

THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S THIRD QUARTER STATISTICS REPORT 2024

The Corporate Area Coroners and The Special Coroners Court

(July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024)

OVERALL QUANTITATIVE HIGHLIGHTS JULY 1, 2024 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024			
Court	Case Disposal Rate (%)	Case Clearance Rate (%)	Average time to Disposition (months)
Corporate Area Coroners Court	100	114.49	0.38
Corporate Area Special Coroners Court	34.78	100	47.49
Weighted Average	89.8	106.78	8.68

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

The Corporate Area Coroner's Court (CCC) and Special Coroners Court (SCC) continue to perform well. The report suggests that delay in completing the matters from time of death to time when matter is complete is not due to any inefficiency on the part of the CCC. The data shows that the average time from date of death to date of case opening in the CCC is 2.4 years. The modal time was 1.9 months, and the median time was 9 months. The data for the CCC tell us that 46.15% of the adjournments were due to incomplete files/absence of medical certificates. This suggests that dialogue with our stakeholders is necessary to examine the process between reporting and the opening of the case to determine whether there is any gain to be had from process improvement.

The quarter saw a disposal rate of 100% and a clearance rate of 114.49%. This means that the CCC is keeping pace with new cases filed and disposing of cases regardless of when they entered the court at an efficient rate. The average time to disposition was 0.37 months. This means that it is less likely to build up a backlog of cases. The time has come to look at both statutory reform and process review to determine whether the efficiency of the court can be improved further.

The SCC has all island jurisdiction. The report notes that it had a clearance rate of 100% and a disposal rate of 34.78%. It is noted that the average time to disposition of cases in that quarter was 57.10 months. This long average time for the cases in this quarter is higher than the overall average time of 47.49 months. To address this long wait, the Judiciary will be conducting a process review and mapping of the steps to see where the areas of delay are and remedy them. This time lapse is much too long, and every effort will be made to bring the average time to less than 24 months.

I thank the Coroner, Special Coroner, staff, and all stakeholders for assisting in maintaining this high level of productivity.

The Honorable 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 Coroner's Court and the Special Coroner's Court for the third quarter ended September 30, 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 Coroner's Court recorded a case disposal rate of 100%, indicating that approximately 100 cases were resolved out of every 100 filed in the third quarter of 2024. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court continues to maintain a case clearance rate above international standards. This reporting period saw 158 disposed cases (regardless of date of origin) and 138 new cases filed; this produced a case clearance rate of 114.49%. The average time to disposition was 0.37 months, indicative of efficient case processing within the Corporate Area's Coroner's Court.

In the third quarter ended September 30, 2024, the Special Coroner's Court filed 23 new cases; of the new cases filed during the quarter there were no disposed cases. The Special Coroner's Court disposed 15 cases regardless of the date of origin, indicative of efforts to resolve older cases within the reporting period July 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024: with an average time to disposition of 57.10 months. The court's jurisdiction across parishes, saw cases in the reporting period primarily originating from Kingston (56.52%), St. James (21.74%), and Manchester (8.70%).

Table i: Key performance Summary-Third Quarter ended September 30, 2024

Court	Disposal Rate (%)	Case Clearance Rate (%)	Average time to disposition (months)
Corporate Area Coroner's Court	100	114.49	0.38
Special Coroner's Court	34.78	100	47.49
Weighted Average	89.80	106.78	8.68

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 Coroner's court the majority of cases were filed by the police (76.09%), highlighting their role in initiating legal proceedings. The majority of cases filed in the Corporate Area Coroner's Court for the third quarter of 2024 were males (68.12%), and the prevalent cause of death as reported was gunshot wounds. With respect to Form D applications, the majority (61.36%) of the outcomes were in accordance with Section 14¹, indicating the acceptance of matters for an inquest. Despite the fact that delays were encountered, primarily due to the generic category 'Other' (38.64%), the Corporate Area Coroner's Court overall performance for the third quarter ending September 30, 2024, remained impressive.

An examination of the demographic disaggregation and causes of death for cases in the Special Coroner's Court, noted all cases were male victims. It is also of note for the period July through September 2024 that 69.57% of the matters filed in the Special Coroner's Court were deaths related to JCF incidents, 17.39% were death related to custodial incidents. Of the new cases filed in the period 8 cases were disposed of. The Special Coroner's Court recorded a case clearance rate of 100% exceeding international standards.

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 first quarter ended September 30, 2024, a total of 159 new cases were filed, with 132 disposed of during the quarter and an overall average time to disposition of 8.68 months. The weighted average case disposal rate was 89.80%, and the weighted average case clearance rate was 106.78% for the reporting period.

Table ii: Forecasted case flow performance estimates for the quarter ended December 31, 2024

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 Coroner's Court	125	124	145	99.20	116.00
Corporate Area Special Coroner's Court	14	2	33	14.29	235.71
Total/Weighted Average	139	126	178	85.95	134.73

The above table forecasts core activity for the Corporate Area Coroner's and Special Coroner's 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 Coroner's court in quarter four (Oct.-Dec. 2024.) is 116%, which would be 1.51 percentage points higher than that of the 114.49% recorded in quarter three (Jul.- Sep. 2024). The overall forecasted case clearance rates for the Corporate Area Special Coroner's court in quarter four (Oct. – Dec.2024.) is 235.71%, which would be 135.71 percentage points higher than that of the 100% recorded in quarter three (Jul.- Sep. 2024).

Introduction

The Coroner's court serves as the judicial body responsible for determining the cause of death in diverse circumstances. Although the Coroner's Court operates across all parishes in Jamaica, this report concentrates specifically on the Corporate Area Coroner's Court and the Special Coroner's Court. It is important to note the distinction between the Coroner's Court and the Special Coroner's 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 Coroner's 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 Coroner's Court and the Special Coroner's Courts during the third quarter of 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 Coroner's Court

This subsection on the Corporate Area Coroner's Court details information on the case activity in this court for the third quarter ended September 30, 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 third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (in days)	
Number of observations	126
Mean	871.70
Median	279.50
Mode	56a
Std. Deviation	1430.450
Skewness	3.203
Std. Error of Skewness	.216
Range	8110
Minimum	8
Maximum	8118

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 for the third quarter ended September 30, 2024. It is seen that from a sample of 126 observations, the average time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the associated cases were opened in Corporate Area Coroner's Court was roughly 872 days (or 2.4 years). The modal time taken was 56 days or 1.9 months and the median was approximately 280 days or approximately 9 months. The standard deviation stands at a high of 1430 days or 3.9

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 22.2 years, while the lowest is 8 days.

Table 1.2: Case Activity Summary for the quarter ended September 30, 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 (%)
124	0	124	100

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court in the third quarter ended September 30, 2024. It is shown that 124 new cases were filed during the quarter, 3 cases or 2.47% more than the 121 cases filed in the similar third quarter of 2023. There were 124 disposed cases at the end of the quarter. These results yield to a case disposal rate of 100% this disposal rate satisfies the international standard on this measure and suggests that for every 100 cases filed over the period, roughly 100 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 quarter ended September 30, 2024.

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Police	105	76.09
Family	33	23.91
Total	138	100

A sample of 138 cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court shows that 105 cases or 76.09% of cases filed were filed by the police, while 33 or 23.91% were filed by the family of deceased.

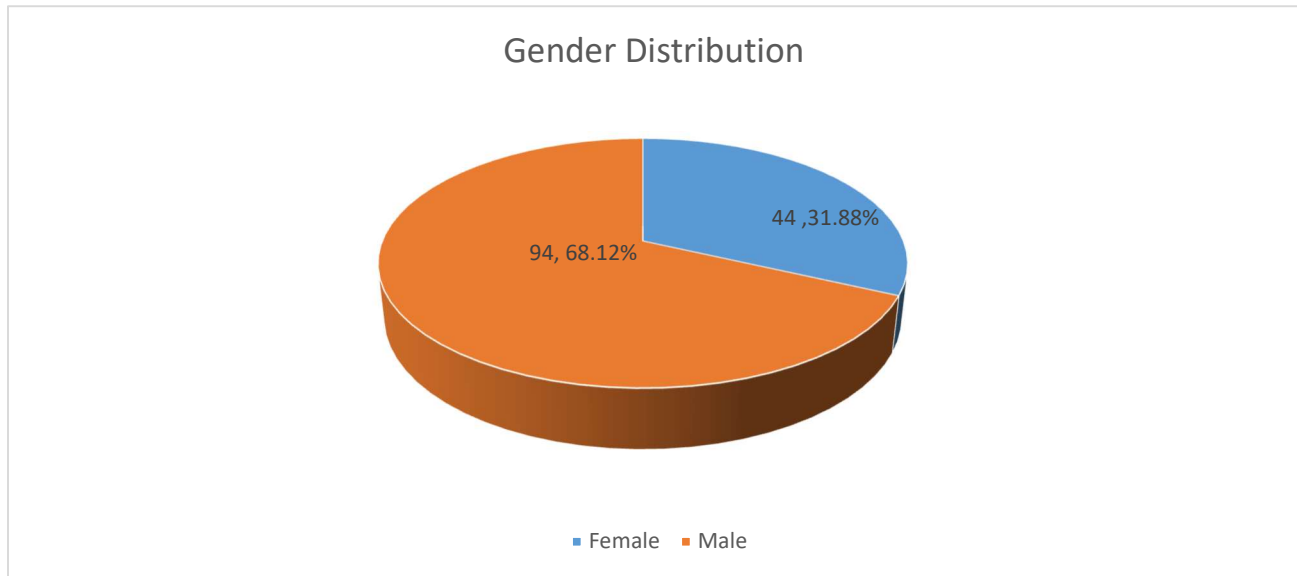
Table 1.4: Sampling distribution of deaths reported at various Police and brought before the court for the quarter ended September 30, 2024.

Police Station	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Denham Town Police Station	17	12.98
Half Way Tree police Station	15	11.45
Major Investigations Division	14	10.69
Vineyard Town Police Station	11	8.40
Olympic Gardens Police Station	10	7.63
Sub-Total	67	51

Sample of observations (N) = 131

The data showed a sample of 131 Coroner's Court cases reported at the different police stations in the Corporate Area which were subsequently brought to the court. Of that number, Denham Town Police Station accounted for the highest proportion of cases filed/investigated during the quarter with 15 or 12.98%, while the Half Way Tree Police Station followed with 15 or 11.45%. The Major Investigation Division with 14 or 10.69% ranked next while The Vineyard Town and Olympic Gardens Police Stations rounded off the top five Police Station with 11 cases (8.40%) and 10 (7.63%) respectively of the sample.

Chart 1.1: Distribution of gender of the deceased for new cases filed in the third quarter ended September 30, 2024



The above chart summarizes gender distribution, using a sample of 138 deceased persons involved in the cases filed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024. It is shown that 94 or 68.12% of the deceased were male, while the remaining 44 or 31.88% were female. In the similar quarter of 2023, males also accounted for a larger proportion, 88 or (72.73%) of the total sample. For the reporting period the absolute number of cases of males increased by was 6.82% when compared to 2023.

Table 1.5: Descriptive Statistics on the age of the deceased in cases filed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Descriptive statistics (age in years)	
Number of observations	133
Mean	55.39
Median	53
Mode	24a
Std. Deviation	24.269
Skewness	0.185
Std. Error of Skewness	0.21
Range	94
Minimum	14
Maximum	108

a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

A sample of 133 ages of the deceased involved in the cases filed revealed that the average age is roughly 55 years while the median is 53 years, and one of the most common age value is 24 years. The standard deviation stands at a moderate value of 24 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 14 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 third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Cause of death	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Injuries to vital organs, Multiple gunshot wounds	9	6.47
Hemorrhage and shock, Multiple gunshot wounds to the right buttocks and chest	8	5.76
Gunshot wounds of neck and torso	7	5.04
Gunshot wounds of face, head, and neck	6	4.32
Multiple blunt impact trauma	5	3.60
Sub-Total	35	25

Sample size (N) = 138

The above table is computed using a sample of 138 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 injuries to vital organs and multiple gunshot wounds with 9 or 6.47% of the sample and Hemorrhage and shock, Multiple gunshot wounds to the right buttocks and chest with 8 or 5.76% followed by Gunshot wounds of neck and torso with 7 or 5.04%. Gunshot wounds of face, head, and neck with 6 or 4.32% and Multiple blunt impact trauma with 5 or 3.60% 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 third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Cause of death as determined by Coroner	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Death due to natural causes	68	51.52
Death due to gunshot wounds	50	37.88
Death due to motor vehicle accident	7	5.30
Death due to fall	2	1.52
Death due to blunt impact head trauma	1	0.76
Death due to non-traumatic brain hemorrhage	1	0.76
Death due to septic retained products of conception	1	0.76
Death due to septic, acute cystitis	1	0.76
Death due to stab wounds	1	0.76
Total	132	100

Number of observations N= (132)

The above table is computed using a sample of 132 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 68 or 51.52% of the sample and deaths due to gunshot wounds with 50 or 37.88% 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 third quarter ended September 30, 2024.

Outcomes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14 ²	81	61.36
Other	51	38.64
Total	132	100.0

During the processing of a case at the Coroner's 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 81 or 61.36% of the outcomes. While the generic category 'other outcomes' accounted for 51 or 38.64%. These results are typical to the trends observed in the Coroner's Courts Island wide. The data was computed using a sample of 132 cases.

² 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.

Table 1.8: Sampling distribution of reasons for adjournment/continuance during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Reasons for adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
File incomplete/awaiting medical certificate	6	46.15
Part-heard	3	23.08
Other	2	15.38
Mention/Awaiting Jury Panel	2	15.38
Total	13	100

In the report period, 13 matters were adjourned/continued. Continuances (delays attributable to case progression stages) by way of Adjournments due to incomplete files/awaiting medical certificate, and continuances for mention/awaiting jury panel accounted for the highest portion of the sample with 46.15% of the sample. Part heard matters followed with 3 or 23.08%. Other and Mention/ Awaiting Jury Panel each accounted for 15.38% of the sample.

Table 1.9: Sampling distribution of the type of hearings in the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Chambers	138	100
Total	138	100

A sample of 138 hearings at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court in the third quarter of ended September 30, 2024, reveals that all 138 were chamber hearings.

Table 1.10: Sampling distribution of the methods of Disposition of matters completed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Methods of disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14 ³	75	57.25
Section 10	55	41.98
Open Court Verdict	1	0.76
Total	131	100

The methods of disposition for a sample of 131 matters which were disposed during the quarter, revealed that 75 or 57.25% of matters were disposed by way of an Inquest, under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroner's Court Act. Matters disposed by way of inquest under the provision of Section 10 of the Coroner's Court Act followed this with 55 or 41.98% of the sample. Matters disposed by open court verdict or by inquest accounted for 0.76%.

Table 1.11: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (in days)	
Number of observations	131
Mean	11.3500
Median	3.0000
Mode	2.00
Std. Deviation	54.46900
Skewness	9.428
Std. Error of Skewness	.212
Range	583.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	584.00

³ 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.

The above data shows that the average time taken to dispose of matters during the quarter is approximately 11 days. This was derived from a sample of 131 matters resolved during the quarter. 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 54.47 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 6.83 days compared to the 3.82 days recorded in the similar quarter of 2023.

Table 1.12: Case clearance rate summary for the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Approximate Number of new cases filed	Approximate Number of cases disposed or inactive	Estimated Case clearance rate (%)
138	158	114.49

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 Coroner's Court with a case clearance rate of 114.49% for the quarter ended September 30, 2024, up from the 108.26% recorded in the similar quarter 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 20%. There were 138 new cases filed during the quarter and 158 cases were disposed (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate. It suggests that for every 100 new cases filed, 138 cases were resolved during the quarter.

Chapter 2.0: The Special Coroner's Court

This section provides a detailed summary of case activity and events as well as case outcomes and related factors at the Special Coroner's Court during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024.

Table 2.1a: Case activity summary for the third quarter ended September 30, 2024, in the Special Coroner's 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 (%)
23	0	8	34.78

Note 1: There were 7 new pending cases at the end of the quarter.

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Cooperate Area Special Coroner's Court. It is shown that 23 new cases were filed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024, 8 cases were disposed from those originating in the quarter leading to a disposal rate of 34.78%.

Table 2.2: Sampling distribution of the parish of origin of matters filed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Parish Origin	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Kingston	13	56.52
St James	5	21.74
Manchester	2	8.70
St Ann	1	4.35
St Catherine	1	4.35
Trelawney	1	4.35
Total	23	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. The above table provides a summary of the 'parish of origin' of cases filed in the Special Coroner's Court. It

is seen that Kingston with 56.52% of the cases filed, St. James with approximately 21.74% and Manchester with 8.70% accounted for 86.96% share of new cases filed in the Special Coroner's Court during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024.

Table 2.3: Sampling distribution of the source of matters filed during the third quarter ended September 30,2024

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
INDECOM	23	100

A sample of 8 matters filed at the Special Coroner's Court during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024, shows that all 100% were filed by INDECOM.

Table 2.4: Sampling distribution on the type of death by Institution for the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Type of death	Frequency	Percentage (%)
JCF	16	69.57
Custodial	4	17.39
JDF	3	13.04
Total	23	100.0

It is seen in the above table that 69.57% of all the matters filed in the third quarter of 2024 were matters related to JCF deaths, while 17.39% were related to custodial deaths. The remaining 13.04% were death related to JDF. The majority of the causes of death as reported in the cases filed during the third quarter of 2024 were stated as "hemorrhage and shock" or "gunshot wound to the body", accounting for 50% of the sample.

The sex distribution of the deceased involved in the 23 cases filed in the third quarter of 2024, were all (100%) males.

Table 2.5: Descriptive Statistics on the age of the deceased in cases filed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (age in years)

Number of observations	16
Mean	36.88
Median	30.00
Mode	30
Std. Deviation	15.999
Skewness	1.326
Std. Error of Skewness	.564
Range	53
Minimum	20
Maximum	73

The above descriptive summary on the age of the deceased 16 observations, the average age was roughly 37 years, while the most frequently occurring age was 30 years old. The highest age recorded was 73 years, while the lowest is 20 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 third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Methods of disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14 ⁴	8	81.82
Section 16(1)	2	18.18
Total	11	100.0

The methods of disposition for a sample of 11 matters, which were disposed of during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024, revealed that 8 or 81.82% of matters were disposed by way of an inquest under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroner's Court Act.

⁴ 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.

The remainder were matters disposed by way of Inquest under the provision of Section 16 of the Coroner's Court Act with 18.18% of the sample.

Table 2.7: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (Days)	
Number of observations	28
Mean	1424.75
Median	1465.50
Mode	78 ^a
Std. Deviation	1151.646
Skewness	.833
Std. Error of Skewness	.441
Range	4332
Minimum	78
Maximum	4410

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The above table uses a sample of 28 cases disposed of in the third quarter of 2024 reveals an estimated average of roughly 47 months, with a maximum of approximately 12 years and a minimum of 78 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 September 30, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (in days)	
Number of observations	40
Mean	666.78
Std. Error of Mean	123.814
Median	213.00
Mode	79 ^a
Std. Deviation	783.071
Skewness	1.064
Std. Error of Skewness	.374
Range	2335
Minimum	59
Maximum	2394

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

The above data is based on sample of 40 active Special Coroner's matters during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024. The average age of these matters was roughly 667 days or approximately 22 months, while one of the most frequently occurring age in the distribution was 79 days. The standard deviation of roughly 783 days suggests that there is a large 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 2394 days old or approximately 7 years, while the youngest case is 59 days.

Table 2.9: Case clearance rate summary for the third quarter ended September 30, 2024

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of cases disposed	Estimated Case clearance rate (%)
23	23	100

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 Coroner's Court with a case clearance rate of 100% in the third quarter of 2024, exceeds the above-mentioned range, which shows promising signs of a well- managed caseload, there were 23 new cases filed, and 23 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 quarter ended September 30, 2024

Metric	Corporate Area Coroner's Court	Corporate Area Special Coroner's Court	Total/Weighted Average
Approximate number of new cases	124	23	147
Approximate number of disposed cases	124	8	132
Approximate gross number of disposed cases (regardless of date of origin)	158	23	181
Estimated Case Disposal Rate (%)	100	34.78	89.80
Estimated Case Clearance Rate (%)	114.49	100	106.78
Average Time to Disposition	0.38	47.49	8.68

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the featured specialized Coroner's Court and Special Coroner's Court during the third quarter ended September 30, 2024. It is shown that a total of 147 new cases were filed in these courts, while 132 of these cases were disposed of, leading to an estimated weighted case disposal rate of 89.80%. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court had an estimated case disposal rate of 100%, an impressive result. The table also shows that a gross number of 132 cases were disposed of in the quarter, leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 106.78%. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court recorded a case clearance rate of 114.49% and the Special Coroner's Court had an estimated case clearance rate of 100%, both notable results which exceed the international standard.

Concluding Note

The Corporate Area Coroner's Court and the Special Coroner's Court both continue to contribute to reducing the overall net case backlog rate and enhancing judicial efficiency. In the third quarter ended September 2024, the combined weighted average time to disposition was 8.68 months. Across both courts the estimated case disposal rate was 89.80%, and the estimated case clearance rate was 106.78% in the reporting period.

The Corporate Area Coroner's 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 Coroner's Court filed 23 new cases and irrespective of the date of origin twenty-three (23) cases were either disposed or inactive. The Special Coroner's Court recorded a case clearance rate of 100%, with an average time to disposition of 47.49 months in the third quarter ended September 30, 2024. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court filed 124 new cases in the reporting period and disposed of 158 matters irrespective of the date of origin, producing a case clearance rate of 114.49%. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court, in particular, continues to be an exceptional performing court and one of the fastest in disposing of new cases, having disposed of 124 of the 124 new cases filed (100%) in the third quarter ended September 30, 2024 and recorded an average time to disposition of less than one month (0.38 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 rank of 45 indicates that 45% of the scores in a distribution of scores fall at or below the score at the 45th 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 α – 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.

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>