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Global Health Organizations in Narcotic and Psychoactive Substance Control

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Abstract

Global drug abuse presents a growing public health and security crisis, fueled by complex socio-economic and psychological factors. **Specifically**, psychoactive substances threaten not only individual well-being but also the stability of communities and national development. While international frameworks exist, the **effectiveness of the World Health Organization (WHO)** in combating this threat remains underexamined. **This study aims** to evaluate the WHO's institutional role, legal authority, and operational strategies in addressing drugs and psychoactive substances at global and regional levels. **The findings reveal** that WHO plays a critical role through international health policy coordination, technical support, and scientific assessment, especially via collaboration with entities such as the UNODC and INCB. **The novelty** of this research lies in its integration of legal analysis and health-based strategies, highlighting WHO's function not only in treatment and prevention but also in legislative guidance and international drug classification. **Implications** suggest that sustained global cooperation, policy alignment, and WHO-backed health systems strengthening are vital to effectively combat drug proliferation and reduce its societal impact. This study contributes to public health policy discourse by proposing a model of comprehensive, evidence-based international response.

Highlight :

- The WHO plays a central role in coordinating global efforts to combat drugs through health-focused, rights-based strategies.
- Social, economic, and psychological factors are deeply intertwined in the spread of drug use, making prevention multifaceted.
- Collaboration between WHO, UNODC, and member states is essential for developing treatment, legislation, and awareness programs.

Keywords : World Health Organization, regional organizations, drugs, psychoactive substances, international cooperation

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Introduction

Drugs and psychoactive substances represent one of the most significant health and social challenges facing modern societies due to their devastating effects on individuals, families, and entire communities. This phenomenon has led to increased rates of addiction and crime, as well as mounting health and economic burdens on nations, making it essential to mobilize international efforts to confront it comprehensively and effectively. In this context, global health organizations, particularly the World Health Organization (WHO), have emerged as key actors by adopting integrated strategies for prevention and treatment, providing technical support to countries, and promoting international cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking.

The WHO aims to confront the threat of drugs and psychoactive substances through a multidimensional framework that encompasses health, awareness, and legislative aspects, stemming from its belief that combating this scourge requires a comprehensive response that respects human rights and is based on scientific evidence and best practices.

This study will address two main sections. The first section explores the definition of drugs and psychoactive substances and the reasons behind their spread, divided into two subsections: the first addresses the definition of drugs and psychoactive substances, and the second discusses the causes of their spread. The second section is dedicated to the institutional foundation of the World Health Organization and its effectiveness in confronting the threat of drugs and psychoactive substances, also divided into two subsections: the first explains the institutional foundation of the WHO, while the second focuses on the effectiveness of the WHO in addressing this threat.

Research Objective:

The objective of this study is to examine and analyze the effectiveness of the World Health Organization (WHO) in confronting the threat of drugs and psychoactive substances, with a focus on the efforts undertaken by these organizations at both global and regional levels. The study highlights the vital role played by the WHO in coordination with various United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and also addresses the strategies employed by these organizations in combating drug trafficking and supporting member states through the provision of training and technical assistance.

Research Significance:

The significance of this research lies in shedding light on the pivotal role played by global health organizations in addressing the threat of drugs and psychoactive substances, which has become a major health and security challenge worldwide. By exploring strategies of cooperation and coordination between countries and international organizations, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into how effective policies can be developed to combat the production and trafficking of drugs. It also emphasizes the importance of developing comprehensive prevention and treatment programs tailored to the specific needs of each region. Furthermore, the study contributes to raising awareness of the importance of joint cooperation among countries in exchanging information and expertise, which helps enhance public health and safety in societies and mitigates the impact of drugs on individuals and communities.

Research Problem:

To what extent is the World Health Organization effective in confronting the threat of drugs and psychoactive substances?

Research Methodology:

This study adopts the descriptive analytical approach in addressing this issue clearly and explicitly.

Research Outline:

A. First Topic: Definition of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances and the Reasons for Their Spread.

1. **First Subsection:** Definition of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances.
2. **Second Subsection:** Reasons for the Spread of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances.

B. Second Topic: The Institutional Foundation of the World Health Organization and Its Role in Confronting the

Threat of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances.

