



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC  
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL

REGIONAL COMMITTEE

WPR/RC26/10  
16 June 1975

Twenty-sixth session  
Manila  
1-6 September 1975

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Provisional agenda item 16

DRUG DEPENDENCE

Progress Report by the Regional Director

1. INTRODUCTION

The Regional Committee at its twenty-fifth session adopted resolution WPR/RC25.R3 which requested the Regional Director:

- (a) "to pursue the studies on the epidemiology of drug dependence and alcoholism;"
- (b) "to support training programmes for national personnel in the prevention, rehabilitation and control of drug dependence and alcoholism;"
- (c) "to assist governments, upon request, in the study and development of action programmes against drug dependence and excessive use of alcohol and tobacco."

2. ACTION TAKEN

2.1 Two consultants completed the collection of epidemiological data in the Philippines on the extent and nature of problems associated with drug dependence, patterns of drug abuse and the availability of facilities for treatment, rehabilitation and research. A similar epidemiological study had been carried out in Malaysia in 1973. Financial assistance for these studies was provided by the Government of the United States and the Aw Boon Haw Foundation of Hong Kong. The recommendations resulting from

the two studies are now being implemented and arrangements are being made for multidisciplinary teams of four fellows from Malaysia and two from the Philippines to observe drug abuse programmes in various countries.

2.2 To design a strategy for combating the problem of drug dependence, including alcoholism, a working group on measures for the prevention and control of drug dependence met in Manila from 9 to 17 December 1974. Stress was laid on the need to develop balanced programmes which will embody treatment and rehabilitation and educational, legislative and socio-cultural approaches. Possible areas of assistance were also identified. The Group recommended that assistance be provided to countries in collecting epidemiological data, planning and programming alternative courses of action, training personnel in methods of treatment and rehabilitation and evaluating the progress of prevention and control programmes. Supporting the facts revealed by analysis of the questionnaire circulated to Member States in the Region, the Group emphasized the importance of combating the growing problem of alcohol consumption. The report of the working group, the first in a series which will deal with various aspects of the problem, has been distributed to Member States in the Region.

2.3 Consultant assistance was provided to South Viet-Nam to review epidemiological information and to assist in establishing a national centre near Saigon for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependents.

2.4 In the Philippines, assistance was provided to the College of Education, University of the Philippines, in introducing education on the prevention of drug abuse into schools. Curricula suitable for students of various ages were developed and materials designed for use in schools and for teaching young people outside school. The experience gained with youth education programmes on drug abuse within the school system of the Philippines will be of value in developing curricula and school health education activities on drug abuse in other countries.

### 3. PROPOSED FUTURE ACTION

3.1 Assistance to Member States in collecting epidemiological information and formulating national programmes will be strengthened further by the assignment of a WHO adviser to the intercountry prevention and control of drug abuse project. A number of governments have already shown interest in utilizing the services of the adviser for initiating and strengthening activities in the field of drug dependence.

3.2 An expanded programme of assistance, which will include consultant services, fellowships and workshops, is planned for the next two years. In 1976 provision has been made for short-term consultants to assist countries in the Region upon request for two or three months each in specialized areas

within the drug abuse field. Consultant services will also be provided from the intercountry project to assist in the development and implementation of programmes to prevent and reduce the incidence and severity of problems associated with the use of dependence-producing drugs and alcohol.

3.3 A working group on health education programmes for young people concerning drug abuse will be held in Manila from 4 to 10 November 1975. Another working group to formulate programmes for early intervention in drug abuse is planned for December 1976. It is expected that the recommendations of these working groups will help further to refine strategies for dealing with the problem more effectively.

3.4 It is hoped to be able to formulate proposals for collaboration with other United Nations agencies in strengthening drug dependence control services in Laos.

#### 4. RESOLUTIONS OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

In May 1975 the Twenty-eighth World Health Assembly, recognizing the necessity to provide health care and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation for persons dependent on drugs, adopted resolution WHA28.80 "Drug dependence". In drawing attention to the importance of the problems posed by excessive consumption of alcohol and the economic impact of alcohol-related illnesses on national health services, the Assembly laid stress on the need for reliable statistical information on the relationship between levels of alcohol consumption and the consequent danger to health leading to increased morbidity and mortality, and adopted resolution WHA28.81 "Health statistics related to alcohol". Copies of the two resolutions are attached as Annexes 1 and 2.

