporate Area Coroners Court recorded a case disposal rate of 95.90%, indicating that approximately 96 cases were resolved out of every 100 filed during the 2024 calendar year. The Corporate Area Coroners Court continues to maintain a case clearance rate above international standards.

This reporting period saw 596 disposed cases (regardless of date of origin) and 512 new cases filed; this produced a case clearance rate of 116.41%. The average time to disposition was 0.59 months, indicative of efficient case processing within the Corporate Area's Coroners Court.

For the year ended December 31, 2024, the Special Coroners Court filed 67 new cases; of the new cases filed during the year there were 24 disposed cases, leading to a disposal rate of 35.82%. The Special Coroners Court disposed 149 cases regardless of the date of origin, indicative of efforts to resolve older cases within year, leading to a clearance rate of 222.39% and an average time to disposition of 46.63 months. The court's jurisdiction across parishes, saw cases in the reporting period primarily originating from Kingston (40.54%), St. James (17.57%), and St. Catherine (10.81%).

Key performance Summary- 2024

Court	Disposal Rate (%)	Case Clearance Rate (%)	Average time to disposition (months)
Corporate Area Coroners Court	95.90	116.40	0.59
Special Coroners Court	35.82	222.39	46.66
Weighted Average	**88.95**	**128.67**	**10.26**

The report also analysed various aspects of case activity, including sources of cases, causes of death, gender distribution, and age demographics. Notably, in the Corporate Area Coroners court the majority of cases were filed by the police (70.27%), highlighting their role in initiating legal proceedings. The majority of cases filed in the Corporate Area Coroners Court for year ended December 31, 2024, were males (70.53%), and the prevalent cause of death as reported was death due to natural causes. As it concerns Form D applications, most (62.86%) of the outcomes were in accordance with Section 14[1], indicating the acceptance of matters for an inquest. Despite the fact that delays were encountered, primarily due to the generic category 'Other' (35.20%), the Corporate Area Coroners Court overall performance for the year ended December 31, 2024, remained impressive.

An examination of the demographic disaggregation and causes of death for cases in the Special Coroners Court, noted all cases were male victims. It is also of note for the period January through December 2024 that 70.27% of the matters filed in the Special Coroners Court were deaths related to JCF incidents, 21.62% were death related to custodial incidents. Of the new cases filed in the period 61 cases were disposed of. The Special Coroners Court recorded a case clearance rate of 91.04% exceeding international standards.

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[1] Section 14 of the Coroners Act grants coroners the discretion to forgo an inquest if the cause of death is clearly established, there is no suspicion of foul play, or an inquest would not provide further insights. This provision aims to improve efficiency, avoid unnecessary burdens on families, and ensure judicial resources are used effectively.

Across both courts in the year ended December 31, 2024, a total of 579 new cases were filed, with 657 disposed of during the year and an overall average time to disposition of 10.26 months. The weighted average case disposal rate was 88.95%, and the weighted average case clearance rate was 128.67% for the reporting period.

Forecasted case flow performance estimates for the year ended December 31, 2025

Parish Court	Forecasted number of new cases	Forecasted number of disposed cases	Forecasted gross number of disposed cases (regardless of origin)	Forecasted case disposal rate (%)	Forecasted case clearance rate (%)
Corporate Area Coroners Court	487	473	536	97.13	110.06
Corporate Area Special Coroners Court	84	51	145	60.71	172.67
Total/Weighted Average	**571**	**524**	**681**	**92.92**	**117.30**

The above table forecasts core activity for the Corporate Area Coroners and Special Coroners court. The forecasts are generated using the method of exponential smoothing which uses weighted averages from past observations with weights decaying exponentially as the observations get older. See further explanation of the mathematical science behind the method of exponential smoothing in the glossary of terms. The above data shows that the overall forecasted case clearance rates for the Corporate Area Coroners court for the period (Jan.-Dec. 2025.) is 110.06%, which would be 6.35 percentage points lower than that of the 116.41% recorded in the period (Jan-Dec. 2024). The overall forecasted case clearance rates for the Corporate Area Special Coroners court in the period (Jan. – Dec.2025.) is 172.67%, which would be 49.72 percentage points lower than that of the 222.39% recorded in the period (Jan.-Dec. 2024).

