

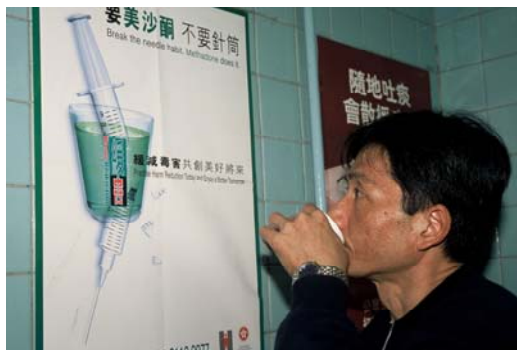
Access and Control Newsletter

The Access and Control Newsletter is sent by the World Health Organization, Department of Essential Medicines and Pharmaceutical Policies, Medicine Access and Rational Use Unit. The Newsletter provides you with the latest news from WHO on the following issues:

- access to medicines controlled under the international drug treaties
- evaluation of substances for their dependence producing properties

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Methadone outreach in China

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WHO Executive Board decides on Internet consultation

At its 125th session in May 2009, WHO's Executive Board discussed briefly the *Guidance for the WHO review of psychoactive substances for international control: proposed revision* and decided to hold an Internet consultation among its Member States in order to prepare for a further discussion of the *Guidelines* at its 126th session in January 2010. The Ministry of Health of each Member State received a circular letter on how to participate in the consultation. The [proposed revision of the guidelines](#) is available on the WHO Governance website.

Guidelines on treatment of dependence

In early 2009, WHO published the [Guidelines for the Psychosocially Assisted Pharmacological Treatment of Opioid Dependence](#). The *Guidelines* were developed by the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and a guidelines development group of technical experts.

The *Guidelines* review the use of medicines such as methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone and clonidine as well as psychosocial support to treat people dependent on heroin or other opioids. Based on a systematic literature review, and using the GRADE approach to determine evidence quality, the *Guidelines* make specific recommendations regarding organization of treatment systems, management of treatment programmes and treatment of people dependent on opioids.

The *Guidelines'* intended audience consists of policy makers and administrators who make decisions on the availability of medicines and services, managers and clinical leaders responsible for specific health-care services, and health-care workers treating patients.

35th ECDD

The 35th Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD), previously scheduled for September 2009, has been further postponed for an indefinite period. Preparation of the meeting is taking considerably more time than expected.

It is anticipated that a decision on the revision of the *Guidelines for the WHO review of psychoactive substances for international control* will be taken by the WHO Executive Board in January 2010, which will help clarify the procedures to be followed by the ECDD and the WHO Secretariat. [Information on the meeting can be found on the controlled substances page of the WHO website.](#) Any new information will also be posted here.

Development of WHO Pain Treatment Guidelines

WHO is preparing a series of guidelines for the treatment of pain. Preparation of the *WHO Treatment Guidelines on Chronic Pain in Children* is half completed. Based on the [Scoping Document for WHO Treatment Guidelines on Chronic Pain in Children](#), the literature has been reviewed and the evidence retrieved. The documentation on the evidence has been sent to a panel of experts for review. WHO aims to hold a meeting of a Guidelines Advisory Panel of technical experts in 2010 to finalize the contents of these paediatric guidelines. The evidence retrieval for the *WHO Treatment Guidelines on Chronic Pain in Adults* is about to start, likewise the drafting of a scoping document for *WHO Treatment Guidelines on Acute Pain*. Subject to sufficient funding, the *WHO Treatment Guidelines on Chronic Pain in Children* will be published in 2010, those on *Chronic Pain in Adults* in 2011 and those on *Acute Pain* in 2012.

Estimates for narcotic drugs

WHO and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) are developing Joint INCB-WHO guidelines on calculating adequate estimates for drugs controlled under international conventions. The guidelines will provide methods for calculating adequate estimates for narcotic drugs, assessments for psychotropic substances and estimates for the pharmaceutical requirements of ergometrine, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. It is expected that the guidelines will make a substantial contribution to making appropriate amounts of opioid medicines and other controlled medicines available for meeting treatment needs at country level. Subject to sufficient funding, the guidelines will be available by the end of 2010.

