



HTU MUN

TOPIC GUIDE



**The Legality Of The Medical And
Recreational Use Of Illicit Drugs**



Topic Overview

The usage of drugs manipulates the pleasure and reward system in the brain to achieve some benefit. Brains are wired to associate life-sustaining activities such as eating, sleeping, sex with pleasure or reward. Drugs modify that wiring and play with our feelings of pleasure, as well as our movement, emotion, thinking and motivation. Some drugs can have up to ten times the impact of natural behaviours in triggering our pleasure and reward centre. This intense response encourages repeated use of a drug. Unfortunately, repeated use, especially in high doses, is often associated with significant harm. If the brain is repeatedly exposed to a drug, it may go through changes in order to restore balance. Whether it's a psychological benefit or treating an addiction to one drug with the help of another, several studies document the potential medicinal effects of otherwise illegal drugs.

If you extend that logic of what happened after the Prohibition era to cannabis, ecstasy, and similar drugs, you won't end up with the violence and fear traditionally associated with drug deals and so on. Even better, drugs can be regulated so that everyone knows what he or she is getting. With federal regulation, doses could be standardized, and issues with quality could easily be followed up. If you knew that a certain brand would affect you for a certain amount of time, you could plan accordingly.

Countries Involved

USA: The use of illegal drugs has been a long-standing problem in American society, a problem that has taken on a particular urgency in the last 30 years. In the early 1960s, a presidential commission stated: "The concern and the distress of the American people over the national problem of drug abuse is expressed every day in the newspapers, magazines, scientific journals, public forums and in the home. It is a serious and many-faceted problem" (President's Advisory Commission on Narcotics and Drug Abuse, 1963:1). In 1971, President Nixon called drugs, especially heroin, America's public enemy number one. The 1980s saw the emergence of cocaine, particularly crack cocaine, as a new focus of concern. After President George Bush's televised address in September



1989 (his first as President) on a national drug control strategy, 64 percent of respondents to a New York Times–CBS poll rated drugs as the nation's number one problem (New York Times, 1990). Respondents to such surveys during that period typically rated crime and AIDS as the number two and number three problems—both of which are associated with drugs. As one measure of importance attached to this issue, in fiscal 1992 the federal government spent \$12 billion on anti drug efforts, and state and local agencies together spent roughly the same amount (White House, 1992).

UK: Britain is now the drugs capital of Europe, with higher levels of cocaine and amphetamine abuse than anywhere else in the EU. Cocaine use is rising faster than in any other country while cannabis use is among the highest. According to the EU survey, 6.7 out of every 1,000 people aged 15 to 64 in the UK are 'problem' drug users - meaning they inject drugs or have long-term cocaine, opiate or amphetamine habits.

Canada: Drug use and abuse in Canada is a problem that not only ruins the lives of the users and their families, but also costs taxpayers \$22.8 billion per year. This cost is from treatment for drug abusers, as well as hiring additional law enforcement and equipment. With drug trafficking and production in Canada, the opportunity for its citizens to purchase these drugs and abuse them is extremely high. Despite the amount of illegal drugs in Canada, statistics have shown that drug use has been declining since 2006. On the 17th October 2019, Canada legalized recreational pot. Now, you would think that people will start buying their weed legally, however, statistics show that 40% of Canadian marijuana users still buy it illegally.

China: The introduction of opium, marijuana, heroin, and cocaine is the most noticeable change in the Chinese society. In 1995, there were about 520,000 reported drug users in China and the rate of increase was about 200 percent. During the 1990 Strictly Against Illegal Drug Campaign (Yan Da), the Chinese government implemented a compulsory detoxification plan and a Community Drug Rehabilitation Camp strategy to deal with the diverse aspects of the illegal drug control.



Timeline of the War on Drugs

1914: The Opening Salvo

The Supreme Court ruled in 1886 that state governments could not regulate interstate commerce and the federal government, whose law enforcement focused mainly on counterfeiting and other crimes against the state, initially did very little to prevent that the use and abuse of drugs.

1937: Reefer Madness

By 1937, the FBI had branched out on Depression-era gangsters and achieved some level of national prestige. Prohibition had ended, and meaningful federal health regulation was about to come about under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act of 1938. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics, operating under the U.S. Treasury Department, had come into existence in 1930 under the leadership of Harry Anslinger. And into this new national enforcement framework came the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, which attempted to tax marijuana into oblivion. Marijuana had not been shown to be dangerous, but the perception that it might be a "gateway drug" for heroin users — and its alleged popularity among Mexican-American immigrants — made it an easy target.

1954: Eisenhower's New War

General Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president in 1952 by an electoral landslide based largely on his leadership during World War II. But it was his administration, as much as any other, that also defined the parameters of the War on Drugs. The Boggs Act of 1951 had already established mandatory minimum federal sentences for possession of marijuana, cocaine, and opiates, and a committee led by Senator Price Daniel called that the federal penalties be increased further, as they were with the Narcotic Control Act of 1956.