Introduction

The Coroners court serves as the judicial body responsible for determining the cause of death in diverse circumstances. Although the Coroners Court operates across all parishes in Jamaica, this report concentrates specifically on the Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Court. It is important to note the distinction between the Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Court, with the latter focusing on cases involving deaths caused by individual or institutional state actors or occurring under state care. Despite the fact that there's only one Special Coroners Court on the island, located in Kingston and St. Andrew, it conducts special sittings in all parish courts, ensuring full coverage.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the key statistics regarding case activity within both the Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Courts during 2024. It includes various metrics related to productivity, time lag, resource utilization, and other relevant measurements. The objective is to offer insights into the case flow dynamics within these courts, including disposals, factors contributing to case delays, and other crucial aspects of case progression management and outcomes.

Chapter 1.0: The Corporate Area Coroners Court

This subsection on the Corporate Area Coroners Court details information on the case activity in this court for the year ended December 31, 2024, as well as the associated measurements of productivity in the disposal of cases, time lag measures outlining the average times between important events on the case flow continuum, as well as other supplementary measurements and information.

Table 1.1: Summary of time interval between date death reported and date case opened for the period ended December 31,2024

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	515
Mean	833.77
Std. Error of Mean	71.083
Median	267.00
Mode	100[a]
Std. Deviation	1613.131
Skewness	4.732
Std. Error of Skewness	.108
Range	16273
Minimum	6
Maximum	16279

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The table above provides a descriptive summary of the time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the cases for investigation of causes of death were opened in court at the Corporate Area Coroners Court in 2024. It is seen that from a sample of 515 observations, the average time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the associated cases were opened in Corporate Area Coroners Court was roughly 834 days (or 2.3 years). The modal time taken was 100 days or 3 months and the median was approximately 267 days or approximately 9 months.

The standard deviation stands at a high of 1613 days or 4.4 years, strongly suggesting that the alignment between the time of reporting death and the date cases open in the court varies widely around the mean. The acutely high positive skewness further suggests that decisively more of the scores fall below the overall average, a result that is not surprising considering that the modal and median values are significantly below the overall mean. The maximum time shown between date deaths reported and date case opened is approximately 44.6 years, while the lowest is 6 days.

Table 1.2: Case Activity Summary for the year ended December 31, 2024

Approximate Number of new cases filed	Approximate Number of active cases	Number of disposed or inactive cases (from those filed in the quarter)	Estimated Case disposal rate (%)
512	21	491	95.90

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroners Court in 2024. It is shown that 512 new cases were filed during the year, 33 cases or 6.89% more than the 479 cases filed in the similar period of 2023. At the end of the 2024 calendar year, there were 491 disposed cases. These results yielded a case disposal rate of 95.90% satisfying the international standard on this measure. This suggests that for every 100 cases filed over the period, roughly 96 cases were resolved. The case clearance rate will be examined later in this report.

Table 1.3: Sampling distribution of Source of cases filed for the year ended December 31, 2024.

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Police	407	76.79
Family	123	23.21
Total	**530**	**100**

A sample of 530 cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroners Court shows that 407 cases or

76.79% of cases filed were filed by the police, while 123 or 23.21% were filed by the family

of deceased.

Table 1.4: Sampling distribution of deaths reported at various Police and brought before the court for the year ended December 31, 2024

Police Station	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Half Way Tree Police Station	66	12.29
Denham Town Police Station	56	10.43
Hunts Bay Police Station	47	8.75
Elleston Road Police Station	38	7.08
Major Investigations Division	33	6.15
Sub-Total	**240**	**44.7**

Sample of observations (N) = 519

The data showed a sample of 519 Coroners Court cases reported at the different police

stations in the Corporate Area which were subsequently brought to the court. Half Way

Tree Police Station accounted for the highest proportion of cases filed/investigated in 2024

with 66 or 12.29%, while the Denham Town Police Station followed with 56 or 10.43%. The

Hunts Bay Police Station with 47 or 8.75% ranked next while The Elletson Road and Major

Investigation Division rounded off the top five Police Station with 38 cases (7.08%) and 33

(6.15%) respectively of the sample.

