

IDHDP Newsletter

Volume 10

January 2013



our aims

Increase the participation of medical doctors in drug policy reform

Dear colleague,

Welcome to the January 2013 issue, particular welcome to our new members and readers.

Highlights:

- British Medical Association (BMA)'s latest report
- Summary of the National AIDS Trust Roundtable meeting
- News
- Membership
- Upcoming events
- New publications on the website
- IDHDP communications

British Medical Associations' report "In depth: Drugs of dependence: The role of medical professionals"

We congratulate Professor Mansfield and the British Medical Association (BMA) for publishing this important report stating clearly the role of the medical profession in the management of people who have problematic drug use.

The objectives are completely in line with those of IDHDP:

- to encourage debate on the most effective approach to preventing and reducing the harms associated with illicit drug use and illicit drug-control policies, based on an independent and objective review of the evidence
- examine the role of the medical profession in preventing and reducing the harms associated with illicit drug use and policies for control of illicit drug use
- encourage debate and dialogue between the medical profession and policy makers, legislators, the police, service providers and academics who have knowledge and expertise in this Area. Read Chris Ford's response to the report [here](#).

The Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies has used the BMA report to give evidence and question "the government's policy of criminalizing all people who take illegal drugs and said they should be treated primarily as if they have a health problem". This has prompted campaigners to call again for a Royal Commission to review drug laws in the UK. Read the full article [here](#)

We believe this is a crucial report, having been written by a general medical association calling for people who use drugs not to be treated as criminals, but as patients. We would like other colleges and medical associations to adopt this report, and we request that you take this report to your colleagues and medical associations and ask them to endorse it and / or write something similar. Please let us know to which organizations you are going to take it. If you have any other suggestions on how to maximize the impact of this important report please contact Rebecca.

The full report can be read [here](#)

National AIDS Trust Roundtable: HIV and Injecting Drug Use (summary)

This was an important day looking at PWID and HIV in UK. The overall aims of the day were to understand the current epidemiology of injecting drug use in the UK and implications for HIV (and other BBV) risk in particular; to assess at this time of significant organisational change, relevant policies, commissioning arrangements and service provision in relation to prevention/harm reduction, BBV diagnosis, and treatment and care and to identify any recommendations for change/improvement in relation to the above. Drug policy was the focus throughout the day, and particularly the implications for those at risk of HIV.

The day started with Dr Vivian Hope, Health Protection Agency presenting on "**Injecting drug use and HIV**" of current trends in injecting drug use in the UK and although it's UK data, it has relevance for other countries.

Next, Dr Adam Bourne, Stigma Researcher, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine presented "**Injection drug use among men who have sex with men (MSM)**", pointing out that, "While use of 'club drugs' (stimulants) has been commonplace among MSM across the world for many years, prevalence of injected drug use had historically remained comparative low. However, emerging data from the UK and the USA suggests that more and more MSM are choosing to inject drugs such as crystal methamphetamine and mephedrone. This is concerning not only because of the increased risk of HIV transmission, but also because many existing drug treatment services are not set-up to meet the needs of this population and are not always aware of appropriate harm reduction techniques for these particular drugs."

Dr. Bourne also wrote a paper on "**Drug use amongst men who have sex with men: Implications for harm reduction**" in HRI's report on the state of harm reduction in 2012.

MSM are a group of people who use drugs and are often not welcomed in traditional drug services. With increasing rates of injecting of drugs unfamiliar to many of us, we need to expand our harm reduction interventions and approaches. This will be a new discussion on the **forum** shortly.

In the news

Guatemala President Claims Drug Reform Would Cut Violence in Half

Guatemala's president has claimed that reforming prohibitionist drug laws would reduce violence in his country by 50 percent, as he presented his plans for drug policy reform at the World Economic Forum. Read the full article [here](#)

New Zealand, legal highs and sensible supply-side policies

Editorial by Kasia Malinowska-Sempruch, Director of Open Society Foundations Global Drug Policy Program, stating that the UK government could learn a lot from New Zealand about how to sensibly control the proliferating supply of so-called "legal highs". Read her commentary [here](#).

Marijuana Legalization Bill Introduced in Hawaii

House Speaker Souki introduced a bill to establish a legal market for businesses to cultivate and sell marijuana to adults 21 and older. Read the full article [here](#)

Thinner Syringes May Reduce Risk of H.I.V.

