



WHO/Mwananyamala Methadone Clinic, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH DIMENSION OF THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM

How WHO works to prevent drug use, reduce harm and
improve safe access to medicines



World Health
Organization

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WHO/MVP/EMP/2019.02

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Suggested citation. The public health dimension of the world drug problem: how WHO works to prevent drug misuse, reduce harm and improve safe access to medicine. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 (WHO/MVP/EMP/2019.02). Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data. CIP data are available at <http://apps.who.int/iris>.

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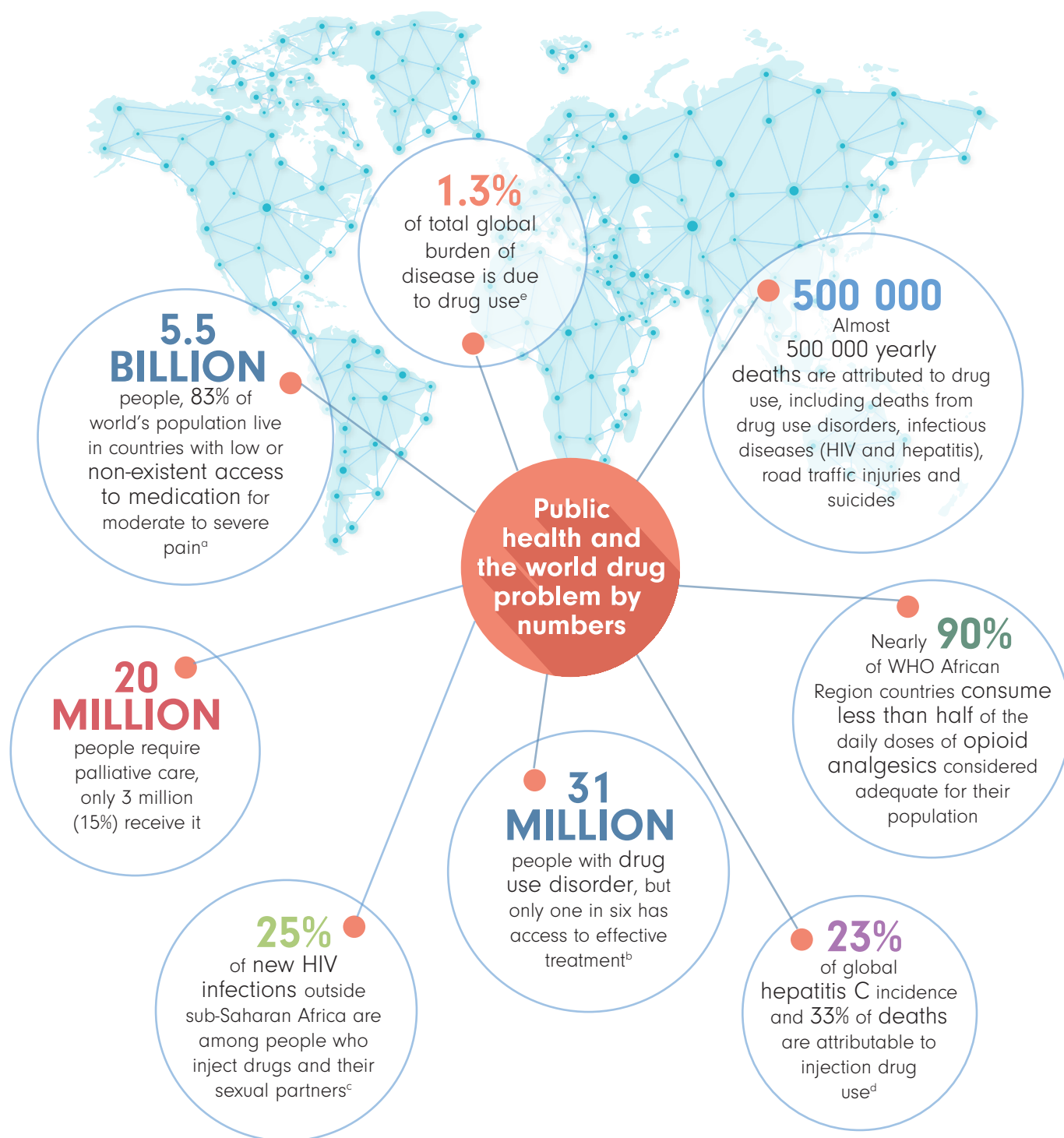
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PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM BY NUMBERS



a International Narcotics Control Bureau Annual Report 2015.

b World Drug Report, 2015.

c UNAIDS Data 2018.

d WHO Global Hepatitis Report, 2017

e Global Burden of Disease Study, 2016

INTRODUCTION

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The world drug problem has multiple public health dimensions encompassing vulnerability to drug use disorders and dependence, treatment and care of people with drug use disorders, reducing harm associated with drug misuse, and access to controlled medicines for medical pain relief.

It demands a multi-sectoral response including public health, law enforcement, education and social policy. Globally, there are legal, political and economic challenges to addressing the world drug problem. There are also human rights concerns. Ten years on from the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem,¹ the complexity of the world drug problem is more apparent than ever.

In 2016, the United Nations reaffirmed the need for a multi-sectoral approach, particularly to the health-related dimensions of the world drug problem. Prevention of drug misuse, treatment of drug use disorders and appropriate access to controlled substances are all highlighted in the outcome document of the 13th special session of the General Assembly, Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem.²

In partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which is recognized as the leading UN entity for countering the world drug problem, the World Health Organization (WHO) has a pivotal and unique role in addressing the public health and human rights dimensions of global issues related to drugs.



WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM REMAINS A COMMON AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN A MULTILATERAL SETTING THROUGH EFFECTIVE AND INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEMANDS AN INTEGRATED, MULTIDISCIPLINARY.

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