Chart 1.1: Distribution of gender of the deceased for new cases filed during the year ended December 31, 2024
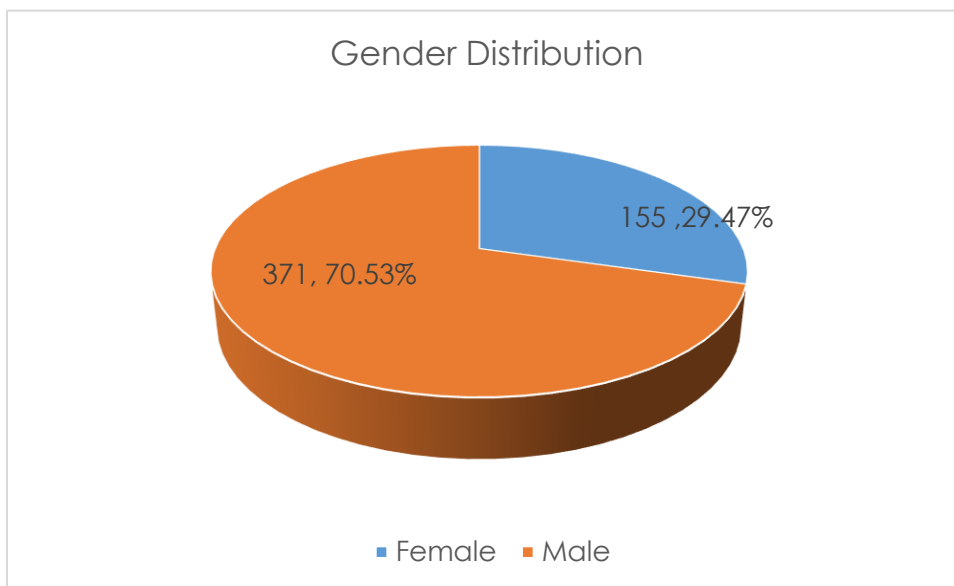
The above chart summarizes gender distribution, using a sample of 526 deceased persons involved in the cases filed during the year ended December 31, 2024. It is shown that 371 or 70.53% of the deceased were male, while the remaining 155 or 29.47% were female. In the similar period of 2023, males also accounted for a larger proportion, 364 or (74.44%) of the total sample. For the reporting period the absolute number of cases of males increased by was 1.92% when compared to 2023.

Table 1.5: Descriptive Statistics on the age of the deceased in cases filed during the year ended December 31,2024

Descriptive statistics (age in years)

Number of observations	514
Mean	56.81
Std. Error of Mean	1.021
Median	57.50
Mode	32
Std. Deviation	23.155
Skewness	.018
Std. Error of Skewness	.108
Range	95
Minimum	13
Maximum	108

A sample of 514 ages of the deceased involved in the cases filed revealed that the average age is roughly 57 years while the median age is approximately 58 years, and one of the most common age value is 32 years. The standard deviation stands at a moderate value of 23 years, indicating a modest variation of the scores around the mean. The skewness is low positive value, suggesting that the distribution of ages is scattered around the mean. The smallest age value in the data set is 13 years, while the largest age value was 108 years.

Table 1.6a: Sampling distribution of the causes of death reported for cases filed during the year ended December 31, 2024

Cause of death	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gunshot wound of head and neck, chest, torso abdomen	40	7.45
Multiple gunshot wounds	23	4.28
Multiple blunt impact trauma	11	2.05
Blunt Impact Trauma of head/neck/chest	9	1.68
Brain lacerations, Multiple skull fractures, Multiple gunshot wounds	8	1.49
Sub-Total	**91**	**17**

Sample size (N) = 537

The above table is computed using a sample of 537 observations of the causes of death associated with cases. It is shown that among the most common causes of death reported are death caused by Gunshot wound of the head and neck, chest, torso and abdomen with 40 or 7.4% of the sample and Multiple gunshot wounds with 23 or 4.28% followed by Multiple impact trauma with 11 or 2.05%. Blunt impact trauma of head, chest and neck with 9 or 1.68% and Brain lacerations, Multiple skull fractures, Multiple gunshot wound with 8 or 1.49% rounded off the top five causes of death.