1. **First Subsection:** The Institutional Foundation of the World Health Organization.
2. **Second Subsection:** The Effectiveness of the World Health Organization in Confronting the Threat of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances.

First Topic

Definition of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances and the Reasons for Their Spread

Drugs and psychoactive substances are among the most prominent health and social challenges facing many societies around the world. Drugs are substances that contain chemical compounds that affect the nervous system and alter its normal functions, leading to changes in behavior, thinking, and emotions. Drugs vary between natural and synthetic substances, and their effects may range from stimulation to sedation. Continuous use can lead to addiction. This topic will be addressed through two subsections: the first subsection is dedicated to the definition of drugs and psychoactive substances, while the second subsection will discuss the reasons for the spread of drugs and psychoactive substances.

First Subsection

Definition of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances

First: Linguistic Definition of Drugs

Drugs and psychoactive substances have been defined in various ways in specialized terminology. They have been described as “any substance that causes partial or complete temporary loss of consciousness, induces a sense of bodily lethargy, and places the person in a state of fantasy, with effects persisting throughout the period of use” (Imad Al-Din, 1986, p. 96).

They have also been defined as “any substance that exhausts the body and affects the mind to the extent of impairing its control, leading to addiction, which is prohibited by law. Among the most common types are cannabis, opium, morphine, heroin, cocaine, and khat” (Izzat, 1986, p. 287).

Another definition states that drugs are “any substance that causes bodily fatigue and mental effects that may reach the point of loss of control, resulting in the formation of an addictive habit” (Abdullah, 1988, p. 6).

Furthermore, drugs have been described as “a group of substances that lead to addiction upon use, causing imbalanced effects on the user, which reflect on their behavior and actions in a manner that may harm themselves or others. These substances pose dangers to both individuals and society and are prohibited in terms of manufacturing, cultivation, or pharmaceutical formulation without legal authorization” (Maha, 2012, p. 137).

Additionally, they have been defined as “any natural or synthetic substance listed in Schedules I and II” (Article 1/j of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs).

Another international definition states that they are: “any natural or synthetic substance listed in Schedules I and II of the 1961 Convention and the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention” (Article 1/n of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances).

From the above, it is evident that drugs are any substance whose use results in changes to an individual's mental and physical functions, weakening cognitive abilities and leading to loss of self-control. Drug use may cause imbalanced effects that result in harmful actions to the individual or society as a whole. These substances are often prohibited or subject to legal control in most countries.

Second Subsection

Reasons for the Spread of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances

The phenomenon of drug and psychoactive substance-related crimes remains a major concern for society. Despite the efforts exerted and the use of advanced tools and techniques to curb their spread, this phenomenon continues to develop noticeably. The reasons behind it vary from one individual to another and from one society to another, ranging from psychological, social, to economic factors. The most significant reasons include the following:

First: Social Reasons

Social causes are among the primary factors contributing to the commission of drug and psychoactive substance-related crimes. These causes relate to the structure of society and the principles that govern it. The most prominent

social factors influencing individual behavior and driving them toward committing such crimes include:

1. Weak Family Relationships

Family disintegration leads to a loss of stability within the household, contributing to the deviation of some of its members toward criminal behavior. The absence of family stability and the breakdown of familial bonds, in addition to the lack of parental roles, foster psychological and behavioral disturbances among children and increase the likelihood of their involvement in harmful behaviors such as drug abuse. This situation may further deteriorate family relationships and increase individuals' feelings of isolation, prompting them to seek escape through unhealthy behaviors (Mohammad, 2004, p. 117). The collapse of family ties leads to the deviation of its members and makes them more susceptible to criminal behavior, including drug abuse and other offenses, especially when the father himself is deviant, thereby serving as a negative role model devoid of morals and virtue (Aliya et al., 1993, p. 335).

2. Keeping Bad Company

Human beings are inherently social creatures who tend to associate with others who share similar ages, habits, and traditions. Sociological studies have emphasized the importance of peer influence, especially during adolescence, in shaping individual behavior—particularly in relation to deviant conduct. One of the most prominent criminal behaviors influenced by peers is the use of drugs and psychoactive substances. Friends play a significant role in shaping an individual's behavior, and associating with bad company can lead a person to deviate. The motivations behind this can vary and include curiosity, imitation, or the desire to keep up with friends. Such influences often reinforce destructive behaviors, contributing to a deviation from the right path (Muwafaq, 2018, p. 51).

