

PHARMA HEALTH CLUB

SAFE USE OF MEDICINES FOR BETTER HEALTH

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INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE & ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is a United Nations International Day against drug abuse and the illegal drug trade. It is observed annually on 26 June, since 1988, a date chosen to commemorate Lin Zexu's dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong, just before the First Opium War in China.[1]

The United Nations' (UN) International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is organized to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society. This day is supported by individuals, communities and various organizations all over the world.

According to the UNODC, nearly 200 million people are using illicit drugs such as cocaine,

cannabis, hallucinogens, opiates and sedative hypnotics worldwide. In December 1987 the UN General Assembly decided to observe June 26 as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The UN was determined to help create an international society free of drug abuse. This resolution recommended further action with regard to the report and conclusions of the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Following the resolution, the years 1991 to 2000 were heralded as the "United Nations Decade Against Drug Abuse". In 1998 the UN General Assembly adopted a political declaration to address the global drug problem. The declaration expresses UN members' commitment to fighting the problem.[3]

● **What is Drug Abuse?**

- Drug abuse is an extreme desire to obtain, and use, increasing amounts of one or more substances. Drug abuse is a generic term for the abuse of any drug, including alcohol and cigarettes.[4]
- Drug abuse is not the same thing as drug dependence or drug addiction. Drug dependence or addiction indicates a psychological or physical dependence on the drug to function. Drug dependence requires the symptoms of withdrawal if the drug is discontinued, whereas drug abuse does not.[4]

● **Who could be the victim of Drug Abuse?**

Anyone can become a drug abuser. Drug abuse information indicates that all ethnicities, ages, social groups and genders can have drug abuse problems. Drug abuse is not a character flaw but rather a medical condition that has developed over time.[4]

● **Risk factors for developing drug abuse problems:**

The National Institute on Drug Abuse indicates the following Risk factors for developing drug abuse problems (typically seen in adolescence):[4]

- Unstable home environment, often due to drug abuse or mental illness of the parent
- Poor relationship with parents
- Inadequate supervision over adolescent's activities
- Use of drugs by friends / peers Permissive attitude towards their own drug use and the drug use of the adolescent
- Behavioral problems combined with poor parenting
- Poor achievement in school
- Apparent ambivalence or approval of drug use in the school, peer group or community
- Availability of drugs in the community, peer group or home

● **What Drugs are Abused widely in the World?**

Drug abuse can be abuse of any chemical substance including cigarettes, inhalants, alcohol and others. Drug abuse information shows both legal and illegal drugs can lead to drug abuse. In short, any drug that can be used can also be a drug of abuse.[4]

- Categories of drugs commonly seen in drug abuse cases include:[4]
- Legal, over-the-counter - Includes drugs like alcohol and cigarettes

- Legal, prescription - includes drugs like methadone, oxycodone and Zolpidem
- Chemical - includes drugs like inhalants, nail remover
- Illegal - includes drugs like marijuana, opiates (like heroin), stimulants (like methamphetamine and cocaine) and hallucinogenic (like acid)

● **What Happens to Your Brain When You Take Drugs – Mechanics of Drug Abuse?**

Drugs are chemicals that tap into the brain's communication system and disrupt the way nerve cells normally send, receive, and process information. There are at least two ways that drugs are able to do this: by imitating the brain's natural chemical messengers, and/or overstimulating the "reward circuit" of the brain.[5]

Some drugs, such as marijuana and heroin, have a similar structure to chemical messengers, called neurotransmitters, which are naturally produced by the brain. Because of this similarity, these drugs are able to "fool" the brain's receptors and activate nerve cells to send abnormal messages.[5]

Other drugs, such as cocaine or methamphetamine, can cause the nerve cells to release abnormally large amounts of natural neurotransmitters, or prevent the normal recycling of these brain chemicals, which is needed to shut off the signal between neurons. This disruption produces a greatly amplified message that ultimately disrupts normal communication patterns.[5]