Table 1.6b: Sampling distribution of the causes of death as officially determined by the coroner for matters disposed during the year ended December 31, 2024

Cause of death as determined by Coroner	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Death due to natural causes	285	56.10
Death due to gunshot wounds	172	33.86
Death due to motor vehicle accident	25	4.92
Death due to fall	6	1.18
Death due to drowning	3	0.59
Sub-Total	**491**	**96.65**

Number of observations N= (508)

The above table is computed using a sample of 508 observations of the causes of death as officially determined by the Coroner. It is shown that among the most common causes of death reported are deaths due to natural causes with 285 or 56.10% of the sample and deaths due to gunshot wounds with 172 or 33.86% of the sample. It is important to note that there may often be variances between the causes of death as reported and the causes of death as determined by the Coroner.

Table 1.7: Sampling distribution of the Summary of outcomes of Form D applications made during the year ended December 31, 2024.

Outcomes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14	325	62.86
Other	182	35.20
Trial and Judge	9	1.74
Trial and Jury	1	0.19
Total	**517**	**100**

During the processing of a case at the Coroners Court, a Form D application is made which the judge reviews an order to determine the direction of the case thereafter. The above table provides a summary of the outcomes of these applications over the period under examination. It is seen that the dominant outcome from Form D applications were decisions in accordance with Section 14, which means that the matter was accepted for an Inquest to be carried out by the Coroner. Section 14 accounts for 325 or 62.86% of the outcomes. While the generic category 'other outcomes' accounted for 182 or 35.20%. These results are typical to the trends observed in the Coroners Courts Island wide. The data was computed using a sample of 517 cases.

Table 1.8: Sampling distribution of reasons for adjournment/continuance during the year ended December 31, 2024

Reasons for adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
File incomplete/awaiting medical certificate	11	31.43
Mention/Awaiting Jury Panel	11	31.43
Part-heard	9	25.71
Other	4	11.43
Total	**35**	**100**

In the report period, 35 matters were adjourned/continued. Continuances (delays attributable to case progression stages) by way of Adjournments due to incomplete files/awaiting medical certificate, and mention/awaiting jury panel accounted for the highest portion of the sample with 31.43% of the sample. Part heard matters followed with 9 or 25.71%. Other reasons for adjournment or continuance (not elsewhere classified) accounted for 11.43% of the sample.

Table 1.9: Sampling distribution of the type of hearings during the year ended December 31, 2024

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Chambers	520	96.83
Trial and Judge	16	2.98
Trial and Jury	1	0.19
Total	**537**	**100**

A sample of 537 hearings at the Corporate Area Coroners Court in 2024, reveals that 520 or 96.83% were chamber hearings while 16 or 2.98% were Trial and Judge. The remaining 1 or 0.19 was Trial and Jury.

Table 1.10: Sampling distribution of the methods of Disposition of matters completed during the year ended December 31, 2024

Methods of disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14	343	61.91
Section 10	195	35.20
Open Court Verdict	9	1.62
Inquest	7	1.26
Total	**554**	**100**

The methods of disposition for a sample of 554 matters which were disposed during the year 2024, revealed that 343 or 61.91% of matters were disposed by way of an Inquest, under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroners Court Act. Matters disposed by way of inquest under the provision of Section 10 of the Coroners Court Act followed this with 195 or 35.20% of the sample. Matters disposed by open court verdict or by inquest accounted for 16 or 2.88%.

Table 1.11: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the year ended December 31, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	553
Mean	17.63
Median	3.00
Mode	2
Std. Deviation	71.823
Skewness	7.135
Std. Error of Skewness	.104
Range	934
Minimum	1
Maximum	935

The above data shows that the average time taken to dispose of matters during the year is approximately 18 days. This was derived from a sample of 553 matters resolved during the year. The data also revealed that the median time taken to dispose of the matters was 3 days and the modal time was also 2 days. The standard deviation of 71.82 days, however, suggests that there is a wide variation in the individual scores and the high positive skewness indicates that a larger proportion of the scores fell below the overall mean. The minimum time taken was 1 day, with the maximum time taken being 584 days. The average time taken between the date the file was received, and the date of first hearing was 6.98 days compared to the 5.79 days recorded in 2023.