3. Environmental Setting

The nature of the place in which an individual lives significantly influences their behavior. The impact of the environment varies depending on whether the person lives in a city or a village. Urban areas, due to their population density and the presence of industries and markets, generally witness higher crime rates, including drug-related offenses. Cities are also hubs for visitors and travelers, leading to a mixture of cultures and environments that can have adverse effects, such as increased drug use. Furthermore, cities provide a fertile environment for seeking unhealthy alternatives due to the ease of access to narcotic substances and the variety of places that promote them (Mohammad, 2005, p. 182).

4. Lack or Weakness of Religious Awareness

The family plays an essential and influential role in the religious upbringing of children. The father and mother are the primary figures in shaping the personality of their children. By creating a stable religious and ethical environment, parents can instill high values and principles in their children's hearts. Religious and moral deterrents are among the key factors that protect individuals from falling into vice and prevent them from becoming involved in destructive environments such as the world of drugs and psychoactive substances. This positive influence helps guide children toward healthy behaviors, shields them from criminal involvement, and ultimately enhances their psychological and social stability (Yusuf, 2017, p. 261).

Second: Economic Reasons

Economic factors are among the most influential causes that significantly contribute to individuals committing drug and psychoactive substance-related crimes. The economic conditions of a society can have either positive or negative effects on individual behavior. In situations of economic hardship or poverty, some individuals may feel despair or frustration, prompting them to seek unhealthy outlets such as drugs. Unemployment or limited economic opportunities may increase the likelihood of individuals engaging in destructive behaviors as a means of escaping life pressures. Below are the most prominent economic reasons that may lead to the commission of such crimes:

1. Unemployment:

Unemployment and the failure to invest free time are key contributing factors to drug and psychoactive substance-related crimes. Unemployment generates feelings of helplessness and frustration, fostering resentment and hatred toward society. This emotional and psychological void may serve as an entry point into drug environments, where individuals become susceptible to the influence of others who may introduce them to these substances as a means of escaping despair and pressure. The likelihood of engaging in destructive behavior increases in life settings that lack positive opportunities or proper social guidance (Mohammad, 2011, p. 74).

2. Personal Financial Situation:

While economic growth and societal prosperity contribute to improved living standards, stable financial conditions and luxury may also facilitate the increase of drug-related crimes, particularly drug use. When living conditions improve and social affluence rises, some individuals may experience boredom or emptiness, leading them to seek

unhealthy recreational alternatives such as drugs. The easy availability of money may also make access to narcotic substances easier, thereby increasing the chances of falling into addictive behaviors and related crimes (Muwafaq, 2018, p. 55). Conversely, a person may be in a state of financial hardship and still resort to criminal behavior due to personal factors specific to the individual (Imad, 2008, p. 212).

3. Lack of Success in Work:

When a person enters the workforce, they strive to prove themselves and achieve financial success through their work, which is essential for personal economic stability. However, in cases of failure or financial loss, some individuals may turn to illegal paths, such as involvement in drug and psychoactive substance trafficking, as a way to compensate for their failure or cover their losses. This may be driven by feelings of helplessness or despair, pushing them to make uncalculated decisions in an attempt to improve their financial situation or escape life pressures (Mohammad, 2016, p. 41).

Third: Psychological Reasons

Psychological factors are among the primary causes that contribute to the spread of drug and psychoactive substance-related crimes and their use. There are various psychological instincts that drive individuals to engage in aggressive and destructive behaviors, such as drug use. Among the most prominent psychological factors are anxiety and feelings of alienation, where a person experiences a loss of connection with oneself or with society. This sense of isolation and internal emptiness may lead individuals to seek an escape or outlet, such as turning to narcotic substances as a means to relieve psychological pressures and escape from reality (Al-Asfar, 2012, p. 5).

Human beings are inherently inclined to escape the difficulties and pressures they face in life. Some individuals possess certain psychological predispositions that may lead them to resort to drugs and psychoactive substances due to their direct effects on mental and emotional activity. This escape from reality may offer a temporary sense of relief or reduction in psychological suffering, but it quickly turns into addiction, negatively impacting their lives. As dependence on drugs increases, other criminal behaviors also emerge, exacerbating the problem and its consequences for both the individual and society (Ahmed, 2018, p. 21).

