

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

INTER-AMERICAN OBSERVATORY ON DRUGS (OID)

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CICAD/OID Launches *Report on Drug Use in the Americas 2019*

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (known by its Spanish language acronym, CICAD), through its Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (known by its Spanish language acronym, OID) launched the *Report on Drug Use in the Americas 2019* in March, at the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, Austria.

“The report contains a wealth of statistics provided by OAS member states, as well as analysis of key drug trends in the Western Hemisphere,” Ambassador Adam Namm, CICAD Executive Secretary, explained in announcing the report’s release.

The 2019 report examines current official data on drug use and highlights developing trends, challenges, and emerging issues of interest to policy makers and the public, by country and subregion. Previous editions were published in 2011 and 2015.

The analysis features data on the most widely used drugs in the region, both licit and illicit: alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, inhalants, cocaine substances, amphetamine-type stimulants, controlled prescription drugs, and new psychoactive



substances. It examines substance use in the general population and breaks down the available data by sex and by age, with a specific focus on adolescents (secondary school) and young adults (university).

The report, which was possible due to the longstanding cooperation on data collection among the region's national drug observatories (NDOs), includes drug use statistics for 33 member states and provides findings and recommendations on each type of substance covered. The Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, applauded the report in a tweet, noting that it would help strengthen member states' capacity "to construct effective policies on drugs in the region."

Here are a few highlights from the report:

Early onset of drug use:

- Drug use is showing up among the very young -- as young as eighth graders¹ -- in many countries.
- The younger individuals are when they start using drugs, the higher the health risks and other consequences.
- National drug policies should give priority to prevention programs and interventions that can delay the age at which people start using drugs.

Drug use trends:

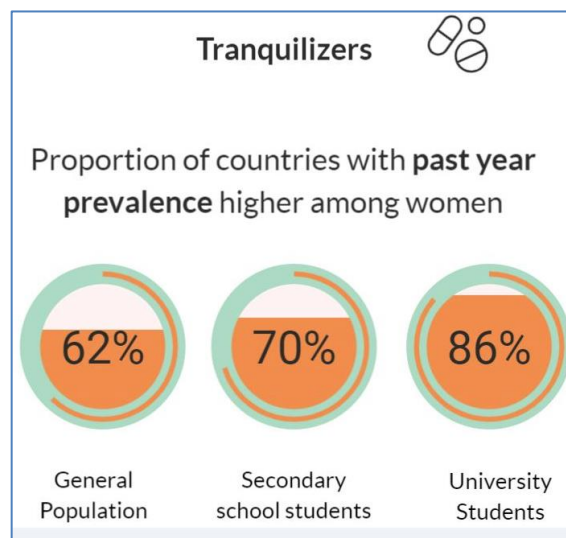
- Tobacco is the only substance for which systematic declines were observed over time among the general population.
- Cannabis use is on the rise in most of the countries for which data on trends are available, while cocaine use in the general population is increasing in about half of the countries studied.
- In most of the countries, marijuana use is increasing among students in secondary school; however, alcohol use among this population is either stable or in decline, which may be considered good news.

Change in use according to sex:

- While drug use has been viewed historically as a male phenomenon, women in some countries are now using certain drugs at the same rate as men, or at even higher rates.
- Among all populations and in nearly all countries, more women than men abuse prescription tranquilizers.
- Non-prescription use of controlled prescription medicines, synthetic drugs, and opioids reveals how drug use trends are changing.

New challenges for drug policies:

- The prevalence of new psychoactive substances (NPS), opioids, and benzodiazepines poses new challenges -- not only for drug treatment but also for public health and for drug policies in general.



¹ In the majority of member states, eighth graders are roughly 13-14 years old.

- The United States and Canada are experiencing severe opioid and NPS epidemics, resulting in some of the highest overdose rates in history.
- Alcohol-related high-risk behaviors, such as early start of use and harmful alcohol consumption, are a concern throughout the region. Among eighth graders in 10 countries, past month prevalence was over 20%, exceeding 30% in three of the countries.
- Changes in the legal and regulatory status of marijuana have continued to be implemented across the Hemisphere. The decriminalization of marijuana for recreational or medical use has led to increased access for adults, which may spillover into younger populations, which is a particular concern to public health and policy when it comes to cannabis use.

Regional Early Warning System to Highlight Emerging Drug Trends

Countries in the region that have created national early warning systems for drugs can now share their information with each other, through the Early Warning System for Drugs in the Americas (known by its Spanish language acronym, SATA).

The system, established by the OID, will compile official alerts issued by the region's NDOs, to draw attention to emerging, changing, or underreported trends in drug use.

So far, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay have submitted information through the SATA. As more countries establish national early warning systems, the SATA database will expand to include their alerts too.

Officials will receive valuable alerts on new types of drugs appearing in different markets, or new aspects of traditional drugs -- such as different methods of use or different adulterants -- that could pose a threat to public health or safety. This will enable national agencies to respond more quickly to new drugs, patterns of use and other changes that could pose a public health threat.

The SATA will compile only official alerts classified and issued by NDOs through their own early warning systems. Alerts received through the SATA are posted on the SATA website. The OID disseminates the information pertaining to the alerts to its points of contact for the regional NDO network. It will provide contact information for the source of the alert, in case further clarification is needed.

For details on how to share and receive information through the SATA, please contact Marya Hynes, head of the OID, at mhynes@oas.org.



Workshop Focuses on Upcoming Report on Drug Supply and the Drug Market

Participants from 19 countries and experts from international agencies and programs gathered in Cartagena, Colombia, on June 25-27 for a workshop to discuss the development of a CICAD report on drug supply and the drug market in the Americas.

The workshop aimed to define the scope of such a report and discuss methodological approaches that could be used for gathering and analyzing data. Two OAS/CICAD areas -- the OID and the Supply Reduction Unit (SRU) -- led the workshop, which received support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (known by its Spanish language acronym, AECID).

The meeting opened with remarks by Ana María Rueda, Director of Drug Policy and Related Activities of the Ministry of Justice and Law of Colombia; Rafael Parada, Head of the CICAD/SRU Unit; Pernell Clarke, Specialist in the CICAD/OID Unit; and Sofía Mata Modrón, Director of the AECID Training Center in Cartagena. The three-day event included panel discussions, presentations by experts, moderated discussions, and working groups.

Participants, who included representatives of NDOs and supply-reduction practitioners, looked at what types of supply-related data their countries collect at the national and regional level and reviewed potential tools to identify gaps in information, develop indicators, and facilitate data gathering.

To varying degrees, many countries are already collecting, analyzing, and reporting information on drug supply and the illicit drug market. The challenge will be to determine which information will be useful for the report and how to apply standards to analyze the raw data.

Participants noted that the report should focus on the issues most relevant to the countries of the Americas. For details, the full report from the workshop, including presentations by participating countries, can be found on the CICAD/OID website: http://www.cicad.oas.org/Main/AboutCICAD/Activities_eng.asp?IE=CO0859

OID team

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The Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), part of the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), promotes and supports a drug information and research network for the member countries of the Organization of American States (OAS). The OID partners with the national drug observatories (NDOs) of the region's national drug commissions (NDCs), as well as with universities and international organizations. Beyond the Americas, the OID works closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), among other organizations.