RESOLUTION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

WHA28.80

29 May 1975

DRUG DEPENDENCE

The Twenty-eighth World Health Assembly,

Recognizing the humanitarian necessity to provide health care and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation for drug-dependent persons;

Convinced that in the long term the serious public health problems resulting from the increasing self-administration of dependence-producing drugs cannot be solved unless prompt and effective measures are taken in all the countries of the world;

Recalling Article 38 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs;

Reaffirming resolutions WHA23.42, WHA24.57, WHA25.62 and WHA26.52;

Noting also the unanimous resolution of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council, concerning measures to reduce illicit demand for drugs; and

Commending the Director-General on the measures so far taken to implement the expanded programme in this field approved by the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth World Health Assemblies,

1. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (i) to accelerate the development of the reporting programme on the epidemiology of drug dependence;
- (ii) to further develop the world-wide exchange of information and to continue to foster activities related to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation and research in these fields;
- (iii) to sustain efforts to increase financial support necessary for effective implementation of the expanded programme in the field of drug dependence;
- (iv) to assist governments, in accordance with their requests, within the limits of available financial and technical resources, and in continuing collaboration with the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, to develop and apply integrated services for prevention, early detection, treatment and rehabilitation at the community level;
- (v) to develop further activities related to the monitoring of adverse side effects of psychoactive drugs in relation to their risk of abuse and dependence potential;
- (vi) to foster activities to determine the dependence potential of chemical substances having an effect on mood and behaviour, and to prepare guidelines for the safe and effective use of psychoactive drugs; and
- (vii) to bear in mind the need to provide staff resources to enable WHO to contribute effectively to the efforts of the United Nations system of organizations in the field of drug abuse control.

WHA28.80

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2. **URGES Member States and Associate Members, where the non-therapeutic use of drugs and drug dependence are public health and social problems, to incorporate appropriate prevention, treatment and rehabilitation measures in their integrated public health programmes;**
3. **ALSO INVITES Member States and Associate Members to develop in accordance with international treaties for the control of dependence-producing drugs appropriate national legislation and other procedures to ensure that the marketing of dependence-producing products does not give rise to non-therapeutic use and dependence on such drugs and serves only legitimate medical and scientific interests;**
4. **FURTHER URGES Member States and Associate Members with the appropriate facilities to pursue research in these fields in order to develop and improve methods for the prevention and management of problems related to traffic in and non-therapeutic use of drugs and to drug dependence;**
5. **REQUESTS the Director-General to report progress on this matter to the Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly; and**
6. **REQUESTS the Director-General to transmit this resolution to Member States for their study and guidance.**

Thirteenth plenary meeting, 29 May 1975  
A28/VR/13

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RESOLUTION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

WHA28.81

29 May 1975

HEALTH STATISTICS RELATED TO ALCOHOL

The Twenty-eighth World Health Assembly,

Recalling the recommendations by the meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence held in Geneva from 8 to 13 October 1973;

Noting the trend toward increasing levels of alcohol consumption in some of the industrialized and the developing countries and the consequent health hazards which require new initiatives at the international and national levels;

Noting the association between the level of alcohol consumption and certain forms of health damage resulting in the increase of morbidity and mortality (e.g. mental disorders, liver disease, accidents and injuries);

Recognizing that a basic ingredient in the formulation of a national public-health-oriented alcohol policy is reliable statistical information on alcohol consumption and certain forms of health damage;

Bearing in mind the need to broaden the scope of health statistical information to comprise not only disease entities or specific conditions but also other indicators of health and social well-being,

1. URGES Member States to promote the development of information systems on alcohol consumption and other relevant data needed as a basis for a public-health-oriented alcohol policy; and

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(a) to direct special attention in the future programme of WHO to the extent and seriousness of the individual, public health and social problems associated with the current use of alcohol in many countries of the world and the trend toward higher levels of consumption;

(b) to take steps, in cooperation with competent international and national organizations and bodies, to develop comparable information systems on alcohol consumption and other relevant data needed for a public-health-oriented alcohol policy;

(c) to study in depth, on the basis of such information, what measures could be taken in order to control the increase in alcohol consumption involving danger to public health;

(d) to report on this matter to a coming session of the World Health Assembly.

Thirteenth plenary meeting, 29 May 1975  
A28/VR/13