1971: "Public Enemy Number One"

With the passage of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, the federal government took a more active role in drug enforcement and drug abuse prevention. Nixon, who called drug abuse "public enemy number one" in a 1971 speech, emphasized treatment at first and used his administration's clout to push for the treatment of drug addicts, particularly heroin addicts.

1973: Building an Army

Before the 1970s, drug abuse was seen by policymakers primarily as a social disease that could be addressed with treatment. After the 1970s, drug abuse was seen by policymakers primarily as a law enforcement problem that could be addressed with aggressive criminal justice policies.

1986: Black Cocaine, White Cocaine

Powdered cocaine was the champagne of drugs. It was associated more often with white yuppies than other drugs were in the public imagination—heroin—associated more often with African-Americans, marijuana with Latinos. Then along came crack, cocaine processed into little rocks at a price non-yuppies could afford. Congress and the Reagan administration responded with the Anti drug Act of 1986, which established a 100:1 ratio for mandatory minimums associated with cocaine. It would take 5,000 grams of powdered "yuppie" cocaine to land you in prison for a minimum 10 years but only 50 grams of crack.

1994: Death and the Kingpin

In recent decades, the U.S. death penalty has been reserved for offenses that involve the taking of another person's life. The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Coker v. Georgia* (1977) banned capital punishment as a penalty in cases of rape, and while the federal death penalty can be applied in cases of treason or espionage, nobody has been executed for either offense since the electrocution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953. So when Senator Joe Biden's 1994 Omnibus Crime Bill included a provision



allowing for the federal execution of drug kingpins, it indicated that the War on Drugs had ultimately reached such a level that drug-related offenses were regarded by the federal government as equivalent to, or worse than, murder and treason.

2001: The Medicine Show

The line between legal and illegal drugs is as narrow as the wording of drug policy legislation. Narcotics are illegal—except when they're not, as when they're processed into prescription drugs. Prescription narcotics can also be illegal if the person in possession of them hasn't been given a prescription. This is precarious, but not necessarily confusing.

List of Drug Abuse Organizations

- Addiction Helper
- Addiction Help Today
- Akron-Urban Minority Alcoholism Drug Abuse Outreach Program Inc
- Alcohol & Addictions Resource Ctr
- Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council For The Concho Valley
- Alcohol 24-Hour Help Line
- Alcohol And Drug Abuse Self-Help Network Inc
- Alcohol And Drug Dependency Services Foundation Inc
- Alcohol And Drug Dependency Services Inc
- Alcohol Drug Abuse Womens Center, Inc.
- Alcohol Justice
- Alcohol Training & Education Inc
- Alcohol-Drug Council Of North Carolina
- Allen County Drug And Alcohol Consortium Inc
- Armstrong County Council On Alcohol And Other Drugs Inc
- Armstrong-Indiana Drug & Alcohol Commission Inc
- Baton Rouge Area Alcohol & Drug Center Inc
- Bay Area Council On Drugs & Alcohol Inc



- Bethesda Addictions Treatment Centre (South Africa)
- Burlington County Council On Alcohol And Drug Abuse
- Cady Inc Communities For Alcohol & Drug Free Youth
- California Hispanic Commission On Alcohol And Drug Abuse Inc
- Cape May County Council On Alcoholism And Drug Abuse, Inc. Dba Cape Assist
- Carbon Monroe Pike Drug And Alcohol Commission Inc
- Council For Alcohol And Drug Abuse Services Inc
- Council On Alcohol & Drug Abuse For Greater New Orleans
- Council On Alcoholism & Drug Abuse
- EATA Recovery Services
- Erie County Council For The Prevention Of Alcohol & Substance
- Face - Truth And Clarity On Alcohol
- Faith Mission Inc Alcohol Crisis Center
- Fayette County Drug & Alcohol Commission
- First Call, Ncadd) Alcohol/Drug Prevention & Recovery
- Hill Country Council On Alcohol & Drug Abuse, Inc.
- Houston Council On Alcoholism And Drug Abuse Inc
- Impact Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Services, Inc.
- International Center For Alcohol Policies
- Jefferson County Council On Alcohol & Drug Abuse Dba Southeast Texas Council On Alcohol And Drug Abuse
- Landmark Drug and Alcohol Recovery
- Latino Commission On Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services Of San Mateo County
- Lighthouse Treatment Center
- Middlegate Addiction Advice and Treatment
- Nassau County Mental Health Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Council In
- National Association Of State Alcohol And Drug Abuse Directors
- National Association On Drug Abuse Problems New York State Inc



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Useful Resources

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK234579/>

<https://canadiancentreforaddictions.org/drug-use-and-abuse-in-canada/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10429353>

<https://www.dw.com/en/germany-named-drug-use-capital-following-europe-wide-sewage-study/a-47968865>

<https://testcountry.com/pages/list-of-organizations-fighting-against-drug-abuse>

