

Dependency Freedom Foundation Agrees That Alcohol And Tobacco Are By Far The Biggest Threat To Human Welfare

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Dependency Freedom Foundation has compiled the best, most up-to-date source of information on alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and the burden of death and disease. It shows that in 2018 alcohol and tobacco use between them cost the human population more than a quarter of a billion disability-adjusted life years, with illicit drugs costing a further tens of millions.

The largest health burden from substance use was attributable to tobacco smoking and the smallest was attributable to illicit drugs. Global estimates suggest that nearly one in seven adults (15.2%) smoke tobacco and one in five adults report at least one occasion of heavy alcohol use in the past month.

Compared with the rest of the world, Central, Eastern, and Western Europe recorded consistently higher alcohol consumption per capita (11.61, 11.98 and 11.09 litres, respectively) and a higher percentage of heavy consumption amongst drinkers (50.5%, 48.2%, and 40.2%, respectively). The same European regions also recorded the highest prevalence of tobacco smoking (Eastern Europe 24.2%, Central Europe 23.7%, and Western Europe 20.9%).

In contrast, use of illicit drugs was far less common. Fewer than one in twenty people were estimated to use cannabis in the past year, and much lower estimates were observed for amphetamines, opioids and cocaine. Hotspots included the US, Canada, and Australasia. The US and Canada had one of the highest rates of cannabis, opioid, and cocaine dependency (748.7 [694.8, 812.3], 650.0 [574.5, 727.3], and 301.2 [269.3, 333.7] per 100,000 people, respectively). Australasia (Australia and New Zealand) had the highest prevalence of amphetamine dependence (491.5 per 100,000 people [441.4, 545.5]), as well as high rates of cannabis, opioid and cocaine use dependence (693.7 [648.1, 744.4], 509.9 [453.7, 577.8], and 160.5 [136.4, 187.1] per 100,000 people, respectively).

Some countries and regions (e.g., Africa, Caribbean and Latin America, Asia regions) have little or no data on substance use and associated health burden. These are typically low or middle income countries that frequently have punitive drug policies, and may experience serious political and social unrest. These countries need enhanced monitoring because they are at risk of rapid escalation in substance use and related health burden.

The report uses data mainly obtained from the World Health Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. The authors note that there are important limitations to the data, especially for illicit drugs, but believe that putting all this information in one place will make it easier for governments and international agencies to develop policies to combat substance use.

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For more information about Dependency Freedom Foundation, contact the company here:Dependency Freedom Foundation603-782-2100Manchester, NH 03103

Dependency Freedom Foundation

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