

IDHDP Newsletter

Volume 14

May 2013



our aims

increase the participation of
medical doctors in drug policy reform

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

Highlights:

- The Negative Impact Of The War On Drugs On Public Health: The Hidden Hepatitis C Epidemic
- Organization of American States' report: The Drug Problem in the Americas
- Support Don't Punish Campaign
- In the News
- New publications on the website
- Upcoming events
- IDHDP communications

IDHDP closure

It is with deep regret that we inform you that we have come to the hard decision to close down IDHDP activities on June 30, 2013. We hope that the work we have done in the last two years will encourage our members and readers to remain active in promoting healthy drug policies. In our June newsletter we will provide you with our suggestions of allied organizations, groups and list serves to participate in. In the meantime, please explore the '[other organisations](#)' section on our website.

Thank you for joining us in the challenge to open up the dialogue on drug policy and health and enabling us to grow from a small group of doctors talking about improving harm reduction and drug policies on a list serve, to a global network of over 270 doctors from 62 countries.

We hope that what we've begun and developed will be carried forward and contribute to real reforms that make a difference in the lives of people who use drugs and the communities in which they live.

The Negative Impact Of The War On Drugs On Public Health: The Hidden Hepatitis C Epidemic, Report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy.

IDHDP thanks the GCDP for their excellent and much-needed report: "[The negative impact of the War on Drugs on Public Health: The hidden hepatitis C epidemic](#)" May 2013

Hepatitis C is an important cause of morbidity and mortality in people who use drugs and it is both preventable and curable. But as this report states globally access to preventative, diagnosis and treatment services is far too low. Of the 16 million people who inject drugs worldwide, approximately 10 million are living with hepatitis C, with rates of more than 90% in countries, where the harshest drug policies are found. Whereas where drug policies are in line with public health goals, they can protect against hepatitis C transmission. Clearly hepatitis C is one of the many negative consequences of the 'war on drugs', which continues to expand. Mass incarceration and punitive approaches prevent people who use drugs from accessing potentially lifesaving services, while the stigma, discrimination and abuses which these

individuals face create high-risk environments for the transmission of hepatitis. The report opens this discussion and not only calls for action but sets out a list of useful recommendations for governments.

To quote IDHDP member Dr Philip Bruggmann, ARUD Zurich, one of the report's key advisors: *"To fight the hepatitis C epidemic among people who use drugs taboos must be broken. Decriminalization of drug use is one of the most important measures to overcome current barriers to hepatitis C care. Current and future HCV medication must be offered at affordable prices worldwide, otherwise treatment will never unfold its preventative potential. These and further important points are addressed in the 3rd report of the Global Commission on Drug policy."*

IDHDP joins the Global Commission on Drug Policy in calling for leadership in ending drug policies that fuel HCV and ignore the medical needs of people who use drugs at the expense of us all. Read the full [IDHDP statement](#)

Organization of American States' report: The Drug Problem in the Americas

A groundbreaking high level discussion of what alternatives to drug prohibition may look like. Among the report's conclusions is the need for a "public health approach" to address drug problems - and that "the decriminalization of drug use needs to be considered as a core element in any public health strategy."

Read the report [here](#)

Support Don't Punish Campaign

The heightened risks faced by people who inject drugs can no longer be ignored. It is time to leave behind harmful politics, ideology and prejudice. It is time to prioritise the health and welfare of people who use drugs, and their families and communities.

Support. Don't Punish is a global advocacy campaign to raise awareness about the need to stop criminalising ('punishing') people for using drugs. The campaign aims to change laws and policies which impede access to harm reduction interventions, increase awareness about the need for greater funding for essential services for people who use drugs, engender public support for drug reform and to promote respect for the human rights of people who use drugs.

Sign up now: Click [here](#) to participate in the SUPPORT. DON'T PUNISH. campaign. And get your friends and colleagues to sign also.

Day of Action: 26 June 2013 - A key focus of the campaign is 26 June 2013 - which is the UN International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, but also UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. On this day, groups of supporters will gather at key cities for a coordinated 'day of action.' Supporters will be provided with Support. Don't Punish. t-shirts and Richard Nixon masks, and will pose for the media nearby key landmarks in each city. If you would like to attend this day of action and to support the campaign register on the [website](#)

In the news

[Ketamine shows significant therapeutic benefit in people with treatment-resistant depression](#)

The largest ketamine clinical trial to-date, led by researchers from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City concluded that "Patients with treatment-resistant major depression saw dramatic improvement in their illness after treatment with ketamine."

