

IDHDP Newsletter

Volume 5

Summer 12



our aims

increase the participation of
medical doctors in drug policy reform

Dear colleague,

Welcome to the summer 2012 issue of the IDHDP newsletter, particular welcome to our new members,

Highlights:

- Development of IDHDP's Patrons Group and Advisory Board
- International AIDS 2012 Conference
 - IDHDP activities
 - Harm reduction presentations (webcasts and slides)
- IDHDP position statements
- Upcoming conferences
 - Regional chapters
- New publications
- IDHDP discussion forums
- Communications (Facebook and Twitter)
- Increasing IDHDP membership

IDHDP Patrons

We have established a patrons' group of the leaders in medicine, HIV and policy to help raise the profile of the issues and of the organization. We're fortunate to have the following distinguished members on board:

- Prof. Michel Kazatchkine (Chair), *Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*,
- Prof. Chris Beyrer, *Director Center for Public Health and Human Rights, Johns Hopkins University*,
- Prof. Adeeba Kamarulzaman, *Director, Infectious Disease Unit Department of Malaya University of Malaya Medical Centre*,
- Dr. Jessie Mbwambo, *Psychiatrist, Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences*,
- Dr. Fabio Mesquita, *HIV Senior Advisor and Team Leader, WHO Viet Nam*,
- Prof. Julio Montaner, *Director, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS*
- Dr. Evan Wood, *Co-Director, UHRI; Founder, International Center for Science in Drug Policy*

Our first meeting of the patron's group was on July 25, during the International AIDS conference. They expressed how essential IDHDP was, as until now the doctor's voice has been missing in the drug policy debate and discussed how a societal change was needed and doctors could help achieve this. They also contributed a myriad of ideas for how IDHDP could best do this and raise the profile of drug policy reform and that of the organization.

Advisory board

In further efforts to enhance our organizational health and structure, strategic planning and raising our profile, we have also established a board of advisors with a wealth of varied experiences. We are grateful to have the following people join us:

- Eliot Albers (*INPUD ED*), *UK*
- Dr Carmen Albizu-Garcia (*University of Puerto Rico, professor*), *Puerto Rico*

- Raj Boyjoonauth (*Association of Nurses in Addiction Care, vice chair*), UK
- Elsa Browne (*SMMGP Project Manager*), England
- Niamh Eastwood (*Release ED*), England
- Dr Robert Haemmig (*Swiss Society of Addiction Medicine, president*), Switzerland
- Dr David Lewis (*Brown University, professor*), USA
- Dr Sharon Stancliff (*HRC medical director*), USA

We're holding our first advisory meeting on September 12, 2012.

IDHDP Support Statements

We have released two position statements this past month:

In recognition of International Overdose Awareness Day

IDHDP supports the efforts in communities around the globe to prevent drug overdose fatalities and calls for greater governmental and international policymaker leadership.

IDHDP statement of support: "The War on Drugs and HIV/AIDS, How the Criminalization of Drug Use Fuels the Global Pandemic"

IDHDP joins the distinguished Global Commission on Drug Policy in condemning the drug war as a failure and a major factor sustaining the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. We support their call for immediate, major reforms of the global drug prohibition regime to correct the policy distortions that favor criminal justice over public health evidence-based addiction treatments.

International AIDS Conference 2012

IDHDP activities

Doctors' reception: "The Neglected Epidemic: Can we Get to Zero Without Drug Policy Reform?" IDHDP co-organised with the Harm Reduction Coalition and International Center for Science in Drug Policy a very well attended and well received reception to bring doctors and others attending the AIDS conference to the Harm Reduction and Drug Policy Zone of the Global Village to learn more about the connection between drug policy and health. IDHDP medical director Chris Ford and special guest speaker, Stephen Lewis, gave rousing speeches, recorded here: (click on the links below)

- [Chris Ford](#)
- [Stephen Lewis](#)

Members meeting: We held a very successful members meeting on July 25. The minutes from the meeting can be found [here](#).

We are planning the next members meetings at the upcoming Harm Reduction International conference in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2013 (conference details below).

Harm reduction presentations (webcasts and slides)

The following presentations below may be of interest and there are more on our website:

[Prevention and care towards vulnerable and stigmatized populations \(MSM, drug users, and sex workers\)](#)

Presentation slides from Joseph Larmarange.

[The Global Commission on HIV and the Law: A Movement for HIV Law Reform](#)

This session addresses the political dimensions of the Commission's recommendations as an essential ingredient for successfully using the law to scale-up effective HIV responses.

Correlation between illicit substances, unsafe sexual behavior and symptoms suggesting sexually transmitted infections among male clients of female sex workers in Bangladesh

Presentation slides from Anisuddin Ahmed.