A person's actions fundamentally stem from their psychological makeup, and these predispositions can be a direct cause of criminal behavior. Thus, psychological reasons are considered highly influential in the commission of drug and psychoactive substance-related crimes. Psychological adjustment disorders may also drive individuals toward drugs and psychoactive substances, particularly when experiencing severe psychological trauma, such as the loss of a close person. Mental illnesses and psychological disorders also contribute to addiction and other crimes related to drugs and psychoactive substances (Al-Issawi, 2011, p. 92).

The more stable an individual's psychological state is, the more consistent and balanced their behavior becomes, aligning with the values of the society they belong to. Conversely, if an individual's psychological makeup is disturbed, it may lead to deviant behavior and criminal acts. Therefore, psychological motives are among the main causes behind drug and psychoactive substance-related crimes, especially drug use. Instinctive drives are also influential, as it is often difficult for a person to control these impulses, leading them to make poor decisions that result in criminal behavior (Mohammad, 2005, p. 33).

From the above, it becomes evident that the phenomenon of drug and psychoactive substance spread is not an individual issue, but rather the result of a complex interaction of various social, economic, and psychological factors. Weak family relationships and the breakdown of familial ties may be a major reason pushing individuals toward such behaviors. The influence of peers and the environmental setting also play significant roles in these decisions. Economically, unemployment and poverty may deepen the sense of despair, pushing individuals toward drug use. Psychologically, anxiety, emotional trauma, and other mental disorders may act as catalysts for this deviation.

Second Topic

The Institutional Framework of the World Health Organization and Its Role in Confronting the Threat of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances

The problem of drugs and psychoactive substances represents one of the most significant challenges facing societies globally, as it causes various social, health, and economic harms. Studies have shown that the spread of drugs greatly affects individuals, families, communities, and even the economic development of some countries. This necessitates the mobilization of both local and global efforts to combat this growing threat.

International and regional organizations play a key role in addressing this challenge. Cooperation among countries and international bodies such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and regional organizations like the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation provides a robust legal and regulatory framework to combat drug trafficking, reduce drug consumption, and raise awareness about the dangers of such substances.

This topic will be addressed through two subsections: The first subsection will be dedicated to studying the institutional framework of the World Health Organization. The second subsection will examine the effectiveness of the World Health Organization in confronting the threat of drugs and psychoactive substances.

First Subsection

The Institutional Framework of the World Health Organization

The origins of the World Health Organization (WHO) can be traced back to the health conferences held in the 19th century, during which the international community began to recognize the need for an international body to implement the recommendations of these conferences. Prior to the establishment of WHO, several international health organizations were created, such as the Pan American Health Office (1902) and the International Office of Public Health in Paris (1907), both of which aimed to combat the spread of infectious diseases.

First: The Founding Document of the World Health Organization

International jurisprudence has differed regarding the legal characterization of the charters establishing international organizations. Some legal scholars consider such a charter a constitution. Although the WHO Constitution takes the form of a multilateral treaty, the content of its provisions resembles that of a domestic constitution. Considering the WHO's founding document as a constitution carries the following legal implications:

1. The WHO Constitution may only be amended by unanimous agreement of its members.
2. The Constitution is binding on all countries, including non-member states.
3. The provisions of the Constitution take precedence over those of other international treaties.
4. No state may issue reservations on the WHO Constitution.

Another group of legal scholars views the Constitution as a special type of multilateral international treaty one that contains specific and exceptional provisions differing from ordinary treaties (Iman Al-Deeb, 2016, p. 139). A third group considers the WHO Constitution to be both a constitution and a treaty simultaneously. This view is based on the formal criterion, as the Constitution functions as an international treaty with states joining and expressing consent to its provisions, and it enters into force accordingly. From a substantive perspective, the Constitution resembles a constitution in that it addresses the powers of the organization's bodies, the criteria for membership, and the functions and objectives of the organization matters that go beyond the typical scope of international treaties (Mohammad Ramadan, 2021, p. 115).

Applying this view to the WHO's founding document reveals the following:

(a) States may become parties to this Constitution:

1. By signature without reservation as to approval;
2. By signature subject to approval, followed by acceptance;
3. By acceptance.

(b) Acceptance shall be affected by the deposit of a formal instrument with the Secretary-General of the United Nations" (Article 79 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 18).

