



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC  
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL

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DRUG DEPENDENCE

Progress Report by the Regional Director

1. INTRODUCTION

The Regional Committee at its twenty-fourth session adopted resolution WPR/RC24.R8 which requested the Regional Director:

(a) "to obtain from Member States information on the nature, extent of drug dependence and the availability of treatment and rehabilitation centres in their respective countries;"

(b) "to stimulate and develop activities in the field of the control of drug abuse and drug dependence;"

(c) "to explore further the possibility of inter-regional cooperation with the South-East Asia Regional Office after completion of the pilot project and to submit to the Committee at its twenty-fifth session a report on the progress made."

2. ACTION TAKEN

2.1 Two consultants visited Malaysia and, after reviewing available information, made recommendations for the development of a training programme which could eventually also serve other countries in the Region. Steps are now being taken to try to arrange the necessary training of national staff. Due to other commitments, one of the consultants was unable to fulfil a similar mission to the Philippines but a replacement is being found and it is expected that the mission will be accomplished later in 1974. Financial assistance was provided by the United States Government and the Aw Boon Haw Foundation of Hong Kong.

2.2 To develop these activities further within the Region, arrangements are being made to recruit a technical officer with expertise in this field in 1974.

2.3 Support has been obtained from the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) for the establishment of a treatment centre in the Republic of Viet-Nam. Four fellowships have been provided, a consultant is being recruited, and UNFDAC has indicated that it is likely to assist with the provision of materials recommended by the consultant.

2.4 Information on drug dependence activities has been exchanged with the South-East Asia Regional Office of WHO. Cooperation has been agreed on and, as a first step, it is expected that two participants from countries in the Western Pacific Region will be invited to attend a seminar in the South-East Asian Region in late 1974.

2.5 A questionnaire was prepared and sent to countries and territories in the Western Pacific Region. This was designed to obtain information on the extent and type of drug dependence and the nature and adequacy of available service. The findings are given in section 3.

### 3. QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

Twenty-three completed questionnaires were received, one country was unable to supply any information, the origin of one questionnaire could not be identified and five countries did not reply.

The analysis of the replies is given in Annex 1. In summary, this indicates that:

(a) Drug dependence (excluding alcohol) is a major problem in two countries, a moderate problem in seven, and a minor or negligible problem in fourteen. In terms of population represented by the responses, 25.4% lived in countries with a major or moderate problem, which was mostly thought to be increasing. Elsewhere it was regarded as static or decreasing.

(b) Alcohol was the most commonly used drug and sixteen countries, representing 67% of the population, regard alcohol consumption as a major or moderate problem.

(c) Thereafter, the most commonly used drugs were cannabis and opiates, usually illegally imported or locally produced, followed by sedatives and amphetamines, which were most often diverted from legal channels or illegally imported.

(d) With one or two exceptions, all the above drugs (excluding alcohol) were under some form of legal restriction.

(e) The most common users were 20 to 29 year old males from middle class urban areas, there being more difference in the type of users by country than by drug.

(f) Most countries with a major or moderate drug problem had special facilities for the detection, treatment and follow-up of drug abusers, but few considered these adequate.

(g) The types of assistance most frequently mentioned as required were: epidemiological studies and information on trends and treatment; training of medical and social personnel; health education of the public.

#### 4. PROPOSED FUTURE ACTION

In order to continue the collection of epidemiological information, to assist the design of national programmes and to coordinate the work of short-term consultants advising in particular sub-fields, it is proposed to continue the post of intercountry officer through 1977. In 1976 and 1977, an additional provision has been made for consultant months so that assistance may be provided in specialized areas within the drug abuse field.

In late 1974, a working group on measures for the prevention and control of drug abuse and dependence is expected to be held. This will be used to advise the Regional Director on the strategy the Region should follow. This working group will not be repeated in 1975 but one on health education programmes for young people concerning drug abuse will be held. In 1976, a working group on early intervention programmes in drug abuse is proposed, and in 1977, a further working group on health education programmes for young people concerning drug abuse.

EXTENT OF DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM AND DRUGS ABUSED (EXCLUDING ALCOHOL)

IMPORTANCE OF DRUG ABUSE			Drugs abused less commonly	Drugs abused commonly
Severity of problem	Problem increasing/diminishing	Objective data available		
<b>A. Major*</b>				
Laos	Static	No	Sedative, amphetamine, hallucinogen, volatile solvent	Cannabis, opiate
Republic of Viet-Nam	Static	No	Sedative, amphetamine	Opiate
<b>B. Moderate*</b>				
American Samoa	Increasing	Yes	Sedative, amphetamine, hallucinogen, cocaine, opiate	Cannabis
Australia	Increasing	Yes	Sedative, amphetamine, hallucinogen, opiate	Cannabis
Guam	-	Yes	Sedative, amphetamine, hallucinogen, cocaine, volatile solvent	Cannabis, opiate
Malaysia	Increasing	Yes	Sedative, amphetamine	Cannabis, opiate
New Caledonia	Increasing	No	Sedative, amphetamine, opiate	Cannabis, hallucinogen
New Zealand	Increasing	Yes	Amphetamine, cocaine	Cannabis, opiate, sedative, hallucinogen
Singapore	Static	No	Amphetamine	Cannabis, opiate, sedative
<b>C. Minor*</b>				
Japan	Diminishing	Yes	Sedative, amphetamine, cannabis, volatile solvent, hallucinogen, opiate	
Khmer Republic	Static	No	Sedative, cannabis, opiate	Sedative
New Hebrides	Static	-		
Papua New Guinea	Increasing	No	Sedative, cannabis, opiate	
Macao	Static	Yes	Sedative, hallucinogen	Opiate
Republic of Korea	Diminishing	No	Sedative, cannabis, opiate	
Western Samoa	Static	No	Amphetamine	
<b>D. Non-existent*</b>				
British Solomon Islands Protectorate	-	No	- none -	- none -
Brunei	-	No	Sedative, cannabis, opiate	
Cook Islands	-	No	- none -	
French Polynesia	-	No	- none -	
Fiji	-	No	Sedative, cannabis, opiate	
Gilbert and Ellice Islands	-	No	- none -	
Tonga	-	No	- none -	

