



our aims

increase the participation of  
medical doctors in drug policy reform

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

### Highlights:

- News
- New publications on the website
- Upcoming events
- Membership
- IDHDP communications

### In the news

#### **New Zealand: Psychoactive Substances Bill a 'game-changer'**

A new Psychoactive Substances Bill introduced in New Zealand means legal highs have to be proven safe before they can be sold. Read the full article [here](#)

#### **Methadone may be an imperfect treatment, but it's a necessary one**

Editorial in the Guardian by Dr Roy Roberson (IDHDP member), read [here](#)

#### **Road to Ruin**

Editorial in the Drink and Drugs news by IDHDP advisory board member, Dr Eliot Ross Albers, who says. "The puritanical recovery agenda is stigmatising, marginalising and endangering the health of people who use drugs or have a maintenance script" Read the full editorial [here](#)

#### **Legalised Cannabis Supported By More Than More Than Half Of Britons**

The majority of Britons support a softer stance on cannabis laws, according to a survey by an independent think-tank. Read the article [here](#)

### New Publications on the IDHDP website

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

#### **Transmission of hepatitis C virus among people who inject drugs: viral stability and association with drug preparation equipment**

"Hepatitis C virus (HCV) transmission among people who inject drugs remains a challenging public health problem. We investigated the risk of HCV transmission by analyzing the direct association of HCV with filters, water to dilute drugs, and water containers."

#### **Are major reductions in new HIV infections possible with people who inject drugs? The case for low dead-space syringes in highly affected countries**

"Circumstantial evidence from laboratory studies, mathematical models, ecological studies

and bio behavioural surveys, suggests that injection-related HIV epidemics may be averted or reversed if people who inject drugs (PWID) switch from using high dead-space to using low dead-space syringes."

### **Pharmaceutical Overdose Deaths, United States, 2010**

"Data recently released by the National Center for Health Statistics show drug overdose deaths increased for the 11th consecutive year in 2010. Pharmaceuticals, especially opioid analgesics, have driven this increase. Other pharmaceuticals are involved in opioid overdose deaths, but their involvement is less well characterized. Using 2010 mortality data, we describe the specific drugs involved in pharmaceutical and opioid-related overdose deaths."

### **Mortality among people who inject drugs: a systematic review and meta-analysis**

This report systematically reviews cohort studies of mortality among people who inject drugs, examine mortality rates and causes of death in this group, and identify participant- and study-level variables associated with a higher risk of death.

### **Opioid overdose rates and implementation of overdose education and nasal naloxone distribution in Massachusetts: interrupted time series analysis**

IDHDP member Dr. Alexander Walley, et al's analysis concludes "Opioid overdose death rates were reduced in communities where OEND was implemented. This study provides observational evidence that by training potential bystanders to prevent, recognize, and respond to opioid overdoses, OEND is an effective intervention."

### **New treatment gives hope to East Africa's drug users**

"The United Republic of Tanzania is the first mainland sub-Saharan country to launch a national methadone programme as part of its battle to fight the twin epidemics of heroin addiction and HIV infection"

### **Methadone maintenance treatment in Spain: the success of a harm reduction approach**

"The rapid spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection among people using heroin led to a shift from a drug-free approach to the treatment of opioid dependence to one focused on harm reduction. A substantial change in legislation made it possible to meet public health needs and offer OAMT as part of harm reduction programmes in the public health system, including prisons."

### **Methadone maintenance treatment and mortality in HIV-positive people who inject opioids in China**

The study examines the effect of methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) on mortality in people injecting opioids who receive antiretroviral therapy (ART) for the treatment of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection in China.

### **Implementing methadone maintenance treatment in prisons in Malaysia**

"In Malaysia, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection is highly concentrated among people who inject opioids. For this reason, the country undertook a three-phase roll-out of a methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) programme. In Phase 3, described in this paper, MMT was implemented within prisons and retention in care was assessed."

### **Indonesia situation assessment on amphetamine-type stimulants (2013)**

"The manufacture, trafficking and use of crystalline methamphetamine is now the greatest illicit drug threat facing Indonesia, according to a jointly-published report released today by the National Narcotics Board of Indonesia (BNN) and the UNODC Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme."

### **Unanimous New Jersey Supreme Court Decision Affirms that Drug War Propaganda and Junk Science Provides No Basis for Child Neglect and Abuse Finding Against Pregnant Women**

New Jersey Civil Child Abuse Laws Do Not Authorize State Jurisdiction Over Pregnant Women; Drug Tests Are Not Predictors of Parenting Ability.

### **Addiction to Medicines Consensus Statement January 2013**

"Medicines have an important role in healthcare. However, dependence on prescribed and over-the-counter medicines can occur and can be devastating to those affected and their families. Care is needed in the initiation of any drugs that can lead to dependence and in managing the risk and development of withdrawal symptoms."

### **Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

The report focuses on certain forms of abuses in health-care settings that may cross a threshold of mistreatment that is tantamount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It identifies the policies that promote these practices and existing protection gaps.

### **Towards revision of the UN drug control conventions: Harnessing like-mindedness**

"The article applies an international relations approach, including examples from the UN system in general and other issue areas in particular, to explore how the formation and operation of a group, or groups, of like-minded nations may offer a route towards some form of substantive treaty revision."

### **Upcoming events**

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

### **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."

### **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.

### **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](#).**

## Membership

Our membership continues to grow. We now have members in **62 countries!**

We encourage members to tap into our 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.

## IDHDP communications

### Twitter

Follow us on **Twitter**. We now have over **800 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.

All the very best,

Chris, Holly and Rebecca

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