Washington State to release draft rules for legal marijuana

Washington State is releasing preliminary draft rules legal marijuana covering an array of topics.

Mother Saves Her Son From Overdose Thanks To Pilot Program

"In Massachusetts, doctors are crediting a new pilot program with a recent drop in some drug overdose deaths."

New publications on the website

MEDICAL PRACTICE

Why are we still stuck around benzos and how can guidance help us?!

Dr Chris Ford's presentation at the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) on 16 May 2013.

Guidance for the use and reduction of misuse of benzodiazepines prescribing and other hypnotics and anxiolytics in general practice

An executive summary by Dr Chris Ford and Dr Fergus Law, a guidance for general practitioners on how to reduce the misuse of benzodiazepine prescribing. Full report is in the final stage of publication. For further information contact [Chris](#).

DRUG POLICY

Getting To Tomorrow: A Report on Canadian Drug Policy

This report by the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition "documents the failing role that current federal drug policies play in supporting safety and health and draws attention to the acute need for an improved system of supports for people who use drugs including harm reduction."

Illicit Drug Data Report 2011-12

The report is produced by Australian Crime Commission (ACC) "and is recognised as one of the most valuable tools for law enforcement agencies, policy and decision makers, research bodies and other stakeholders in developing strategies to combat the threat posed by illicit drugs. It provides a statistical overview of illicit drug arrests and seizures as well as profiling the current situation, national impact and the emerging trends and threats of illicit drugs in Australia."

Drug prevention interventions targeting minority ethnic populations: issues raised by 33 case studies

This paper produced by EMCDDA "contains the results of a study that examined drug prevention interventions for minority ethnic populations in 29 European countries. A total of 33 interventions were reported to the study and the issues they raise are presented and discussed in the paper. The results will inform the EMCDDA's plans for 2013–15 in terms of monitoring drug prevention interventions particularly in three areas: data collection, design and quality, and the dissemination of knowledge."

The Global Drug Prohibition Regime: Half a Century of Failed Policymaking?

A discussion forum held at the CEU in Budapest. Participants: Sandeep Chawla (Deputy Executive Director and Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime UNODC), Niamh Eastwood (Executive Director of Release), Martin Jelsma (TNI Drugs and Democracy Programme Coordinator), Kasia Malinowska-Sempruch (Director of OSF Global Drug Policy Program) and Wolfgang Reinicke (Dean, School of Public Policy, CEU).

The National Drug Related Deaths Database (Scotland) Report 2011

"This is the third report from the National Drug Related Deaths Database (NDRDD) for Scotland and reports on the calendar year 2011. This is supplementary to the previously published, in August 2012, national reporting of drug-related deaths in Scotland by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and reports on a subset of the overall drug-related deaths."

Drugs: Education, Prevention, and Policy Jun 2013, Volume 20, Number 3 (2013)

The Use of Evidence in Policy Making This edition has interesting articles on international drug policies, including an excellent editorial by Alex Stevens and Alison Ritter titled: "How can and do empirical studies influence drug policies? Narratives and complexity in the use of evidence in policy making"; "Barriers to the influence of evidence on policy: Are politicians the problem?" by Susanne MacGregor, which although is about the UK has lots for all on how politicians view the drugs problem and the relative influence on them of values and evidence. Many politicians see drugs as a toxic issue, one best avoided and where scientific evidence and calm appraisal have been subordinated to electoral concerns; "Confronting the challenges of conducting a CBA of cannabis policies", "Drug user dynamics: A compartmental model of drug users for scenario analyses" and many more.

Advocacy

Cracking on: A harm reduction report

This report from The Bawnogue Youth and Family Support Group, Ireland aims "to inform a universal harm reduction strategy for Clondalkin specifically in response to new and emerging trends in crack cocaine use. It is hoped that a clearer picture will emerge about the qualities of the most effective form of crack pipe to distribute as part of a harm reduction strategy."

An Exit Strategy for the Failed War on Drugs: A Federal Legislative Guide

This comprehensive report by Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) "contains 75 broad and incremental recommendations for federal legislative reforms related to civil rights, deficit reduction, law enforcement, foreign policy, sentencing and re-entry, effective drug treatment, public health, and drug prevention education."

