

References to Argentina

Part 1

RECENT STATISTICS AND TREND ANALYSIS OF ILLICIT DRUG MARKETS

A. EXTENT OF ILLICIT DRUG USE AND HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

The Americas (pages 12 to 14 WDR 13)

In the Americas, a high prevalence of most illicit drugs, essentially driven by estimates in North America, was observed, with the prevalence of cannabis (7.9 per cent) and cocaine (1.3 per cent) being particularly high in the region.

South America, Central America and the Caribbean

The annual prevalence of cocaine use in South America (1.3 per cent of the adult population) is comparable to levels in North America, while it remains much higher than the global average in Central America (0.6 per cent) and the Caribbean (0.7 per cent). Cocaine use has increased significantly in Brazil, Costa Rica and, to lesser extent, Peru while no change in its use was reported in Argentina.

The use of cannabis in South America is higher (5.7 per cent) than the global average, but lower in Central America and Caribbean (2.6 and 2.8 per cent respectively). In South America and Central America the use of opioids (0.3 and 0.2 per cent, respectively) and Ecstasy (0.1 per cent each) also remain well below the global average. While opiates use remains low, countries such as Colombia report that heroin use is becoming increasingly common among certain age groups and socio-economic classes.³⁰

Part 2

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

C. THE RECENT EMERGENCE AND SPREAD OF NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (page 67 WDR 13)

Spread at the global level

Number of countries reporting the emergence of new psychoactive substances Pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 55/1, entitled “Promoting international cooperation in responding to the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances”, in 2012 UNODC sent a questionnaire on NPS to all Member States, to which 80 countries and territories replied. Most responses were received from countries in Europe (33), followed by countries and territories in Asia (23), in the Americas (12), in Africa (10) and in the Oceania region (2). In total 70 countries and territories, 70 i.e. 88 per cent of all responding countries, reported the emergence of NPS. Only 10 countries had not identified NPS in recent years.

Latin America and the Caribbean (pages 89 to 91 WDR 13)

NPS have also started to emerge in the countries of Latin America, even though, generally speaking, levels of misuse of such substances in the region are lower than in North America or Europe. Countries reporting the emergence of NPS included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay. NPS reported included ketamine and plant-based substances, followed by piperazines, synthetic cathinones, phenethylamines and, to a lesser extent, synthetic cannabinoids. Brazil, for instance, reported the emergence of mephedrone and of DMMA (a phenethylamine) in its market; Chile reported the emergence of *Salvia divinorum* and tryptamine; and Costa Rica reported the emergence of *N*-benzylpiperazine (BZP) and TFMPP, two piperazines.

In addition, a number of other NPS have also started to appear on the market. For instance, the misuse of ketamine has been reported in household surveys, notably in the two largest countries of the Southern Cone. A national household survey conducted in Argentina in 2010 found a lifetime prevalence of ketamine use of 0.3 per cent among the population aged 12 to 65. This was, however, still lower than the lifetime prevalence rates for ketamine use reported from the United Kingdom (2.2 per cent), Australia (1.4 per cent) and the United States (1.0 per cent). Nonetheless,

ketamine use in Argentina is not insignificant. The prevalence rate for its use was about half the reported domestic prevalence rate for “ecstasy” use (0.6 per cent), slightly higher than the rate for non-prescribed amphetamines (0.2 per cent) and far higher than the lifetime prevalence rate for the use of crack cocaine (0.1 per cent) or heroin (0.1 per cent).

An earlier household survey conducted in Brazil in 2005 found a lifetime prevalence rate for ketamine use of 0.2 per cent among those aged 12 to 65. This was equivalent to the lifetime use of *merla*, a variant of smokeable cocaine paste/base, and greater than the prevalence of heroin use (0.09 per cent). Another NPS reported in the household survey from Brazil was “Benflogin” (benzylamine), with a lifetime prevalence rate of 0.4 per cent among the age group 12 to 65.

This is a locally acting medicine with anaesthetic and analgesic properties for treatment of inflammatory conditions of the mouth and throat. Taken in high doses, it is misused in Brazil and a few other countries as a central nervous system stimulant and deliriant (special class of hallucinogens).

An analysis, using Google Trends, of Internet searches via Google for the period 2005-2012 within Latin America revealed an interest in the terms “ketamine” or “ketamina”, not only in Argentina and Brazil but also in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Salvia divinorum, also known in Mexico as “*ska pastora*”, “*ska María*”, “*hierba María*” or “*hierba des los dioses*”, appears to be popular (based on Google Internet searches) in various Latin American countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico. Originally used by shamans of the Mazatec tribe of Mexico for religious purposes and during spiritual healing sessions, *Salvia divinorum* is currently popular for reasons well beyond its traditional use. It has already emerged as the second most widely offered NPS in 2011. At the beginning of 2012 it was offered in online shops in the European Union.

The emergence of synthetic cathinones was reported by Brazil and Mexico. Again, interest in the various cathinone derivatives appears to be limited in Latin America. This may have to do with the ample availability of cocaine in the region. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico reported the emergence of piperazines on their markets. That problem also seems to be limited in scope. This may be attributed to the fact that the region is rather well supplied with “ecstasy”, so there is no urgent need to look for alternative substances.