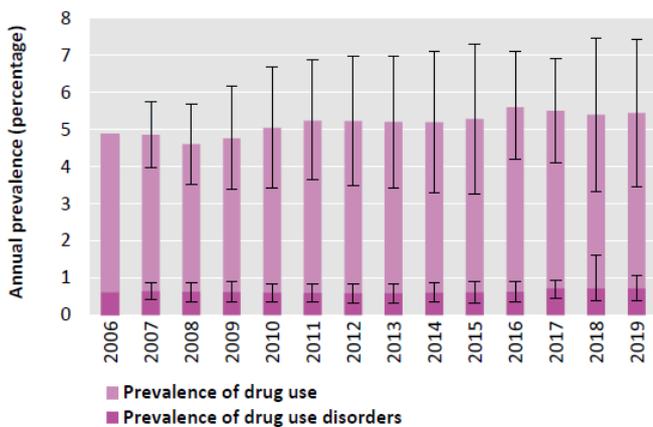


## Introduction: Substance Use Around the World

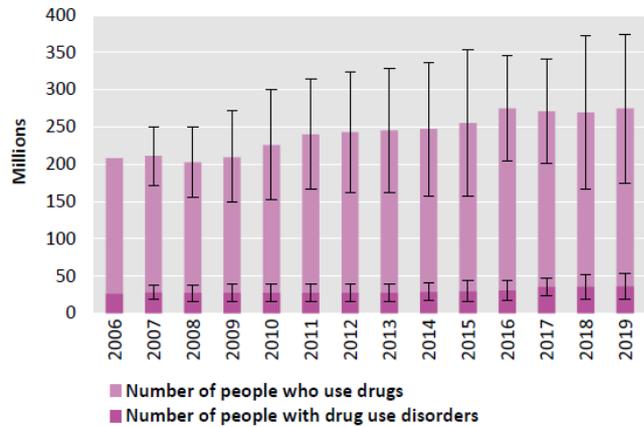
**Figure 1. Global prevalence of drug use and drug use disorders**



Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

Note: Annual prevalence estimates are based on the percentage of adults (aged 15–64) who used drugs in the past year. The global estimates of the extent of drug use and drug use disorders reflect the best available information for 2019. Changes compared with previous years largely reflect the information

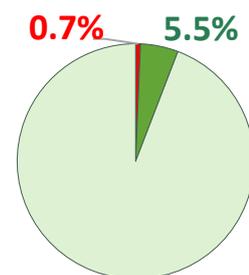
**Figure 2. Global number of people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders**



Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

Note: Estimated number of people (aged 15–64) who used drugs in the past year.

In 2019, an estimated 275 million people worldwide aged 15–64, or 1 in every 18 people in that age group, had used drugs at least once in the previous year. This corresponds to 5.5 per cent of the global population aged 15–64. Among the estimated 275 million people past-year users of any drug, approximately 36.3 million are estimated to suffer from drug use disorders, meaning that their drug use is harmful to the point where they may experience drug dependence and/or require treatment. . This corresponds to a prevalence of drug use disorders of 0.7 per cent globally among the population aged 15–64.



**Figure 3 The Extent of Drug Use**

Also, more than 11 million people worldwide inject drugs. People who inject drugs (PWID) are a particularly vulnerable population who potentially experience multiple negative health consequences as a result of injecting drug use. They are at an increased risk of acquiring serious, life-threatening infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C through the sharing of contaminated needles and syringes and are also at high risk of non-fatal and fatal overdose.

# Understanding Substance Use Prevention

## What is Substance Use?

'Drug use' is used to refer to the use of psychoactive substances outside the framework of legitimate use for medical or scientific purposes in line with the three International Conventions<sup>1</sup>. 'Substance use' is used to refer to the use of psychoactive substances regardless of their controlled status, including non-medical, hazardous and harmful use of psychoactive substances. In addition to drug use, this includes the use of tobacco, alcohol, inhalant and new psychoactive substances (so-called 'legal highs' or 'smart drugs')

## Why is Prevention of Health and Social Problems Important for any Nation?

Good health is linked to Rising incomes, Increased productivity, Children's education, and Adult well-being.

## What is Substance Use Prevention?

The primary objective of substance use prevention is to help people, particularly youth, avoid or delay the initiation of the use of psychoactive substances, or, if they have started already, to avoid the development of disorders. The general aim of prevention is much broader, the healthy and safe development of children and youth to realize their full potential and become contributing members of their community and society.

## Overarching areas to consider in substance use prevention efforts:

- Epidemiology of substance use and development nature of substance use
- Vulnerability to Substance Use and Progression to Addiction
- The Etiology Model: Substance use is a result of interactions between environmental factors and the characteristics of individuals
- The "science of prevention" and how it can provide effective interventions
- UNODC/WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention: evidence-based (EB) interventions and policies and how to use them

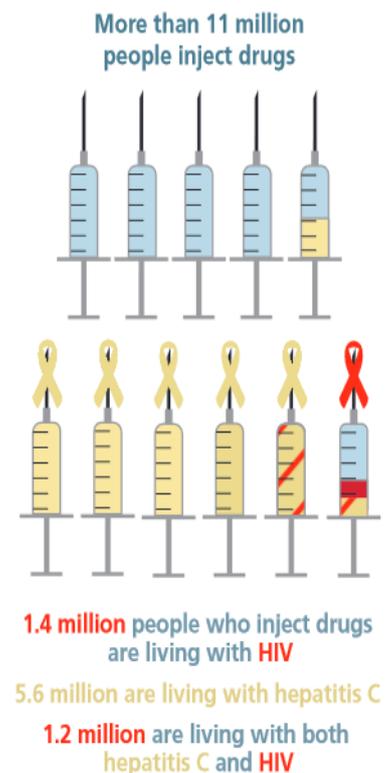


Figure 4 PWID Population

<sup>1</sup> Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1954 as amended by the 1972 Protocol; Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971; and United Nations Convention against illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.