Table 1.12: Case clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2024

Approximate Number of new cases filed	Approximate Number of cases disposed or inactive	Estimated Case clearance rate (%)
512	596	116.41

Courts that consistently maintain an average case clearance rate of between 90%-110% long enough will at a minimum have its disposals keeping up with the number of new cases filed but may also likely make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog rate to an acceptable level of under 10% of its active cases. The Corporate Area Coroners Court with a case clearance rate of 116.41% for the year ended December 31, 2024, up from the 100%recorded in the similar period of 2023, falls within the above –mentioned range which shows promising signs of a well-managed caseload. Currently has a net case backlog rate of approximately 21%. There were 512 new cases filed during the quarter and 596 cases were disposed (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate. It suggests that for every 100 new cases filed, 116 cases were resolved during the year.

Chapter 2.0: The Special Coroners Court

This section provides a detailed summary of case activity and events as well as case outcomes and related factors at the Special Coroners Court during the year ended December 31, 2024.

Table 2.1a: Case activity summary for the year ended December 31, 2024, in the Special Coroners Court

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of active cases	Approximate number of disposed or inactive cases (from those filed in quarter)	Estimated Case disposal rate (%)
67	6	24	35.82

Note 1: There were 37 new cases pending at the end of the period

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Cooperate Area Special Coroners Court. It is shown that 67 new cases were filed 2024, 24 cases were disposed from those originating in the quarter leading to a disposal rate of 35.82%.

Table 2.2: Sampling distribution of the parish of origin of matters filed during the year ended December 31, 2024

Parish Origin	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Kingston	30	40.54
St James	13	17.57
St Catherine	8	10.81
Trelawny	5	6.76
Clarendon	5	6.76
Manchester	4	5.41
St. Elizabeth	3	4.05
St. Andrew	2	2.70
St Ann	1	1.35
Hanover	1	1.35
Portland	1	1.35
Westmoreland	1	1.35
Total	**74**	**100.0**

As a parish court, the Special Coroners Court has a single location in Kingston but is deployed island wide to hear cases originating in the various parishes.

Table 2.2 provides a summary of the 'parish of origin' of cases filed in the Special Coroners Court. It is seen that Kingston with 40.54% of the cases filed, St. James with approximately 17.57% and St. Catherine with 10.81% accounted for 68.91% share of new cases filed in the Special Coroners Court during the year ended December 31, 2024.

Table 2.3: Sampling distribution of the source of matters filed during the year ended December 31,2024

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
INDECOM	71	95.95
Other	2	2.70
BSI	1	1.35
Total	**74**	**100**

A sample of 74 matters filed at the Special Coroners Court during the year ended December 31, 2024, shows that all 71 or 95.95% were filed by INDECOM. The remaining 4.05% were accounted for by BSI or the generic category 'other'.

Table 2.4: Sampling distribution on the type of death by Institution during the year ended December 31, 2024

Type of death	Frequency	Percentage (%)
JCF	52	70.27
Custodial	16	21.62
JDF	6	8.11
Total	**74**	**100.0**

It is seen in the above table that 70.27% of all the matters filed during the year ended 2024 were matters related to JCF deaths, while 21.62% were related to custodial deaths. The remaining 8.11% were death related to JDF. The majority of the causes of death as reported in the cases filed during the year ended 2024 were stated as "Death due to natural causes", accounting for 56.1% of the sample. The sex distribution of the deceased involved in the 74 cases filed in the year 2024, were all (100%) males.

Table 2.5: Descriptive Statistics on the age of the deceased in cases filed during the year ended December 31, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (age in years)	
Number of observations	59
Mean	37.93
Median	31.00
Mode	24
Std. Deviation	16.019
Skewness	1.187
Std. Error of Skewness	.311
Range	64
Minimum	19
Maximum	83

The above descriptive summary on the age of the deceased 59 observations, the average age was roughly 38 years, while the most frequently occurring age was 24 years old. The highest age recorded was 83 years, while the lowest is 19 years old. The moderate standard deviation of roughly 16 years suggests that there was a modest variation of the individual ages from the overall mean, while the positive skewness shown is an indication that proportionately more of the scores fell below the overall mean.

