



transnational institute

Expert Seminar

Global Experiences with Harm Reduction for Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances

Monday 19 May: opening dinner

19.30: Restaurant Naumachia

Via Celimontana 7, Rome

<http://www.naumachiaroma.com/dove-siamo>

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

Venue address: Pontificia Università Lateranense, Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano, 4, Vatican City

We will jointly leave the Hotel at 9 am.

The seminar will start on at **9.30 and finishes at 18.00.**

The objective of this seminar is to compare the findings on innovative tools for the prevention of problematic cocaine use patterns, with experiences with harm reduction measures for stimulants in other regions of world, in particular those with a long trajectory of problematic stimulant uses such as North America (crack cocaine/methamphetamine), South East Asia (methamphetamine) and Latin America (cocaine base paste also known as paco, bazuco or crack).

The seminar will be guided by the Chatham House rule and aims to be an open-minded exchange of opinions and experiences of policy officials and non-governmental experts in the field. The sessions below will be introduced shortly by a relevant participant (about 10 minutes each), Q&A and further debate.

Agenda

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9.30- 10.00 Aims of the seminar and an introduction round of participants

10.00 - 10.30 Self-regulation and drug use

Inputs: Grazia Zuffa (Italy/Forum Droghe)

By taking cues from users' self-regulation strategies, it is possible to design innovative operational models for drug services as well as drug policies, strengthening Harm Reduction as an alternative approach to the disease model. The reason for most controlled use lies in a wide set of self-regulation rules users tend to apply to keep drug use at bay and prevent the disruption of everyday life. This perspective is noticeably at odds with the point of view of drug addiction professionals, who tend to focus on addiction as a disease, resulting from the chemical properties of drugs combined with biological, psychological and social deficits of users. It also challenges the social representation of drugs as intrinsically out-of-control substances and of drug users as helpless under the influence of drugs.

This input is based on the outcomes of the Expert Seminar held in Florence (20-22 June 2013) of the project [Innovative cocaine and polydrug abuse prevention programme](#) from the project New Approaches in Drug Policy & Interventions, with the financial support of the Drug Prevention and Information Programme of the European Union and La Società della Ragione.

Recommended reading:

- [Cocaine: towards a self-regulation model. New developments in Harm Reduction](#), by Grazia Zuffa, Series on Legislative Reform of Drug Policies Nr. 24, February 2014

10.30 - 11.45 Experiences with harm reduction measures for stimulants in Latin America and the Caribbean

Inputs: Marcus Day (Saint Lucia/Caribbean); Thiago Fidalgo (Brazil, TBC)

In Latin America and the Caribbean the problematic use of smokable cocaine (crack, paco, pasta base, bazuco) is causing significant health and social problems. Measures to solve problematic cocaine base paste consumption are the subject of great concern in Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay and Argentina. The mayor of Bogota has recently proposed a pilot scheme with crack cocaine addicts to explore the substitution of crack made of cocaine base paste (or bazuco as it is called in Colombia) by marijuana, while in Brazil, in the city of São Paulo in particular, there are significant experience with treatment and harm reduction programmes. In the Caribbean there are some experiences with substitution of crack with cannabis as well.

Recommended reading:

- [Crack cocaine is king in Brazil: What Sao Paulo is doing about it](#), The Globe and Mail, April 26, 2014
- [Brazil state launches crack rehabilitation program](#), The Associated Press, May 9, 2013
- [Colombia's capital banks on marijuana cure for hard drug addicts](#), The Miami Herald, May 7, 2013
- [Therapeutic Use of Cannabis by Crack Addicts in Brazil](#), Eliseu Labigalini Jr, Lucio Ribeiro Rodrigues and Dartiu Xavier Da Silveira, Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 31 (4), October-December 1999
- [Crack Heads and Roots Daughters: The Therapeutic Use of Cannabis in Jamaica](#), Melanie Dreher, Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics, 2(3-4), 121-133, 2002

11.45 - 12.00 Coffee break

12.00 - 13.15 Experiences with harm reduction measures for stimulants in Southeast Asia and the Pacific

**Inputs: Paul Dessauer (Australia)
Aung Yu Naingh (Burma/Myanmar)**

Problematic use of methamphetamine has become a significant health and social problem in East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific. There are strong indications that the situation is deteriorating: the substances are becoming stronger (from pills – also known as yama or yaba – to crystal methamphetamine or ‘ice’) and methods of use are becoming more harmful (from swallowing pills to injecting). Prevention, treatment as well as harm reduction strategies in the region are in their initial phases. Services are still focused on injecting heroin users as the main problem and have little to offer for methamphetamine users. They rarely use harm reduction services, largely because they do not identify with opioid users, who often belong to different user networks. The needs of ATS users are usually neglected and few services are geared to their special needs. In contrast, harm reduction programmes have shown positive results in Australia.

Recommended reading:

[Amphetamine Type Stimulants and Harm Reduction: Experiences from Myanmar, Thailand and Southern China](#), Tom Blickman, TNI Drug Policy Briefing Nr. 37, October 2011

The findings and recommendations of the workshop

13.15 - 15.00 Lunch

15.00 - 16.15 Experiences with harm reduction measures for stimulants in North America and Europe

**Inputs: Vendula Belackova (Czech Republic)
Sebastian Saville (UK & North America)
Claudio Vidal (Energy Control/Spain)**

In North America and Europe there are some experiences with harm reduction programmes for stimulant users. What have been the results? What do they offer for regions of the world with fewer resources? Are “traditional” stimulants being replaced by new psychoactive substances and does harm reduction for the “traditionals” have anything to offer for new substances? Dexamphetamine and Ritalin substitute treatment for amphetamine dependence shows promising results and appears to be effective and safe in particular in preventing relapse. But research has been much more limited than for methadone treatment for heroin users.

Recommended reading:

[Substitution therapy for amphetamine users](#), by James Shearer, John Sherman, Alex Wodak & Ingrid Van Beek, Drug and Alcohol Review (2002) 21, 179-185

16.15 - 16.30 Tea break

16.30 - 18.00 Conclusion: towards a comprehensive package of harm reduction for stimulants?

Input: ICEERS (TBC)

Given the different experiences with treatment and harm reduction for stimulant users worldwide is there a need to gather data, exchange data and joint research? Could allowing mild herbal stimulants more freely on the market possibly even have a preventive effect and reduce the prevalence of more harmful concentrated stimulants?

Recommended reading:

- [Report of Expert Seminar on Herbal Stimulants and Legal Highs](#), Transnational Institute (TNI) and International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), Amsterdam, October 20-31 2011
- [Kratom in Thailand: Decriminalisation and Community Control?](#) By Pascal Tanguay, Series on Legislative Reform of Drug Policies Nr. 13, April 2011

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