Comprehensive HIV Prevention for People Who Use Drugs: Ways Forward for Inclusion of Needle and Syringe Exchange Programmes

This session addresses the potential impacts of restrictions on NSEPs, and propose ways forward for public health actors, community stakeholders, and drug users themselves to maintain and expand comprehensive services, including needle and syringe exchanges, despite the limitations in funding, restrictive political environments, and other barriers to the implementation of this preventive intervention.

Tougher policy on French illegal drug users: what impact on risk reduction?

Presentation slides from L. Geffroy.

Modelling potential impact of expanding access to anti-retroviral therapy on the concentrated HIV epidemic in Viet Nam

Presentation slides from Reuben Grannich.

New publications

Methadone replacement therapy: tried, tested, effective?

Two Scottish doctors debate, the efficacy of methadone maintenance (under attack in the Scottish media). IDHDP member, Dr Roy Robertson, makes the case that methadone has been well tested, is cheap and acceptable to the patient and results in visible improvement. Dr Daniels argues that methadone treatment is philosophically ill-conceived, ethically dubious, and costly. He also highlights evidence that the treatment is potentially harmful to both patients and those in contact with them.

West Africa 21012 ATS Situation Report

A report on the growing evidence that West Africa is a manufacturing hub for amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and trafficking of drugs.

HIV prevention, treatment and care in prisons and other closed settings: a comprehensive package of interventions

UNODC's new policy brief highlights two guiding principles, namely that "prison health is good public health" and that a human rights-based approach and the principle of equivalence of health in prisons are key. The report proposes a comprehensive package of 15 interventions to address HIV in prisons settings.

Guidelines for the evaluation of drug prevention: a manual for programme planners and evaluators (second edition)

This edition is an updated version of the original EMCDDA guidelines, which contains new methods, concepts and examples of currently available drug prevention interventions and which provides a framework for carrying out an evaluation. The content has also been updated with developments in online EMCDDA drug prevention and evaluation resources.

Torture in the Name of Treatment

Asia Drug Detention - Human Rights Watch Report: summarizes HRW's findings over five years of research on compulsory drug "treatment" centers in China, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Lao PDR.

Global Commission on HIV and the Law: Risks, Rights & Health

Global Commission on HIV and the Law presents a coherent and compelling evidence based report on human rights and legal issues relating to HIV and how evidence and human rights based laws can end an epidemic of bad laws and transform the global AIDS response.

WHO: Guidance on Prevention of Viral Hepatitis B and C Among People Who Inject Drugs

The guidance is the first step in the provision of comprehensive guidance on viral hepatitis surveillance, prevention and

treatment by the World Health Organization.

Drugs Policy is AIDS Policy

The Canadian Drug Policy Coalition (CDPC) details their vision and insights on the drug situation in Canada, including articles by Professor David Nutt, author of "Drugs- Without the Hot Air"; Dan Gardner, author of "Future Babble"; Dan Werb, Co-Founder, International Centre for Science in Drug Policy, and more.

The Robert Carr Doctrine

This document highlights the principles for a meaningful response to HIV among the world's key affected populations.

Home Affairs Committee: Drugs

Danny Kushlink, Transform Drug Policy Foundation, Niamh Eastwood, Release, Tom Lloyd, former Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire Trevor Pearce, Director General, Serious and Organised Crime Agency give evidence to the Home Affairs Committee in relation to the inquiry into drugs.

A Balancing Act: Policymaking on Illicit Drugs in the Czech Republic

The third study on good practices in national drug policy from Global Drug Policy Program, the report shows how the Czech Republic has kept low-threshold health services high on the drug policy agenda, engaged with civil society, invested seriously in research on the impact of drug policy, and managed the shifting political winds of public attitudes toward drugs.

The Global State of Harm Reduction 2012; Towards an Intergrated Response report

This report highlights the major developments in harm reduction policy adoption and programme implementation that have occurred since 2010, enabling some assessment of global progress. It also explores several key issues for developing an integrated harm reduction response, such as building effective harm reduction services for women who inject drugs, access to harm reduction services by young people, drug use among men who have sex with men, and global progress toward drug decriminalisation and sustainability of services in challenging environments.

Drugs Meter

Check out the new Drugs Meter, a new tool which allows people to get non-judgmental feedback on their drug use, including alcohol.

A Quiet Revolution: drug decriminalisation policies in practice across the globe

Release's new report examines the policies of over 20 countries that have adopted some form of decriminalisation of drug possession. The main aim of the report is to look at the existing research to establish whether the adoption of a decriminalised policy led to significant increases in drug use - the simple answer is that it did not.