The amendment of the WHO Constitution is governed by Article 73, which states the following: "The Director-General shall inform the Member States of the text of any proposed amendment to this Constitution at least six months before it is considered by the Health Assembly. The amendment shall take effect for all Member States when adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Health Assembly and accepted by two-thirds of the Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional processes" (Article 73 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 17).

The founding document of the World Health Organization may only be amended through specific and regulated procedures that cannot be bypassed. Any amendment requires the approval of the World Health Assembly by a special majority, in addition to acceptance by two-thirds of the Member States.

It is worth noting that the Constitution is considered a treaty of a special nature. Although it includes provisions similar to those of international treaties, the treaty-based aspect is not predominant. This special nature ensures the rigidity of its provisions, making amendments particularly challenging due to the need for a specific majority. Additionally, Member States are not permitted to make reservations on any of its articles (Ramadan, previously cited, p. 116).

Second: Organs of the World Health Organization and Their Mandates

The World Health Organization comprises several principal organs, each tasked with specific roles and responsibilities aimed at achieving the organization's overall objectives. These organs play a vital role in implementing global health strategies and policies and in addressing the various health challenges facing the

world.

Article 9 of the WHO Constitution states:

"The work of the Organization shall be carried out by:

- (a) The World Health Assembly (hereinafter referred to as the Health Assembly);
- (b) The Executive Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board);
- (c) The Secretariat."

(Article 9 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 5)

The functions of the World Health Assembly are specified in Article 18 of the Constitution, which states:

"(a) To determine the policies of the Organization.

(b) To name the Member States entitled to designate a person to serve on the Board.

(c) To appoint the Director-General.

(d) To consider any matter pertaining to the health of the population.

(e) To establish such committees as may be necessary for the work of the Organization."

(Article 18 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 6)

Furthermore, Article 19 of the Constitution provides:

"The Health Assembly shall have authority to adopt conventions or agreements with respect to any matter within the competence of the Organization. The adoption of such conventions or agreements shall require a two-thirds vote of the Health Assembly and shall come into force for each Member when accepted by it in accordance with its constitutional processes."

This article outlines one of the most important international functions of the Organization and the Assembly namely, the adoption of international health-related agreements (David P. Fidler, Nov. 1998, p. 1087).

The Executive Board is composed of 34 technically qualified members who are elected for a three-year term. The Board holds its annual meetings in January and May, during which it determines the agenda for the World Health Assembly and the resolutions to be considered. Additionally, the Board follows up on the implementation of the Assembly's decisions and submits new technical proposals (Rikka Kastenmäki et al., 2009, p. 18).

The WHO Constitution states:

"The Board shall consist of thirty-four persons designated by as many Member States. The Health Assembly shall elect the Member States entitled to designate a person to serve on the Board, taking into account equitable geographical distribution, and shall elect at least three Member States from each of the regional organizations established pursuant to Article 44. Each of these Member States shall appoint to the Board a technically qualified person in the field of health, who may be accompanied by alternates and advisers." (Article 24 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 8)

The Executive Board meets twice a year: once in January and once following the World Health Assembly in May. Its responsibilities include preparing the Assembly's agenda, implementing its decisions, submitting the draft general program, reviewing the budget, and providing advice on special initiatives. The Board may also take emergency measures concerning financial matters and perform other functions entrusted to it. Various committees are available to support its work, and Member States may respond to the Board's proposals in a report submitted to the World Health Assembly within the year (World Health Organization, United Nations Office, Memorandum of the Director-General's Meeting with Executive Board Members, 31 July 2017, WHO Publications, 2017, p. 17). The Constitution also provides:

"The Board shall meet at least twice a year and shall determine the place of each meeting." (Article 26 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 8)

This article confirms that while the Board is required to meet at least twice a year, it may convene more frequently if necessary.

3. The Secretariat

The Secretariat serves as the administrative and technical body of the World Health Organization, responsible for implementing the organization's activities. It consists of the headquarters in Geneva, six regional offices, and 147 country liaison offices in selected Member States. The Secretariat is headed by the Director-General, who is nominated by the Executive Board and confirmed by the World Health Assembly for a five-year term, renewable once. Among the core responsibilities of the Director-General, as the chief technical and administrative officer, are the appointment of Secretariat staff, preparation of annual financial statements, and drafting of the proposed program budget (Al-Mutairi, 2023, p. 32).