Nearly all drugs, directly or indirectly, target the brain's reward system by flooding the circuit with dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter present in regions of the brain that control movement, emotion, motivation, and feelings of pleasure. The overstimulation of this system, which normally responds to natural behaviors that are linked to survival (eating, spending time with loved ones, etc), produces euphoric effects in response to the drugs. This reaction sets in motion a pattern that "teaches" people to repeat the behavior of abusing drugs.[5]

● **Symptoms of Drug Abuse: [6]**

Cigarettes

- A distinctive smell on the breath and clothing
- Cigarettes and lighter in his or her possession
- Cigarette butts outside a bedroom window or in other odd places around the home

Alcohol

- Beverages missing from the home storage cabinet Alcohol or mouthwash (used to cover up alcohol) breath
- Hangover symptoms (nausea, vomiting, or headache), if recently used

Marijuana

- Sweet smell on clothing or bloodshot eyes, if recently used, and frequent use of eye drops to reduce the redness
- Drug paraphernalia (pipes) in his or her possession
- Carelessness in grooming, increased fatigue, and changes in eating and sleeping patterns, if using regularly

Inhalants

- Chemical breath, red eyes, or stains on clothing or face, if recently used
- Soaked rags or empty aerosol containers in the trash

Club drugs

- Similar to acne
- Small bottles with liquid or powder in his or her possession

Stimulants

- Persistent runny nose and nosebleeds, injection marks on arms or other parts of the body, or long periods of time without sleep
- Possession of drug paraphernalia, such as syringes, spoons with smoke stains, small pieces of glass, and razor blades

LSD or other hallucinogens

- Trance-like appearance with dilated pupils, if recently used
- Small squares of blotter paper (sometimes stamped with cartoon characters) or other forms of the drug in his or her possession

Heroin

- Very small pupils and a drowsy or relaxed look, if recently used
- Possession of injecting supplies, called an outfit or rig, that may consist of a spoon or bottle cap, syringe, tourniquet, cotton, and matches

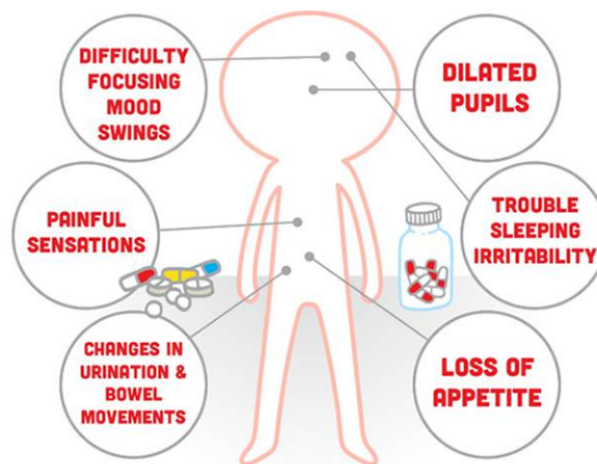
Anabolic steroids

- An unpleasant breath odor
- Mood changes, including increased aggression
- Changes in physical appearance that can't be attributed to expected patterns of growth and development
- Possession of medicines or syringes

Other general signs

- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Changes in appetite or weight loss
- Changes in dress
- Loss of interest and motivation
- Hoarseness, wheezing, or persistent cough

Treatment of Drug Abuse: [8]



Detoxification

If medical care is required to manage withdrawal symptoms then this is sometimes called detoxification or detox.

Detox usually is done under the care of a doctor, because withdrawal can be dangerous without medical care. A doctor may prescribe medicines to help with withdrawal symptoms.

Therapy

Treatment for a drug problem usually involves one or more types of therapy.

- In **Group Therapy**, talk about recovery with other people who are trying to quit.
- In **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**, learn to change the thoughts and actions that make more likely to use drugs.
- With **Motivational Interviewing (MI)**, resolve mixed feelings about quitting and getting treatment.
- **Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET)** uses motivational interviewing find motivation to quit and get started toward recovery.
- **Couples or family counseling** can help to stop using drugs, stay drug-free, and improve relationships with partner and family.

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