Why doctors should read this report:

Chris thinks about decriminalisation in response to Release's report. We know criminalisation of individuals can impact them for the rest of their lives, affecting employment and education, not to mention their health and welfare. It stigmatises people and can push them further into the margins of society. As doctors, many of us may not have thought much about decriminalisation and its potential to improve the health and overall well-being of people who use drugs, but even for those of us who have, read this report: it is an eye opener. I recommend that you read this report and then as a group lets discuss whether IDHDP should firstly make a statement and secondly, talk about whether we agree with Release's call that decriminalisation is the first step in reform of our drug laws.

Upcoming conferences

ISAM Conference (14 - 18 Oct 2012) Geneva, SZ

The theme of the conference is Treatment Delivery Systems: asserting the future.

City Health 2012: Creating Healthy Opportunities in the 21st Century (22 - 23 Oct 2012) London, UK

The London Drug and Alcohol Policy Forum invites you to participate in this landmark meeting on healthy cities and a healthy public. It has a special focus on health behaviours - including diet, alcohol, sex, drugs, smoking as well as nightlife, tourism, mental and physical well-being, and health emergencies.

AMERSA - 36th National Conference, Bethesda, MD

The conference is notable for its in-depth focus on substance abuse education and the high quality of its workshops and presentations.

Regional Chapter alert: We are planning a meeting of IDHDP members and other interested doctors at the conference. Further information will be circulated in due course.

Society for the Study of Addiction 2012 Symposium (8 – 9 Nov 2012) York, UK

Themes of the conference include: Emerging challenges in addiction psychiatry, Alcohol: harms, interventions and policy, The research base for policy and Recovery.

Regional Chapter alert: We are planning to hold an informal members meeting at the conference. Further information will follow in due course.

9th National Harm Reduction Conference: From Public Health to Social Justice (15 – 18 Nov 2012) Portland, Oregon

The conference is focused on improving the health of drug users. Delegates from around the country will discuss critical issues affecting the drug user community including overdose, HIV, hepatitis, incarceration and stigma.

Global Addiction 2013 (7 – 10 May 2013) Pisa, Italy

The conference aims to cover all topics relating to the understanding and treatment of all addictive disorders. This includes pre-clinical, neurophysiological mechanisms through diagnostic and treatment strategies to societal guidelines and health economics.

International Harm Reduction Conference 2013 (9 – 12 July 2013) Vilnius, Lithuania

This international conference is a key event for all those interested in harm reduction around the world. The 2013 conference will include high profile Keynote speeches, Plenary Sessions, Major Sessions, Concurrent Sessions, Workshops and a Film Festival.

Discussion forums

Topics being discussed on the forums:

- Recovery UK style: give your view on 'Medications in recovery: Re-orientating drug dependence treatment' and what's new in your country? [discuss here](#)
- Opioid analgesia deaths: [discuss here](#)
- A new tool to assess human rights in compulsory drug detention centres - read more and [discuss here](#)

We would like to encourage our members to use the discussion forums to communicate with other members, discuss hot topics, and share new information, clinical issues and publications on the forums. If you are having trouble logging in to the forums please contact Rebecca Murchie at Rebecca.murchie@idhdp.com

IDHDP communications

Twitter

We are very excited that our followers on Twitter have increased to close to 400. If you are a member of Twitter please search for us at [@idhdp](https://twitter.com/idhdp), or if you do not wish to join Twitter you can check the IDHDP home page to read our latest tweets.

Facebook

By "liking" our Facebook page you will receive regular updates on news articles and publications straight to your newsfeed on Facebook. Please also share this link with your colleagues who are not members of IDHDP.

Increasing IDHDP membership

We're looking to increase our membership:

1. More individual doctors to join us. Please spread the word about IDHDP to your colleagues working in drug treatment, HIV and AIDS, pain and palliative care, and primary care, by directing them to our website for more information and to register, <http://idhdp.com/forums/register.aspx>
2. Get your colleagues in other professions to join the public forums and increase the discussion.
3. Regional Chapters: We would like to encourage our members to discuss and work on local drug policy and health issues with colleagues in regional chapters. We will be holding chapters in these upcoming venues:
 - US, AMERSA conference – 1- 3 November
 - UK, Society for the Study of Addiction – 8-9 November
 - We can connect you to other members in your regions and we may be able to help with arrangements and networking with other organizations that may be able to help.

For further information contact Rebecca Murchie at Rebecca.murchie@idhdp.com

IDHDP now represents doctors from 53 countries! Click [here](#) to see our map of member countries.

With best wishes,

Chris, Holly and Rebecca

IDHDP team

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