The Director-General presides over the Secretariat and carries significant responsibilities, such as leading the administrative machinery of the organization and negotiating international agreements. Article 30 of the Constitution states: The Secretariat shall comprise the Director-General and such technical and administrative staff as the Organization may require. (Article 30 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 9)

Additionally, the Constitution provides: In the performance of their duties the Director-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials. Each Member State on its part undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Director-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their duties." (Article 37 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2020, p. 10)

Accordingly, the Secretariat of the WHO plays a vital role in achieving the organization's objectives. It is responsible for preparing the financial data necessary for the organization's annual budget, which is then submitted to the Executive Board for review and approval. The Secretariat also strengthens the organization's relations with other international bodies, thus enhancing cooperation in public health and the exchange of expertise and knowledge. Moreover, it maintains continuous communication with Member States, monitoring and discussing public health issues and related matters. Lastly, the Secretariat oversees the appointment of administrative staff, ensuring efficient and effective operations across all departments and health programs (Ramadan, 2021, p. 134).

From the above, it is clear that the World Health Organization was established in response to the international community's need to combat infectious diseases and has evolved into the leading global public health authority. The founding document of the organization serves as a unique legal foundation difficult to amend or reserve upon and its amendment requires approval by Member States through defined procedures. The organization is composed of several key organs: the World Health Assembly, which makes decisions; the Executive Board, which implements them and provides technical advice; and the Secretariat, which manages daily operations, coordinates with countries and other organizations, and prepares the budget and financial data.

Second Subsection

The Effectiveness of the World Health Organization in Confronting the Threat of Drugs and Psychoactive Substances

The World Health Organization (WHO) is one of the most prominent international organizations in promoting public health and faces major challenges in combating drugs and psychoactive substances, which pose a threat to public health and social well-being. The organization works to establish global health policies, provide technical support to Member States, and strengthen international cooperation in the fight against drugs. WHO adopts a scientific approach that focuses on prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, while upholding individual rights. It also supports scientific research aimed at understanding the effects of addiction and contributes to building communities free from the consequences of drug abuse.

Moreover, the WHO plays a vital role in drug control, even though its primary focus remains on the health-related dimensions of the issue. The organization significantly contributes to assisting countries in combating addiction and addressing the impact of drugs and psychoactive substances on public health (Hala Mansour, 2022, p. 73).

One of the primary roles of the World Health Organization is reflected in its recommendations regarding the scheduling of narcotic substances under international agreements such as the 1961 and 1971 Conventions. WHO is entrusted with studying narcotic substances to determine whether they require international control. If the organization finds that a particular substance may negatively affect the nervous system, cause addiction, or induce changes in thought and behavior, it collects scientific and field data about that substance and submits appropriate recommendations to the International Narcotics Control Board regarding its inclusion in control schedules. This is done through a meticulous process that includes reviewing data on the substance's effects on public health, particularly its potential to cause mental or physical disorders (Zaidi, 2024, pp. 819–820).

The WHO also participates in following up on the special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly on drugs and psychoactive substances. These sessions provide an important platform for discussing global drug-related issues, where Member States meet to exchange experiences and develop joint strategies to combat drug abuse. In these meetings, WHO's role involves providing technical advice and participating in the development of public health strategies to combat drugs and psychoactive substances, including preventive and therapeutic measures. It

also works to strengthen health systems in countries facing significant challenges due to the spread of drugs and provides technical and financial support to reduce the burden of drug-related diseases (Atheer, 2024, p. 317).

At another level, WHO contributes to the preparation of strategic projects to combat drugs and psychoactive substances globally, in collaboration with other international bodies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). The organization seeks to develop strategies that include prevention, treatment, and international regulation of narcotic and psychoactive substances. Although some conferences have not been held due to financial issues, UN Member States including several Arab countries have participated in discussions on these strategies and submitted proposals to enhance their effectiveness (Aldirbi, 2023, p. 131).

Since its establishment, the World Health Organization has played a pivotal role in combating drugs and psychoactive substances, particularly by setting standards and guidelines regarding the efficacy and safety of the trade of organic, pharmaceutical, and similar products that fall under the same regulatory provisions in international commerce (Article 21 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization).