A study suggests encouraging drug users to use thin syringes which retain less fluid and the virus it may contain. Read the full article [here](#)

High-risk drug practices tighten grip on London gay scene

The use of crystal methamphetamine is on the rise in London's gay scene, according to an editorial in the Lancet. Read the full article [here](#)

Membership

Our membership continues to grow. We now have members in **59 countries!**

We encourage members to tap into this rich database of international experts. If you would like advice on clinical or policy issues, please post on the members discussion forum or send your query to **Rebecca** who will send on to the appropriate experts.

Upcoming events

*When attending conferences and meetings, please spread the word about IDHDP. Feel free to use the **presentation slide** and the **membership flyer**.*

Plotting a New Course – examining the new policy and practice landscape (25 – 26 February 2013), London, UK

The two day course offers a unique opportunity to both hear about how new developments in the UK will impact on alcohol, drugs and tobacco policies and future practice, as well as having the opportunity to consider the immediate practical implications.

Academic and Health Policy Conference on Correctional Health (21 - 22 March 2013), Chicago, Illinois

The Correctional Health Conference provides a forum for researchers, clinicians, administrators, educators, policy makers, and grant funding leaders to network, share evidence, and learn about emerging research and relevant policy updates in the field of correctional health care.

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

This conference is a key event for all those interested in harm reduction around the world. It will include high profile keynote speeches, plenary sessions, major Sessions, concurrent sessions, workshops and a film festival. The theme of the conference is, "The Value/s of Harm Reduction."

Members meeting: *we will hold an IDHDP members' meeting at the conference. Details will follow in the coming months.*

7th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (30 June – 3 July 2013) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The event will be organized by the IAS in partnership with Centre of Excellence for Research in AIDS (CERiA), University of Malaya, a centre established in 2007 to undertake HIV-related research with a particular focus on HIV and substance use and related co-morbidities including tuberculosis and HCV.

IDHDP doctors' meeting alert: *we are planning a doctors' meeting at this event. Details will be forthcoming.*

International City Health 2013 Conference (4 – 5 November 2013), Glasgow, Scotland

This international event will examine current policy and practice in relation to public health in cities. Prof Michel Kazatchkine, IDHDP Chair and UN special envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe, will present the public lecture on Monday, Nov. 4.

Save the date! *Meet IDHDP Patron's Chair, Michel Kazatchkine.*

This is only a selection of events. To view more visit the [website](#).

New Publications on the IDHDP website

New documents uploaded this month (click on the document title to read the full publication):

An Overview of HIV Prevention Interventions for People Who Inject Drugs in Tanzania

This paper describes how the Tanzania AIDS Prevention Program (TAPP), Médecins du Monde France (MdM-F), and other organisations have been at the forefront of addressing HIV/AIDS in Tanzania, implementing a wide array of harm reduction interventions including medication-

assisted treatment , needle and syringe programs , and “sober houses” for residential treatment in the capital, Dar es Salaam, and in Zanzibar.

Drug policy in Indonesia

This briefing paper by IDPC reviews current policies and practices that have been implemented in response to the use of controlled drugs in Indonesia, and highlights some of the key challenges and issues that remain. The paper also offers policy recommendations for addressing those challenges.

The War on Drugs: Promoting stigma and discrimination

This briefing by Count the Costs summarizes "the global war on drugs has been fought for 50 years, without preventing the long-term trend of increasing drug supply and use beyond this failure, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has identified many serious negative “unintended consequences” of the drug war – including the stigma and discrimination faced by a range of populations these costs are distinct from those relating to drug use, stemming as they do from the choice of a punitive enforcement-led approach that, by its nature, criminalizes many users – often the most vulnerable in society"

SMMGP Clinical Update December 2012 - January 2013

This document produced by SMMGP gives an update on current clinical documents for December 2012 - January 2013.

WHO UNODC UNAIDS Technical Guide for countries to set targets for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care for injecting drug users

First published in 2009, this revised document provides technical guidance to countries on monitoring efforts to prevent and treat HIV infection among people who inject drugs (PWID) and for setting ambitious but achievable national targets for scaling up towards universal access.

City Health International Conference 2012

Presentations from the 2012 conference, including David Wilson from World Bank, who said “Urbanization is the biggest threat to humanity,” Dr Graham Foster on HCV, and Dr Owen Bowden-Jones on club drugs, and more.

PEPFAR’s Evolving HIV Prevention Approaches for Key Populations—People Who Inject Drugs, Men Who Have Sex with Men, and Sex Workers: Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities

"To expand country planning of programs to further reduce HIV burden and increase coverage among key populations (KPs), PEPFAR has developed a strategy consisting of technical documents on the prevention of HIV among people who inject drugs (July 2010) and prevention of HIV among men who have sex with men (May 2011), linked with regional meetings and assistance visits to guide the adoption and scale-up of comprehensive packages of evidence-based prevention services for KPs."