Table 2.6: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for matters resolved during the year ended December 31, 2024

Methods of disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14	109	73.65
Section 16(1)	39	26.35
Section 16(2)	1	0.68
Total	**149**	**100**

The methods of disposition for a sample of 149 matters, which were disposed of during the year ended December 31, 2024, revealed that 109 or 73.65% of matters were disposed by way of an inquest under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroners Court Act. The remainder were matters disposed by way of Inquest under the provision of Section 16(1) and 16 (2) of the Coroners Court Act with 27.03% of the sample.

Table 2.7: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the year ended December 31, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (Days)

Number of observations	147
Mean	1398.35
Median	1238.00
Mode	78
Std. Deviation	1043.863
Skewness	.794
Std. Error of Skewness	.200
Range	4634
Minimum	21
Maximum	4655

The above table uses a sample of 147 cases disposed of in 2024 reveals an estimated average of roughly 47 months, with a maximum of approximately 13 years and a minimum of 21 days. The low positive skewness is an indication that proportionately more of the scores in the distribution were clustered around the series mean, while the moderate standard deviation shows some amount variation in the data points around the overall mean.

Table 2.8: Descriptive statistics on the age of active cases as at December 31, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	46
Mean	175.26
Median	94.00
Mode	94[a]
Std. Deviation	96.861
Skewness	0.646
Std. Error of Skewness	.350
Range	311
Minimum	88
Maximum	399

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The above data is based on sample of 46 active Special Coroners matters as at December 31, 2024. The average age of these matters was roughly 175 days or approximately 6 months, while one of the most frequently occurring age in the distribution was 94 days. The standard deviation of roughly 97 days suggests that there is a small dispersion in the individual scores from the average, while the positive skewness seen is an indication that there were more scores in the data set which fell below the overall average age of the active cases. The oldest active matter was 399 days old or 1 year, while the youngest case is 88 days.

Table 2.9: Case clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2024

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of cases disposed	Estimated Case clearance rate (%)
67	149	222.39

Courts that consistently maintain an average case clearance rate of between 90%-110% for long enough will at a minimum, have its disposals keeping up with the number of new cases filed but may also likely make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog rate to an acceptable level of under 5% of active cases. The Corporate Area Special Coroners Court with a case clearance rate of 222.39% in the year 2024, exceeds the above-mentioned range, which shows promising signs of a well- managed caseload, there were 67 new cases filed, and 149 cases were disposed (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate.

Aggregate Case Activity Summary

Table 2.10: Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the year ended December 31, 2024

Metric	Corporate Area Coroners Court	Corporate Area Special Coroners Court	Total/Weighted Average
Approximate number of new cases	512	67	**579**
Approximate number of disposed cases	491	24	**515**
Approximate gross number of disposed cases (regardless of date of origin)	596	149	**745**
Estimated Case Disposal Rate (%)	95.90	35.82	**88.95**
Estimated Case Clearance Rate (%)	116.41	222.39	**128.67**
Average Time to Disposition	0.59	46.66	**11.23**

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the featured specialized Coroners Court and Special Coroners Court during the year ended December 31, 2024. It is shown that a total of 579 new cases were filed in these courts, while 515 of these cases were disposed of, leading to an estimated weighted case disposal rate of 88.95%. The Corporate Area Coroners Court had an estimated case disposal rate of 95.90%, an impressive result. The table also shows that a gross number of 745 cases were disposed of in the quarter (regardless of date of origin), leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 128.67%. The Corporate Area Coroners Court recorded a case clearance rate of 116.41% and the Special Coroners Court had an estimated case clearance rate of 222.39%, both notable results which exceed the international standard.