The World Health Organization also undertakes the development and implementation of specialized training programs targeting its personnel, including physicians, sociologists, psychologists, and legal experts, with the aim of equipping them to address issues related to drug and psychoactive substance addiction and to provide appropriate treatment for individuals suffering from addiction. These programs also include monitoring newly misused substances in order to place them under international control.

The organization works to ensure the availability of controlled substances for legitimate medical and scientific purposes, a mission considered a fundamental element in its decision-making process. A clear example of this can be seen in WHO's resolutions concerning the fight against diseases such as cancer, the provision of emergency surgical care, anesthesia management, and the treatment of epilepsy (World Health Organization, *The Public Health Dimension of the World Drug Problem*, 28/12/2019).

As the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations system, the World Health Organization plays a central role in promoting and developing the public health approach to addressing the global drug problem. The organization seeks to strengthen the role of health systems in reducing the disease burden resulting from the use of psychoactive substances and improving overall population well-being at all levels.

WHO also recognizes the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as a key entity within the UN system that plays an active role in combating the global drug and psychoactive substance epidemic. In this context, WHO intensifies its efforts to ensure that public health policies related to drugs are aligned with other relevant areas, such as combating non-communicable diseases, reducing alcohol and tobacco consumption, improving road safety, and preventing HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis, and other communicable diseases. It also promotes sexual and reproductive health, supports health systems, and enhances emergency responses.

The organization provides technical and logistical support to Ministries of Health and other public health authorities at the national level to strengthen their capacity to effectively and comprehensively address drug-related challenges (World Health Organization, *The Public Health Dimension of the World Drug Problem*, p. 2).

From the above, it is evident that the World Health Organization, in coordination with the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, monitors narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances. It calls upon governments to ensure that the procurement and supply of internationally controlled medicines meet the needs of patients regardless of the viruses or conditions they suffer from as well as the needs of those requiring such medications for treating various health disorders.

Conclusion

The problem of drugs and psychoactive substances poses a major challenge to both individuals and societies. The spread of these substances reflects various social, psychological, and economic factors that contribute to driving individuals toward addiction and drug use. Drugs and psychoactive substances represent serious health and social challenges that threaten the well-being of individuals and the safety of communities worldwide. The World Health Organization has succeeded in positioning itself at the forefront of global efforts to combat this phenomenon by providing technical support, implementing preventive programs, and strengthening international cooperation. The WHO continues to play a pivotal role in developing integrated strategies for control, awareness, and support for affected individuals. Despite ongoing challenges, international and community cooperation remains the cornerstone for successfully confronting this global threat.

First: Conclusions

1. Drugs and psychoactive substances do not constitute an isolated phenomenon; rather, they are the result of the complex interaction of social, economic, and psychological factors, making it difficult to combat them through unilateral efforts.

2. The World Health Organization plays a pivotal role in addressing the drug problem at the international level through preventive and therapeutic policies, provision of technical support, and participation in establishing international drug control standards.
3. The organization's role goes beyond treatment and prevention to include the development of international strategies, training and qualification programs, and collaboration in revising drug schedules with other UN bodies.
4. The fight against drugs cannot succeed without coordination and integration between local efforts in each country and international initiatives, including legislation, healthcare, community awareness, and preventive programs.
5. The harm of drug abuse is not limited to the addict alone; its impact extends to the family and society, leading to social imbalance and increased rates of crime, unemployment, and poverty.

Second: Recommendations

1. Greater emphasis should be placed on awareness campaigns targeting families, schools, and universities, utilizing modern digital platforms to spread awareness about the dangers of drugs.
2. It is necessary to provide comprehensive psychological and social rehabilitation programs for addicts to ensure their reintegration into society and prevent relapse.
3. It is recommended to strengthen the enforcement of regulations governing the distribution and dispensing of medications that may be misused as psychoactive substances and to monitor black markets more effectively.
4. Specialized scientific research on the psychological and social dimensions of addiction should be supported, as well as the analysis of newly emerging substances to ensure their timely inclusion under international control.
5. States should adopt health policies aligned with WHO recommendations and benefit from the organization's technical and financial support in the field of drug control.
6. Member States to drug control conventions must closely cooperate with the World Health Organization to contribute to the scientific evaluation of policies aimed at reducing drug supply and demand, drug markets, and drug-related crime.

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