

Policy Studies Organization

Dupont Summit 2018

Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy
December 7, Whittemore House, Washington DC

Title: Current Issues in Opioid and Psychoactive Substance Abuse

Co-Sponsors: World Medical and Health Policy Journal, PSO and Schar School of Policy and Government, GMU

Objective

Explore addiction and overdose crisis fueled by opiates, opioids and other psychoactive substances.

Introduction

Opiate and psychoactive substances were used by different cultures for centuries. Recent advances in chemistry opened the way to synthetic drugs low cost mass production of such drugs. Early claims that pain medications do not cause major risks for dependence, together with aggressive promotion campaigns, lead to the increased prescribing practices for with chronic pain often resulting in addiction.

The 2016 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention epidemiological survey sounded the alarm that the opioid overdose epidemic is spreading geographically and increasing across demographic groups. Mortality from opioid and psychoactive drugs overdose has been underestimated, in many regions of Africa and Asia. In the face of the crisis of overuse of opioids in North America, a critical undersupply of opioids in many other countries persists due to existing prescribing regulations.

According to UNODC 2018 “the global cocaine manufacture in 2016 reached its highest levels, and mostly produced in Colombia, with Africa and Asia emerging as cocaine trafficking and consumption hubs.” Trafficking of these preparations, is subject to criminal prosecutions and severe punishment. The non-medical use of prescription drugs is becoming a major threat to public health and law enforcement worldwide with opioids causing the most harm responsible for up to 76 per cent of deaths where drug use disorders were implicated, according to the latest reports.

For the last three years USA is attempting to address the rising public health crisis by increasing the annual funding, specifically:

The fight against drug trafficking will remain problematic considering the size of the global value of the illicit drug market, estimated at a half trillion USD, and limited resources allocated to combat the illicit trafficking. Trafficking is associated with high crime rate [sometimes referred to as narcoterrorism], and modern slave trade.

Panel

Experts will discuss current practices and policies in the fight against the evolving opioid and psychoactive substances crisis.

Moderator

Arnauld Nicogossian, *George Mason University*

Panelists

1. Introduction to the global crisis, Arnauld Nicogossian, MD, FACP, Schar School of Policy and Government, GMU.
2. Illicit drug trafficking crisis and interventions, Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera PhD, Professor, Schar School of Policy and Government, GMU {invited]
3. US Policies and standards of practice for overdose and preventing morbidity and mortality. Richard S. Williams, MD. FACS, Director Tree Rivers District [Virginia] Department of Health.
4. Conclusions and discussions