INCB Membership

In May 2009 the United Nation's Economic, Cultural and Social Council elected several new members to the International Narcotics Control Board, including one of three candidates –

Professor Rajat Ray – nominated by WHO. Professor Ray is Professor and Head of the Department of Psychiatry and Chief of the [National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences](#), New Delhi, India. He will take office in March 2010, succeeding Dr Philip Emafo, who has been a member of the Board since 2000 and who was Board president in 2002, 2003, 2006 and 2007.

52nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs

At its 52nd Session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) discussed, *inter alia*, *international cooperation to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes*. Many representatives spoke of the importance of ensuring access to controlled medicines, in particular for the relief of moderate to severe pain. Referring to WHO data that shows that access to such medicines is limited in over 150 countries and that 86 million people worldwide are suffering from untreated pain, speakers welcomed and expressed their support for the work undertaken by WHO in cooperation with the INCB under the Access to Controlled Medications Programme. (See the [Report on the 52nd Session](#) (paragraph 86, page 94.)

The Commission decided to include availability, once again, as an agenda item for its 53rd session in 2010. (See the report, page 4: Chapter I, Section B, Draft decision 1, agenda item 9(c).)

CND also adopted Resolution 52/2, *Exploration of all aspects related to the use of cannabis seeds for illicit purposes*. It requests, *inter alia*, "the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to share information regarding the health risks posed by cannabis with the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence of the World Health Organization, and, in that regard, looks forward to an updated report on cannabis by the Expert Committee, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources" (page 15 of the report). The Commission also decided that US\$ 70,200 will be made available as a contribution to the preparation of the documentation and the organization of an Expert Committee meeting (see the Report, Annex VII, page 137).

International Pain Policy Fellows

The Pain & Policy Studies Group (PPSG)/WHO Collaborating Center at the University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center hosted an update meeting of its 2008 class of International Pain Policy Fellows (IPPF) from 24-26 June 2009. Held in Madison, the update served as an opportunity for the Fellows to share their progress and experiences to improve availability of essential opioid pain medications in their respective countries (Armenia, Georgia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kenya, and Nepal) following the IPPF training course held one year ago. Topics discussed included drug procurement and supply chain issues, legal and regulatory requirements, international drug convention obligations, and systems issues including healthcare infrastructure and level of palliative care development and education.

Several international experts and observers, including Dr

Willem Scholten of the WHO Access to Controlled Medications Programme, gathered with the PPSG to learn about the Fellows' activities and challenges and to provide feedback and advice on how the Fellows can achieve their objectives to improve patient access to opioid pain medications in the second year of their Fellowship. [More information](#)

25th anniversary gala for "Help the Hospices"

On 16 March 2009, Dr Jim Cleary, Director of the WHO Collaborating Center for Policy and Communications in Cancer Care at the University of Wisconsin, attended the 25th anniversary gala for "Help the Hospices" in London. In addition to highlighting the work of the Pain & Policy Studies Group (PPSG) with attending global pain management and palliative care colleagues, Dr. Cleary was very pleased to speak with Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, about the successful work of PPSG's Fellow in Sierra Leone, Mr Gabriel Madiye.

LIVESTRONG Global Cancer Summit

Dr Ala Alwan, Assistant Director-General, Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health, Dr Hans V. Hogerzeil, Director, Essential Medicines and Pharmaceutical Policies and acting on behalf of Dr Carissa Etienne, Assistant Director-General, Health Systems and Services, and other staff members of WHO and representatives from the WHO Collaborating Center on Communications and Policy in Cancer Care/Pain & Policy Studies Group in Wisconsin attended the LIVESTRONG Global Cancer Summit in Dublin from 24-26 August 2009. The Summit was organized by the Lance Armstrong Foundation with the purpose of bringing together world leaders, corporations, non-governmental organizations and individuals to spotlight their collective contributions to the global fight against cancer through a sharing of their experiences, stories and commitments with the hope of changing the course of cancer history. Several PPSG International Pain Policy Fellows and representatives from their governments have also been invited to attend in recognition of their ongoing contributions to fighting the stigma of cancer and promoting the availability of essential opioid analgesics. [More information](#)

See also our [controlled medicines website](#)

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http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/quality_safety/Access_Contr_Newsletter/en/index.html

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