War on drugs Video: Crack Babies: A Tale From the Drug Wars

"Retro Report: In the 1980s, many government officials, scientists and journalists warned that the country would be plagued by a generation of "crack babies." They were wrong."

HIV/AIDS, HCV and TB

The mass criminalization of people who use drugs and Hepatitis C: what can we do about countries' national policies that are silently killing people who use drugs?

IDHDP presentation given by Dr Juliet Bressan at the Global Addiction and Europad Joint Conference 2013.

The Future of Hepatitis C - A cure for all?

Graham R Foster (Professor of Hepatology QMUL) presentation at the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) on 16 May 2013

Other newsletters and websites of interest

IDPC May Alert

International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) May alert includes their activities, publications and news.

DDN MAGAZINE (May 2013)

This issue from Drink and Drugs News (DDN) focuses on "The right support: from training to campaigning."

German Society for Addiction Medicine Newsletter (May)

The German Society for Addiction Medicine March Newsletter (in German)

Upcoming events

When attending conferences and meetings, please spread the word about IDHDP. Feel free to use

IDHDP's [presentation slide](#) and the [membership flyer](#) in your presentations and conversations.

Harm Reduction International Conference + IDHDP workshop and members' presentations

The conference will be held in **Vilnius, Lithuania on 9 to 12 June 2013**. It is a key event for all those interested in harm reduction around the world. It will include high profile keynote speeches, plenary, major, and concurrent sessions, workshops and a film festival. The theme of the conference is, "The Value/s of Harm Reduction."

IDHDP Workshop: Dr. Sharon Stancliff (IDHDP Advisory Board) and Holly Catania (IDHDP Director) are conducting a workshop titled, "A Roadmap for Overdose Prevention Policies: Where do you fit?" on June 12 from 14:00 – 15:30. It aims to provide pragmatic tools for doctors and concerned others to engage in advocacy with policy makers in their communities.

IDHDP Members' who are Presenting at the Conference:

- Michel Kazatchkine (chair): Regional track - Drug policy: open dialogue – Monday 10 June, 15:30
- Dr Mary Hepburn: Glasgow women's reproductive health service: reproductive healthcare for women who use alcohol and other drugs in Glasgow, Scotland – Wednesday 12 June, 14:00

IDHDP Members' who have Posters at the Conference:

- Dr Beatrice Stambul: Low Threshold Hepatology Consultation, Fibrosan Testing and Treatment in Aix En Provence Drug Treatment Center
- Dr Doaa Moustafa Oraby: Hepatitis C: The Missed Opportunity in Harm Reduction Interventions in Egypt (presented by Holly Catania in Dr. Oraby's absence)

Let us know if you are attending the conference, and the titles and times of any papers and/or posters you are presenting and we will post the information on the website for other IDHDP members. Please send the information to [Rebecca](#).

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

The event is being organized by the International AIDS Society in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Research in AIDS (CERiA), University of Malaya.

Sessions on HIV/AIDS and drug policy (*select title for further information*):

- [Evidence-Based Drug Policies for an Effective HIV Response](#)
- [Community Forum: 'Building Partnerships between the Community and Scientists to Strengthen the Response to HIV'](#)
- [IAS Members' Meeting at IAS 2013: 'None Left Behind' – the IAS's Work with Key Affected Populations](#)
- [High Level Panel on Drug Policies and Public Health](#)

3rd Int. Symposium on Hepatitis Care in Substance Users. (5 - 6 September 2013), Munich, Germany

The symposium is organized by the International Network on Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU) to cover the latest advances on the management and treatment of viral hepatitis among people who use drugs.

Jubilee Conference ISGF (9 -13 September 2013), Zurich, Switzerland

The Swiss Research Institute for Public Health and Addiction at Zurich University's (ISGF) international conference will focus on the current major problems in the orientation of addiction research.

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 patron and UN special envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe, will present the public lecture on Monday, Nov. 4. Chris Ford will also give a presentation “Urbanization: the new challenge for addiction and how primary care can help.”

Save the date! Join us there and meet Michel Kazatchkine.

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

IDHDP communications

Twitter

Thank you to all who have been following us on Twitter. We are thrilled to have over **1050 followers** and have learned much from those we follow!

Newsletter

Our next and final newsletter will be in June.

All the very best,

Chris, Holly and Rebecca

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