

## **Concept for UNDOC side event - *Addressing the Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs and Strengthening Global Responses***

*Vienna Time 13:10-14:00 pm, Wednesday, 14 April, 2021*

*Registration Link:*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_jLrgiJEMToCA4Fad1GKQUA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jLrgiJEMToCA4Fad1GKQUA)

### **Purpose:**

Non-medical use of prescription drugs, including opioids, stimulants, etc., is an increasing concern for law enforcement and public health authorities,<sup>1</sup> particularly driven by the rising phenomenon of non-medical use of prescription drugs in young populations.<sup>2</sup> Remarkably, non-medical use of synthetic opioids fuels opioid crisis and public health concerns in North America by fentanyl, and in West, Central and North Africa by tramadol.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, opioid-related overdose deaths now outnumber overdose deaths involving all illicit drugs such as heroin and cocaine combined in some countries.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, control measures are urgently needed to effectively reduce non-medical use of prescription drugs.

More importantly, when non-medical use of prescription opioids is increasingly prevalent in some regions with higher income, pharmaceutical opioids for pain relief and for treatment of opioid dependence are insufficient for patients in need in low-income countries. More than 90 per cent of all pharmaceutical opioids available for medical consumption are in high-income countries.<sup>3</sup>

As the problem of prescription drug abuse and overdose is complex and multi-faceted, the purpose of this side event is to share information on global and regional prevalence, strategic prevention and effective treatment of non-medical use of prescription drugs, as well as to call for international engagement in the control of non-medical use of prescription drugs to save lives and promote health globally.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.who.int/medicines/news/2018/Meeting\\_report24-25SeptWHO-HQ.pdf](https://www.who.int/medicines/news/2018/Meeting_report24-25SeptWHO-HQ.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Martins SS, Ghandour LA. Nonmedical use of prescription drugs in adolescents and young adults: not just a Western phenomenon. *World Psychiatry*. 2017 Feb;16(1):102-104. doi: 10.1002/wps.20350. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/wps.20350>

<sup>3</sup> UNODC. World Drug Report 2020. [https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2020/field/WDR20\\_BOOKLET\\_1.pdf](https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2020/field/WDR20_BOOKLET_1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/hhs\\_prescription\\_drug\\_abuse\\_report\\_09.2013.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/hhs_prescription_drug_abuse_report_09.2013.pdf)

**This side event will invite representatives from International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and renowned experts from China, US, and Singapore to:**

- Introduce an updated review of current global, regional and country trends in non-medical use of prescription drugs
- Demonstrate an overview on effective strategies and practices for addressing the challenges of non-medical use of prescription drugs
- Share successful approaches and lessons learnt at the country and regional levels to prevent and deal with challenges triggered by non-medical use of prescription drugs
- Strengthen global responses and international collaboration on formulating relevant policies and practices for addressing challenges related to non-medical use of prescription drugs

**China's perspective on non-medical use of prescription drugs:**

Although facing an increasingly severe international situation, China has relatively low prevalence of non-medical use of prescription drugs,<sup>5</sup> with the mostly abused prescription drugs including morphine, tramadol, diazepam, methadone, oral solution containing codeine, compound diphenoxylate, and compound liquorice, and has witnessed a reducing trend. As a country with a large general population and a large number of patients with chronic pain and mental disorders, China has a usage rate of psychoactive prescription drugs including opioid analgesics below the world average level. At the same time, the proportion of chronic pain patients receiving effective analgesia in China is much lower than that in high-income countries. Therefore, while sharing experiences and successful practices in restricting the non-medication use of prescription drugs in China, how strictly their medical use should be controlled also needs to be addressed. A balance should be well maintained. Dynamic surveillance system for non-medical use of prescription drugs needs to be established, and meanwhile, monitoring and training programs should be developed to ensure that such drugs are available to those in need and diversion for non-medical purposes is avoided.

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<sup>5</sup> Bao Y, Meng S, Shi J, Lu L. Control of fentanyl-related substances in China. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2019 Jul;6(7):e15. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30218-4. <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2819%2930218-4>

### **Structure of event:**

- **13:10-13:20 Dr. Cornelis P. de Joncheere**, President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), to introduce the global and regional status on non-medical use of prescription drugs and call for international collaborations and responses to challenges triggered by these drugs at global, regional and country levels.
- **13:20-13:30 Prof. Lin Lu**, Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Director of National Institute on Drug Dependence, Peking University Sixth Hospital, and National Clinical Research Center for Mental Disorders, to outline non-medical use of prescription drugs and strategies in balancing medical and non-medical use of prescription drugs in China.
- **13:30-13:40 Prof. Thomas Kosten**, Director of Division of Alcohol and Addiction Psychiatry, Baylor College of Medicine, and Past President of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, to share current trend, control measures and dynamic monitoring system of non-medical use of prescription drugs in the US.
- **13:40-13:50 Prof. Munidasa Winslow**, ex-chief of the Addiction Medicine Department at Institute of Mental Health and playing a pioneering role in the setting up of the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) in Singapore, to illustrate effective prevention and treatment strategies for non-medical use of prescription drugs and overdose related diseases.
- **13:50-14:00 Q & A.**
- **Moderator: Prof. Lin Lu**

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**Deadline for first-round registration:** 9 April, 2021 (Spaces are limited. Please click the link and register before 9 April to ensure your admissibility to the event. Registrations after 9 April will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis)

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