Concluding Note

The Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Court both continue to contribute to reducing the overall net case backlog rate and enhancing judicial efficiency. In 2024, the combined weighted average time to disposition was 11.23 months. Across both courts the estimated case disposal rate was 88.95%, and the estimated case clearance rate was 128.67% in the reporting period.

The Corporate Area Coroners Court has consistently sustained high rates of case disposal and clearance, and to this regard has achieved and maintained the judiciary's goal of reducing the backlog to under 5%. These sustained high case disposal and clearance rates are pivotal in positioning the Jamaican judiciary as one of the most efficient globally.

The data shows that, for the reporting period, the Special Coroners Court filed 67 new cases and irrespective of the date of origin one hundred and forty-nine (149) cases were either disposed or inactive. The Special Coroners Court recorded a case clearance rate of 222.39%, with an average time to disposition of 46.66 months in 2024.

The Corporate Area Coroners Court filed 512 new cases in the reporting period and disposed of 596 matters irrespective of the date of origin, producing a case clearance rate of 116.41%. The Corporate Area Coroners Court, in particular, continues to be an exceptional performing court and one of the fastest in disposing of new cases, having disposed of 491 of the 512 new cases filed (95.90%) in 2024 and recorded an average time to disposition of less than one month (0.59 months).

Glossary of Terms

Sampling Distribution: A sampling distribution of a given population is the distribution of frequencies of a range of outcomes that could possibly occur for a statistic of a population. A population is the entire pool from which a statistical sample is drawn.

Range: This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

Standard deviation: This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are around the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

Outlier: An outlier is a value that is too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

Skewness: This is measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

Clearance rate: The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is 110/100 or 110%.

Note: The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%. A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90% - 110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system.[i]

Disposal rate: As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

Note: A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system.[ii]

Case congestion rate: The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

Trial/hearing date certainty: This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

Case File Integrity Rate: Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the case file integrity is 100%.

Courtroom utilization rate: The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

Case backlog: A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

The **gross backlog rate** measures the proportion of all cases filed within a given period which remain unresolved for a period of over two years.

The **net backlog rate** on the other hand measures the proportion of active cases filed in a given period which are unresolved for over two years.

Continuance and Adjournment: In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjournment. However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjournment'. Here, continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons. For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates, but continuances do not.

Percentile Rank: This refers to the percentage of scores that are equal to or less than a given score. Percentile ranks, like percentages, fall on a continuum from 0 to 100. For example, a percentile ranks of 45 indicates that 45% of the scores in a distribution of scores fall at or below the score at the 35th percentile.

Percentile ranks are useful when you want to quickly understand how a particular score compares to the other scores in a distribution of scores. For instance, knowing a court disposed 300 cases in a given period doesn't tell you much. You don't know how many case disposals were possible, and even if you did, you wouldn't know how that court's score compared to the rest of the courts. If, however, you were told that the court scored at the 80th percentile, then you would know that this court did as well or better than 80% of the courts in case disposals.

Difference between percentage and percentile changes: The difference between percentage and percentage points, the latter is strictly used to compare two percentages, for example, if the clearance rate in 2018 was 89% and the clearance rate in 2019 is 100%, then the appropriate expression to compare these would be "an 11 percentage points increase". However, if we are comparing two absolute numbers, say, 1000 cases were disposed in 2018, and 1500 in 2019, then there would be a 50% increase in cases disposed.

Weighted Average: Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court. A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

Exponential Smoothing: Exponential smoothing of time series data assigns exponentially decreasing weights for newest to oldest observations. In other words, the older data, the less priority ("weight") the data is given; newer data is seen as more relevant and is assigned more weight.

Smoothing parameters (smoothing constants) – usually denoted by a- determine the weights of the observations.

Exponential smoothing is usually used to make short term forecasts, as longer term forecasts using this technique can be quite unreliable.

- **Simple (single) exponential smoothing** uses a weighted moving average with exponentially decreasing weights.

- **Holt's trend-corrected double exponential smoothing** is usually more reliable for handling data that shows trends, compared to the single procedure.

- **Triple exponential smoothing** (also called the Multiplicative Holt-Winters) is usually more reliable for parabolic trends or data that shows trends and seasonality.

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[i] Source :
http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf

[ii] Source :
http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf