



The regulation of drug consumption and care for addiction

Economic/Social Committee

Chair(s): Alicia Smith-Kasparian; Celia Gaillard

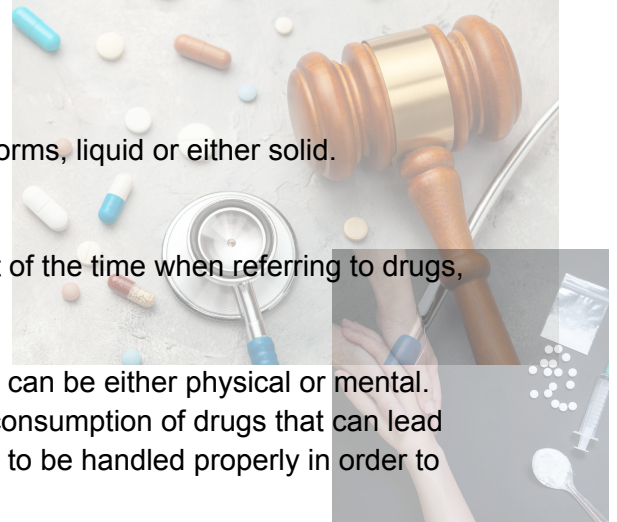
In what ways can a country regulate its drug use ?

Introduction

Drugs are chemical substances that can come in many forms, liquid or either solid.

Drugs can be prescribed by a professional (in most cases doctors). Although most of the time when referring to drugs, people usually mean drugs that are illegal or unsafe.

In general drugs are used to relieve any type of pain that can be either physical or mental. However, a poor regulation of drugs could provoke overconsumption of drugs that can lead to addiction and overdose. In that case the addiction has to be handled properly in order to protect the population.



Definitions of key terms:

Drugs:

Any substance (other than food) that is used to prevent, diagnose, treat, or relieve symptoms of a disease or abnormal condition.

They can also affect the functioning of the brain and body and cause changes in mood and perception. When overused some types of drugs (e.g Opioids) can lead to addiction.

Here are the big 4 types of drugs:

- Depressants: drugs that slow the function of nervous system and brain (e.g alcohol)
- Stimulants: drugs that accelerate the nervous system (e.g cocaine)
- Opioids: drugs used to suppress physical pain (e.g morphine)
- Hallucinogens: drugs that modify the perception of reality (e.g cannabis)

Addiction:

“Not having control over doing , taking or using something to the point that it could be harmful to you” (NHS)

Overdose:

Taking more than the recommended amount of a drug that may result in harmful symptoms or death. It can be intentional or unintentional.

Regulation:

(in government) A rule that limits or controls social behaviour.

Substance use disorder (SUD):

Mental disorder leading to a person's inability to control their use of substances (medication, alcohol...)

General overview:

1) Drug Use

Each year substances are responsible for 1 death out of 5. (11.8 million deaths) in the world. The deaths are caused as well as directly than indirectly. A direct death is caused by a SUD, whereas an indirect death is caused by a drug use that damages the body slowly, such as smoking for example.

Globally drug use is divided into three main substances ; alcohol, smoking and illicit drugs.

Alcohol consumption: As much as alcohol plays a main part in bonding or socialising in today's society it is also linked to many negative consequences. Indeed health degradation, road accidents and even crime are involved in the over use of alcohol. This drug causes 2.8 million premature deaths per year, caused by cancers or ethylic comas.

Smoking: According to WHO in 2020, 22.3% of the global population used tobacco. Smoking has been a major problem for many decades causing around 100 million premature deaths in the 20th century, mainly by the rapid spread of cancers in the body.

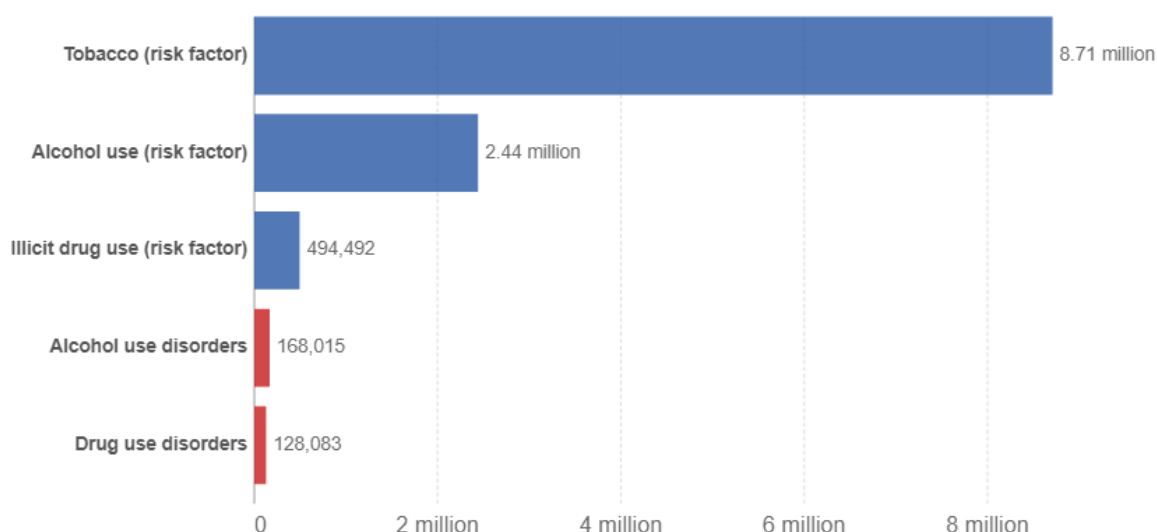
Illicit drugs: Those drugs are part of the drugs prohibited by the government drug control although even the ones allowed by the government (if used over advised quantity) can also have a bad impact on mental and physical health.

Deaths from tobacco, alcohol and drugs, World, 2019



Deaths from substance use are distinguished by two measures:

- direct deaths from substance use disorders (in red). These are deaths which result from alcohol or illicit drug use overdoses.
- indirect deaths (in blue) which result from substance use acting as a risk factor for the development of various diseases and injury.



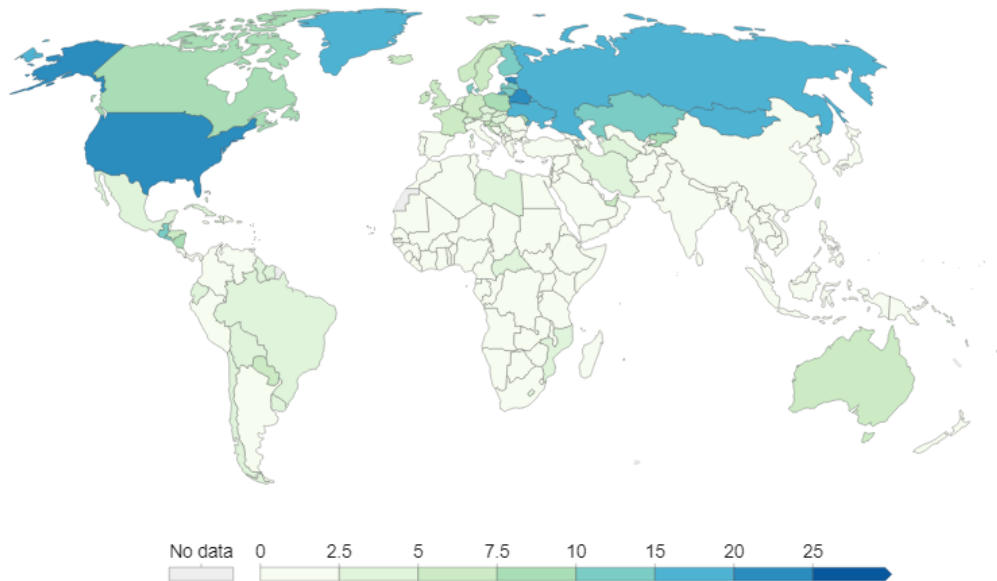
Source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease (2019)

OurWorldInData.org/drug-use • CC BY

Note: Illicit drugs are drugs that have been prohibited under international drug control treaties. They include opioids, cocaine, amphetamines and cannabis.

Death rates from alcohol and drug use disorders, 2019

Age-standardized death rates from alcohol and drug use disorders, measured as the number of deaths per 100,000 individuals. These include only direct deaths from these disorders, meaning they do not include suicide deaths which can in some cases be connected or attributed to substance use disorders.



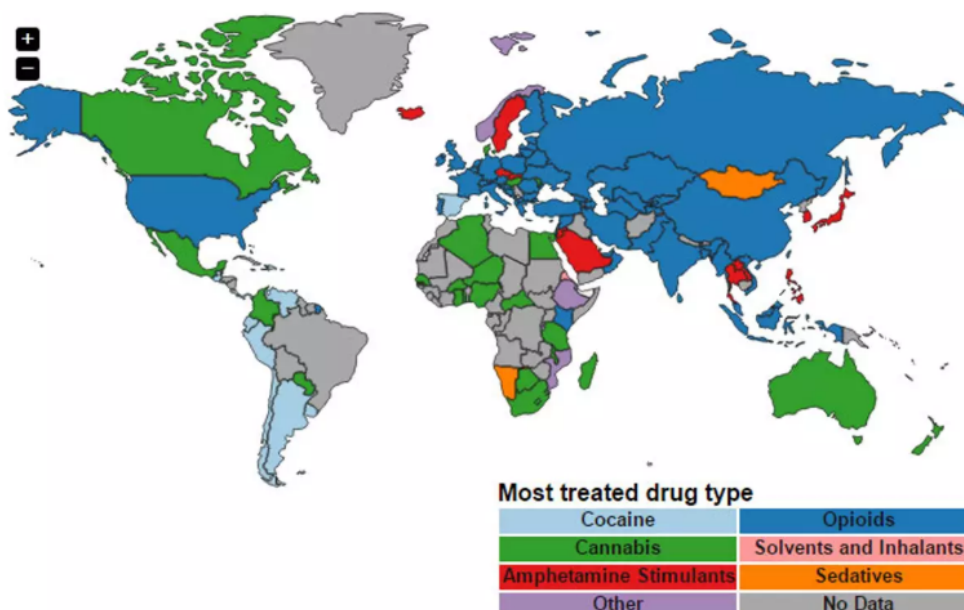
Source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease (2019)

CC BY

- In the world the percentage of people dependent on alcohol or illicit drugs can go up to 5%.
- Over the years deaths from opioid overdoses have increased significantly in recent years and now exceed 80,000 globally.
- Opioid: drugs that contain heroin and painkillers available legally by prescription (e.g codeine, morphine)

2) Drug Regulation

Drug regulation is the control of drug use by international agreements or regulation authorities.



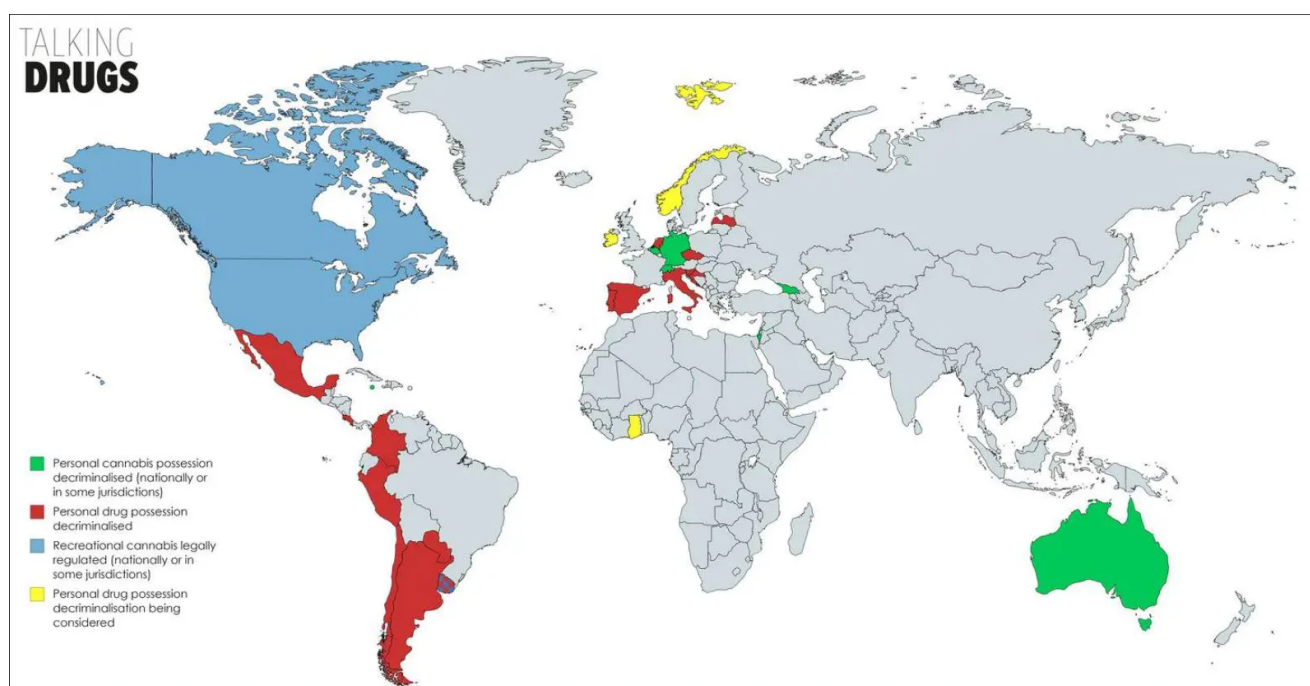
In the pharmaceutical field, drugs have to be given a market authorisation in which quality, efficacy and safety are tested. Afterwards, information about indications, dosage, adverse effects, warnings, monitoring will then be shared to the public.

Drug regulations are required to ensure the safety and efficacy of drugs for the general public.

Even if multiple drugs are regulated, illegal uses of those drugs still occur, leading to mass use of illegal and dangerous drugs.

Although nowadays anyone possessing, manufacturing, distributing or trafficking is usually punished by law.

Many countries have enacted regulations however they aren't much steady. Indeed, for example in countries where drug possession is allowed, someone can still get sentenced for it.



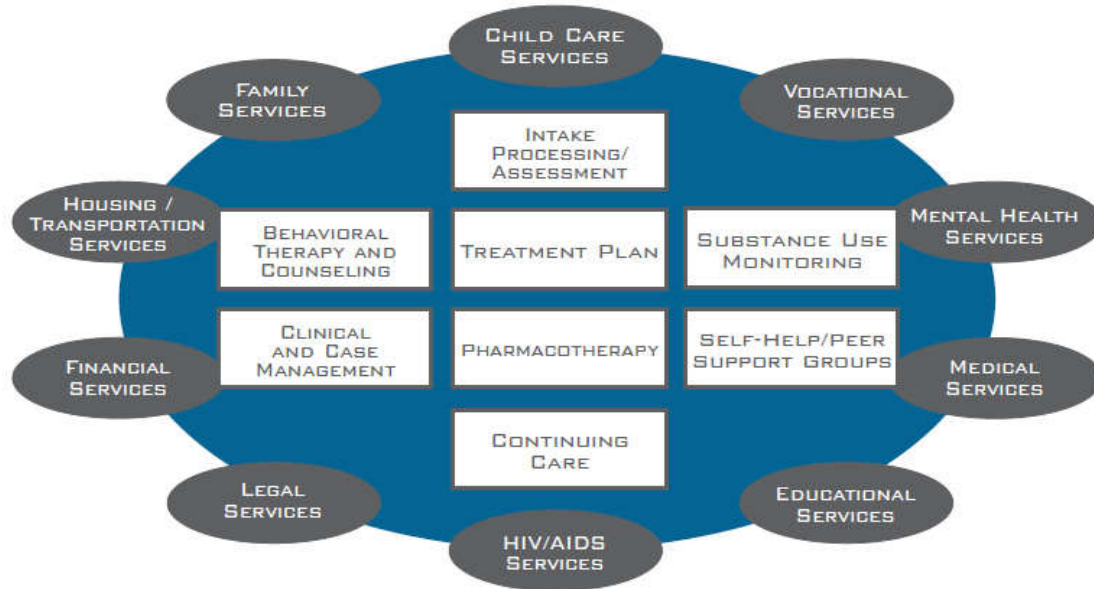
- **17 countries** decriminalise drug possession : Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, Netherlands, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Uruguay.

3) Care for addiction

“A drug addiction treatment is intended to help addicted individuals stop compulsive drug seeking and use.” (National Institutes of Health)

As every drug addiction is different in every human, the treatments can take many forms and last a different period of time. They can include medications or behavioural therapies.

Components of Comprehensive Drug Abuse Treatment



The best treatment programs provide a combination of therapies and other services to meet the needs of the individual patient.

- According to SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, in 2014; 22.5 million of people aged over 12 resort to a treatment for alcohol or illicit drug problems.
- In the same year, 4.2, million received a treatment
- Of these, about 2.6 million people received treatment at specialty treatment programs

Major actors:



USA: This country is one of the top users of illicit drugs. Americans are at the greatest risk of drug-related deaths. 22.2 million current users of marijuana, while 3.8 million people overuse painkillers. Heroin addiction has also risen over the years. Moreover, in the late 1990's the USA also faced a major Opioid Epidemic leading to mass misuse of prescription and non-prescription drugs.



Iran: A great percentage of Iran's population is using drugs such as opium or crystal meth, partly because it is produced by its neighbour: Afghanistan. If caught with drugs in Iran you could either get a fine or a death penalty. However Iran has many programs that care to fight addiction.



China: If caught with drugs in China you are forced to attend a drug rehab facility.



Saudi Arabia: The use of any types of drugs in Saudi Arabia is strictly prohibited. Alcohol use is illegal, and possession or use of alcohol or drugs can be punished by public flogging, fines, long imprisonment or death.



UK: More than 15 million people in Great Britain report trying drugs, and around 3 million take them on a regular basis. Marijuana is the most commonly used drug, followed by amphetamines and cocaine. England is one of the number one users of illicit drugs such as cocaine and heroin in Europe. And more and more citizens start using a young age.



Mexico: Drug use in Mexico has notably increased in the last 3 years (from 15.2% to 17.8%). The most drugs used were marijuana, inhalants and amphetamines. Drug use or possession is not punished by the law in Mexico however any import drug has to be approved by COFEPRIS.

Question to reflect on:

- In what ways can a country regulate its drug use ?
- Can drug addiction recovery be taken care of by a country's health care system ?
- Will the pharmaceutical field be affected if illicit drugs are banned ?
- Are there any solutions to prevent drug use from a young age ?

Tips: Remember your country's opinion on the topic and not your own :)
Have fun and good luck !!!

Appendix:

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/number-of-deaths-by-risk-factor>

<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/drug-laws-drug-crimes-32252.html>

<https://www.12keysrehab.com/a-glimpse-into-drug-use-around-the-world/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support/addiction-what-is-it/>