



Background Paper

Committee: Commission on Narcotic drugs

Topic B: Addressing the Opioid Crisis in the World

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Opioids integrate the components of the poppy seed, containing properties that exert an action with the hemispheres of the brain. Non-medical use can lead to dependence on this narcotic and other health issues, which can have devastating effects. About “62 million people used opioids in 2019 and 36.3 million suffered from a substance use disorder”(Opioid overdose.). The opioid crisis has posed a major challenge to the world, with high mortality and morbidity rates related to the pandemic, with many cases documented in North America, as well as more difficult situations developing around the world. Since 2015, the Informal Science Network (ISN) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have struggled to bring awareness about the concerns regarding addictive medicines.

The cases of opioid overdoses and deaths have increased dramatically in recent years in several countries causing an "opioid crisis". Opioids have been used to treat chronic pain; however, they can become highly addictive, which has led to increased consumption of illicit opioids. The first opioid crisis was in the late 1990s. This happened because the pharmaceutical companies assured the medical population that the opioid was not addictive, and the healthcare field began prescribing it in large magnitudes.

The death rate in the 1990s grew 70% in 2019. There were nearly 50,000 opioid overdose deaths in 2019, 73% from synthetic opioids. This crisis mostly affects Canada and the United States. Between 2010 and 2018, overdose deaths from the drug in the U.S. increased by 120 percent; while more than 9000 people died in Canada in 2016 alone. Most countries in Europe also saw an increase in opioid deaths between 2004 and 2016. Opioid consumption depends on the region, as in the east the proportion of western and northern purchases (from countries such as the Netherlands, Finland, and France) is low, while in the UK the proportion increased in 2016. and 2018. In 2016, the WHO/UNODC Drug Dependence Treatment and Care Program created "Stop Overdose Safely (S-O-S)" to expand information about the risk of overdose. This program was implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Ukraine. 40,000 naloxone kits were given, 14,00 took part in this project and 90% used naloxone. This project proved to be accepted by people who use narcotics and also works for health care and law enforcement personnel.

Working together as a community can help combat this global crisis. Opioid overdoses are drastically around the world We must think about solutions, as well as consider how to prevent them from occurring. Safe, effective, and non-addictive strategies to manage chronic pain should be thought of. Recommendations should be made to focus on new and innovative technologies and medications for the treatment of opioid use disorders. Improving intervention to prevent and reverse overdose to save lives and support recovery is necessary.

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