



17th St. & Constitution Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
United States of America

Organization of American States

P. 202.458.3000  
[www.oas.org](http://www.oas.org)

INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE  
CONTROL COMMISSION  
**CICAD**

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

FIFTY-FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
May 9 - 11, 2012  
Washington, D.C.

OEA/Ser.L/XIV.2.51  
CICAD/doc.1949/12  
8 May 2012  
Original: Español

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF HEROIN CONSUMPTION IN THE AMERICAS: THE COLOMBIAN  
EXPERIENCE



Ministerio de Salud  
y Protección Social  
República de Colombia



Libertad y Orden

Ministry of Health and Social  
Protection

Republic of Colombia



Política  
Nacional  
para la Reducción  
del  
Consumo  
de Sustancias  
Psicoactivas  
y su Impacto

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO





Ministerio de Salud  
y Protección Social  
República de Colombia

# Preventing the Spread of Heroin Consumption in the Americas: The Colombian Experience

Fifty-First Regular Session  
CICAD - OAS  
May 9 - 11, 2012  
Washington, D.C.



Ministerio de Salud  
y Protección Social  
República de Colombia

## Background

Colombia has been the principal source of Cocaine for the global market for the last three decades. However, local consumption of Cocaine is limited, with only a 4% life time prevalence





## Background

It is estimated that close to 30,800 people have consumed heroin at least once in their life, around 4,400 have used it in the last year and 3,000 have used it in the last month (National Study on the Consumption of Psychoactive Substances, 2008).

The prevalence of heroin in the university population was 0.03% (DNE/CAN, 2009) and within that population, 0.33% injected the drug.

The prevalence of injections has increased 21% in 2002 (OMS, Bogotá, 2003) to 70% in Cucuta and by a third in the cities of Medellin, Armenia and Cali.

It is used less than cocaine, marijuana, an ecstasy, but qualitative studies indicate that a pattern of use exists and it is becoming increasingly common among certain age groups, socio-economic strata, and occupations.



## Background

National epidemiological studies demonstrate the limitations for exploring this type of drug use.

The prevalence of HIV in users of inject-able drugs in 2003 in Bogotá was 1%, and 47% of them reported exchanging used needles.

In 2011, the prevalence in Medellin was 3.8%, and 2% in Pereira, and close to 10% in Cucuta.

The risky sexual behavior and practices associated with heroin use are common, and around 20% report they shared syringes when they last injected the drug (MSPS/CES, 2011).



### In Summary:

- There is an emerging and increasing pattern of heroin use in areas of the country that cultivate, produce, and transport the drug.
- Injecting the substance is becoming common and risky behaviors are increasingly prevalent in this group of users. Even though the prevalence of HIV remains low, it is higher among users than in the general population and other priority groups under the National Response Plan to HIV/AIDS.
- Similarly, areas that coincide with local production and transport of poppies and heroin are calling for the attention of the national government, in particular the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, to meet the growing demand for treatment and detoxification services in cities like Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Santander de Quilichao, Armenia, Pereira, Cucuta, among others.



Seeking to improve the capacity of the country to address this matter, with the following developments:

### 1. Research

- Three multi-method, exploratory studies in Santander de Quilichao, Bogota, Medellin, and Cucuta, based on Evaluation and Rapid Response methods.
- Study the prevalence of HIV in Drug Users who Inject in the cities of Medellin and Pereira (published in 2012).
- Characterization Study of the vulnerability factors associated with HIV/AIDS in High Risk Drug Users in Medellin and Armenia (published in 2011).



## Response Plan to the Emerging Use of Heroin

### 2. Technical Assistance

Support the development of response plans to the emerging use of heroin: in the departments of Risaralda, Caldas, Quindio, and Norte de Santander.



## Response Plan to the Emerging Use of Heroin

### 3. Strengthening Provided Services

Detoxification and Treatment Units in:

- Santander de Quilichao (Quilisalud and the Hospital Francisco de Paula Santander).
- Cali (Fundar Colombia)
- Cúcuta (Hospital Rudesindo Soto) .
  
- Pereira (Comprehensive Care Center for Drug Addiction at the Mental Health Risaralda Hospital of Risaralda and the Hospital de Dos Quebradas).
- Armenia, Calarcá, Montenegro and the Tebaida (Mental Health Hospital of Filandia, Detoxification Unit of San Juan de Dios, CAD La Primavera).
- Medellín (ESE CARISMA main and center headquarters).

Each Methadone substitution program accounts for approximately 150 users.





### 4. Health services personnel training

- National Workshop for Training in Prevention and Treatment of Heroin Users (October 2009, 40 participants).
- International Seminar on Drugs and HIV in Colombia (July 2010, 120 participants).



- C.R.I.C. Diploma Program for the improvement of Institutional and Community Response Capacities for treating drug use, HIV, and associated problems (80 graduates).



### 5. Clinical Management and Psychosocial Care Guidelines

Development of Guidelines for Clinical Management and Psychosocial Care for Addicts of Heroin and other Opiates in Colombia, which is in the process of revision and validation.





## Response Plan to the Emerging Use of Heroin

### 6. Promotion of Programmatic Agendas Outlining Actions concerning Drugs and HIV

Action plans for both drugs and HIV in Medellín, Cali, Cucuta and Pamplona, Pereira and Manizales, that promote the active search for HIV and Hepatitis in the drug consuming population, to promote counseling and voluntary testing in this population, to promote the inclusion of this population into priority vulnerable groups as a response to HIV at the territorial and national level.



## Response Plan to the Emerging Use of Heroin

### 7. Prevention and Communication Strategies for Changing Behaviors

Technical and financial support for the development of prevention and communication strategies for changing behaviors associated with heroin use in the Departments of Eje Cafetero, Cauca, Valle del Cauca and Norte de Santander (communicative pieces and videos for creating awareness and education on this issue).





Ministerio de Salud  
y Protección Social  
República de Colombia



Ministerio de Salud  
y Protección Social  
República de Colombia

## Response Plan to the Emerging Use of Heroin

### 8. Comprehensive Treatment Systems for Heroin Use

Financial support for pilot projects in Risaralda, Santander de Quilichao and Norte de Santander, as well Cáritas Alemana.







Ministerio de Salud  
y Protección Social  
República de Colombia

**Thank you,**

[aparra@minsalud.gov.co](mailto:aparra@minsalud.gov.co)

[www.spacio.gov.co](http://www.spacio.gov.co)

[www.onsm.gov.co](http://www.onsm.gov.co)

[www.unaopcionenlinea.gov.co](http://www.unaopcionenlinea.gov.co)

**01 800 113 113**