



# World Drug Report at a glance

The “**International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**” or **International Day against Drugs**, is celebrated on June 26 each year. Its aim is to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of a world free of the use of psychoactive substances.

In the framework of this day, several activities took place, including the publication of the **World Drug Report** elaborated by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**.

This report provides an analysis of year-to-year changes in drug supply and demand, addressing issues such as consumption patterns, treatment of drug use disorders, the extent of injecting drug use and its relationship with HIV and hepatitis C; also the advance in the use of New Psychoactive Substances, and the use of opioids, among other issues.

Thus, the 2022 version has among its particularities that it is the main edition that presents the result of substance use in the year 2020, that is, it analyzes the impact of the **Covid-19 pandemic** on drug use patterns. It is also considered the first publication on the drugs subject, which highlights the **environmental effect** caused by different processes

involved in the cultivation and manufacture of illicit drugs.

## **Related to substance use, what can be highlighted?**

Worldwide, **284 million** people (5.6% of the population) between 15 and 64 years had used a drug in 2020. This data reflects an increase of 26% compared to 2010. It is also estimated that **13.6%** of the people are living with a **substance use disorder**. This figure has increased from 27 million in 2010 to 38.6 million in 2020.

On the other hand, the emergence of Covid-19 produced uneven changes in drug use patterns. Studies confirmed that there was an increase in the use of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. However, in none of the countries that presented information on their use was there an increase in the number of new drug users.

One point that has been highlighted for several years is the significant difference in drug use patterns between men and women. Generally speaking, men have a higher prevalence of drug use. However, women are more likely than men to have a more rapid increase in the rate of drug use and a possible progression to a psychoactive substance use disorder, a phenomenon known as *telescoping*.



## Talking about the most consumed drugs...

- **Cannabis** is positioned as the most used psychoactive substance worldwide. Data revealed that 209 million people consumed it during 2020, which meant an increase of 23% compared to 2010. Likewise, it is said that the legalization of cannabis has accelerated the upward trend in its daily use. This has led to an increase in the proportion of people with psychiatric disorders and suicides linked to the frequent use of this substance.
- Regarding **opioids**, in 2020 there were 61 million people who used these substances for non-medical reasons. Of this number, 31 million were opioid users, especially heroin.
- As for **cocaine**, it was estimated that there were 21 million users of cocaine-type substances in the period under study. In terms of trends, cocaine use has been on the rise in the last decade. However, by 2020 the increasing trend stopped and some countries reported a decrease.

## Talking about treatment, the gender gap is a priority issue

The Report emphasizes that when it comes to drug use treatment, the gender gap is so wide that it is considered a global problem, as at least one in two people who consumed amphetamine-type stimulants in the previous year is female. However, only one in five received treatment.

It should be noted that substance use disorders develop more rapidly in women who use drugs than in men. Therefore, UNODC recommends that the availability of drug use treatment and prevention services be expanded so that women have equal access to them.



### **What is the drug demand situation in our country?**

In Mexico, heavy methamphetamine use stands out in comparison with the use of other amphetamines. It is estimated that **29,680 methamphetamine users were in treatment in 2020**, in contrast to amphetamine users, who are estimated at 727 people.

On the other hand, our country reported a 218% increase in the number of people in treatment for amphetamine-type stimulants (mainly methamphetamine). Likewise, in Mexico, cocaine-derived products represent the second most consumed group of substances and the fourth most reported drug when starting treatment for such consumption.

The rest of the data are related to trends in drug markets and drug trafficking, as

well as the production and seizures of certain substances. In this regard, it is important to note that the precursor **phenylacetone** had its largest seizure in Mexico in 2020.

Finally, it is emphasized that the report mentions that countries should work on an integration of the different types of services offered, in order to promote their effectiveness. This is how the UNODC Report helps governments and institutions whose focus is on addiction care to observe the strengths and areas of opportunity that their national programs and systems have, and thus establish the pertinent measures to counteract the problem.

This article was elaborated with information from the UNODC website: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2022.html>