\*Population (millions)

Major ..... 22.1 (11%)  
 Moderate ..... 28.6 (14.4%)  
 Minor ..... 146.8 (74%)  
 Non-existent .... 1.1 (0.6%)

Total 198.6 (100%)

USE AND SOURCE OF DRUG GROUPS

Drug group	Drug used		Source of drug*			Drug is not legally restricted*
	Less commonly	Commonly	Illicit importation	Illicit local production	Diversion from legal sources	
	Number of Countries					
Cannabis	6	8	8	8	-	1
Opiates	8	8	12	3	5	0
Sedatives	14	3	7	-	10	0
Amphetamines	11	0	6	1	4	2
Hallucinogen	6	2	7	2	-	1
Cocaine	3	0	1	-	1	0
Volatile solvents	3	0	-	-	2	7
Others (paint, etc.)	1	1	-	-	-	1
Khat	0	0	-	-	-	2

\* Few countries gave complete details

MAIN USERS OF DRUGS

DRUG GROUP	Age (years)			Male	Female	Social class			Urban	Rural
	10-19	20-29	30+			Upper	Middle	Lower		
	Number of countries									
Cannabis	5	10	2	12	6	5	8	8	11	4
Opiate	7	11	6	13	6	6	10	8	14	3
Sedative	4	9	9	13	12	8	12	6	14	1
Amphetamine	5	10	4	10	7	5	9	4	11	1
Hallucinogens	5	8	1	7	4	3	7	3	8	1
Cocaine	1	3	0	3	1	1	3	1	3	1
Volatile solvents	2	0	1	3	0	0	2	0	3	0
Other	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	0	2	1
TOTAL	30	52	23	63	37	29	53	30	66	12

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS MEANS OF COMBATING DRUG ABUSE

	Very effective	Fairly effective	No rating given
	Number of countries		
Legal control of drug traffic	15	6	2
Efficient treatment and after-care of drug abusers	9	8	6
Instruction in schools	8	8	7
Community action groups in affected areas	7	7	9
Education of public through mass media	6	11	5
Social workers concentrating on at-risk groups	5	8	10
Involvement of religious bodies	0	14	9

## RESOURCES AND FACILITIES FOR DETECTION, TREATMENT AND AFTER-CARE OF DRUG ABUSERS

COUNTRY	Resources for detection		Treatment facilities		After-care facilities	
	Medical	Non-medical	Present	Adequacy*	Present	Adequacy
<b>A. With major problem</b>						
Laos	Yes	-	Yes	Suff.	Plan	-
Republic of Viet-Nam	Yes	-	Yes	N. suff.	Yes	Insuff.
<b>B. With moderate problem</b>						
American Samoa		none	Yes	N. suff.	Yes	N. suff.
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	N. suff.	Yes	N. suff.
Guam	Yes	-	Yes	Insuff.	-	Insuff.
Malaysia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Insuff.	Yes	Insuff.
New Caledonia		none	Yes	Insuff.	Yes	Suff.
New Zealand	Yes	Yes	Yes	Suff.	Yes	Insuff.
Singapore	Yes	Yes	Yes	N. suff.	Yes	N. suff.
<b>C. With minor problem</b>						
Japan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Suff.	Yes	Suff.
Khmer Republic		none	Yes	N. suff.		none
New Hebrides		none	Yes	-		none
Papua New Guinea		none	Yes	Suff.	Yes	Suff.
Macao	Yes	Yes	Yes	N. suff.	Yes	N. suff.
Republic of Korea		none	Yes	Suff.		none
Western Samoa		-		-		-
<b>D. With no problem</b>						
British Solomon Islands Protectorate		none	Yes	Suff.		none
Brunei		none		none		-
Cook Islands		none		none		none
French Polynesia		none		none		none
Fiji		none		none	Yes	Suff.
Gilbert and Ellice Islands		none		none		none
Tonga		none	Yes	Suff.		none

\* Suff. = Sufficient

N. suff. = Nearly sufficient

Insuff. = Insufficient



## PROBLEM OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Severity of problem	Population (millions)
A. <u>Major</u>  Fiji, Guam, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea	6.2 (3%)
B. <u>Moderate</u>  American Samoa, Australia, British Solomon Islands Pro- tectorate, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Japan, Khmer Republic, Singapore, Tonga	127.1 (64%)
C. <u>Minor</u>  Laos, Malaysia, Macao, Republic of Viet-Nam, Western Samoa	33.2 (17%)
D. <u>Non-existent</u>  Brunei, Republic of Korea	32.1 (16%)
T O T A L	198.6 (100%)