Heroin Addiction and Related Clinical Problems

Featured articles include, Quality of Care Provided to Patients Receiving Opioid Maintenance Treatment in Europe: Results from the EQUATOR analysis, Outcomes of opioid-dependence treatment across Europe: identifying opportunities for improvement and more.

Drug trafficking, use, and HIV risk: The need for comprehensive interventions

"Concern over drug trafficking and abuse in Africa is a recent phenomenon. A radical change appears to have taken place about 40 years ago when trafficking and abuse crept into the mainstream society, and there has been a dramatic acceleration of these trends during the past 30 years. Concern regarding abuse of drugs such as heroin and cocaine is even more recent, starting about 25 years ago in some countries and escalating to involve more countries in the past 10 years."

The less than human among us - Society dehumanizes the addicted while ignoring the genetic and environmental factors at play

Editorial by Dr Evan Wood (IDHDP Patron).

Treatment as Prevention: From STOP HIV to STOP HCV

IDHDP Patron Julio Montaner gives an overview of HIV and HCV treatment and prevention.

Determinants of Hepatitis C Virus Treatment Completion and Efficacy in Drug Users Assessed by Meta-analysis

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)-infected drug users (DUs) have largely been excluded from HCV care. This is a systematic review and meta-analysis of the literature on treatment completion and sustained virologic response (SVR) rates in DUs. The effects of different treatment approaches and services to promote HCV care among DUs as well as demographic and viral characteristics are assessed.

New Psychoactive Substances: The need for policy reform

In this report, Youth RISE explores and identifies important recommendations for how to reduce the harms faced by young people who use NPS, including "legal highs" and other unscheduled substances available both online and at local drug paraphernalia shops.

A New Approach to Marijuana in Washington (film)

A short film by Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU) about Washington's initiative 502 (I-502) "on marijuana reform".

Recovery from drug and alcohol dependence: an overview of the evidence

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) Recovery Committee's first report is "the result of an exercise to scope the evidence, or lack thereof, for the many and complex factors that may contribute to recovery from drug or alcohol dependence. The report highlights that recovery from dependence on drugs and alcohol is a complex, and rarely linear process. The journey to overcome dependence, re-integrate into society and achieve a degree of well-being and social integration is highly individual to the person."

The Twin Epidemics of HIV and Drug Use: Innovative Strategies for Healthy Communities

Immediately prior to the opening of the 2012 International AIDS Conference, amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, and the International AIDS Society convened a day-long meeting to review available evidence on effective strategies to combat HIV among people who use drugs. This report summarizes the outcomes of this meeting.

Eye of the Needle: fourth report on surveillance of significant occupational exposures to bloodborne viruses in healthcare workers

The Health Protection Agency has published an updated Eye of the Needle report showing there has been an increase in the number of significant occupational exposures in recent years. Between 2002 and 2011, 4381 significant occupational exposures were reported, increasing from 276 in 2002 to 541 in 2011.

Hepatitis B and C: ways to promote and offer testing to people at increased risk of infection

The guidance encompasses general awareness raising for the population as a whole, for those at increased risk of infection and for healthcare professionals and others providing services for those at increased risk of hepatitis B and C.

Supply, demand and harm reduction strategies in Australian prisons: an update

"This report provides an update of the 2004 study of supply, demand and harm reduction strategies in Australian prisons (Black, Dolan and Wodak, 2004). Since the 2004 report, the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (MCDS) launched the first National Corrections Drug Strategy in 2008, designed to guide the provision of supply, demand and harm reduction strategies in prisons throughout Australia (Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy, 2008)."

IDHDP communications

Twitter

Follow us on [Twitter](#). We now have over **700 followers!** If you are a member of Twitter

please search for us at [@idhdp](#), or if you do not wish to join Twitter, you can check the [IDHDP home page](#) to read our latest tweets.

Facebook

Like the [IDHDP Facebook page](#) to receive updates on your Facebook news feed. This is also a great way to share articles and information with your Facebook friends.

Newsletter

Please send the newsletter on to your colleagues and encourage them to join IDHDP.

Wishing you a very successful 2013!

All the very best,

Chris, Holly and Rebecca

IDHDP, London and New York
W: www.idhdp.com
E: Rebecca.murchie@idhdp.com

