



Prevention of Transmission of HIV among Drug Users in SAARC Countries



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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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Assistance for containment of the HIV/AIDS infection, which is now concentrated among injecting drug users, is the most important and urgent contribution that UNODC is making towards Pakistan's achievement of the MDGs by 2015, notably Goal number (6) "Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases". In pursuing its strategic objectives, UNODC is working within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in support of the Government of Pakistan's efforts to meet the goals of the 1998 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS). UNODC seeks to collaborate with other UN organizations and with bilateral donors to increase international assistance to Pakistan for the prevention of drug abuse, treatment and rehabilitation of drug users and prevention of the HIV infection as a result of injecting drug use.

UNODC is developing and supporting activities to: (i) assist government institutions to collect and analyze data to inform policy deliberations on prevention and treatment of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS; (ii) test new approaches to promote application of best practices in relation to vulnerable populations; (iii) develop capacity in government institutions and civil society organizations for prevention of drug abuse and HIV transmission and treatment and rehabilitation of drug users; (iv) assist women with substance abuse problems; (v) provide assistance for street children abusing drugs and solvents. (vi) increase the capacity of prison staff and NGOs to undertake drug abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention work in prisons; (vii) introduce a pilot oral substitution treatment programme for the management of opiate dependence; and (viii) prevention, treatment and reduction of health and social consequences of drug use and dependence.



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UNODC in Pakistan

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UNODC's Work

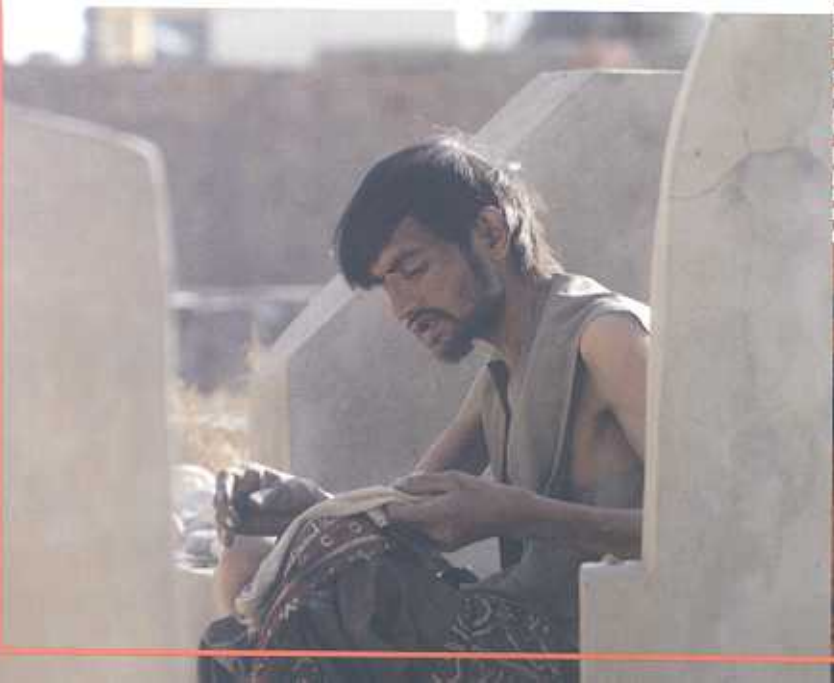
UNODC, a cosponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS is the lead agency in the UNAIDS family for HIV/AIDS prevention and care among injecting drug users and in prison settings.

UNODC is mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into its activities globally and at regional and country levels, and is helping countries and civil society organizations to develop and implement comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes for injecting drug users and in prison settings.

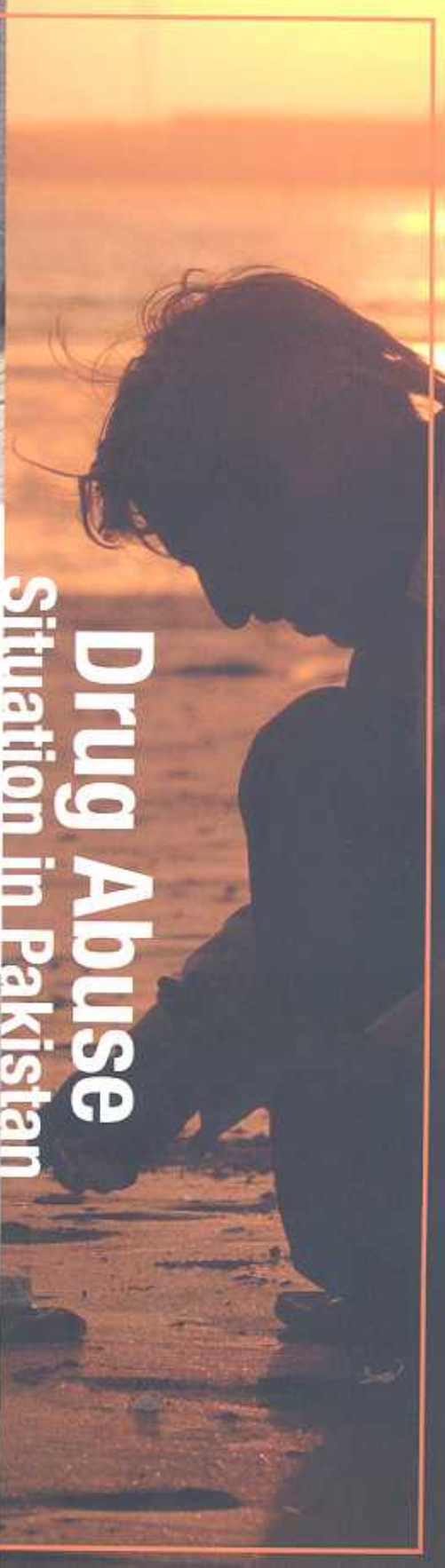




According to the National Drug Abuse Assessment -2006/07 there are an estimated 628,000 (0.7 percent of the adult population -15-64 years) opioid users (heroin, morphine, opium, codine, pentazocine, buprenorphine etc) in Pakistan. Out of the total around 77 percent (484,000) are heroin users. There are an estimated 125,000 injecting drug users. It is important to note that in year the 2000 the absolute number of injecting drug users in Pakistan was 60,000, a figure that almost doubled in 2007- an alarming trend that needs to be addressed as a priority.



Drug Abuse Situation in Pakistan





Drug-Related HIV

Pakistan is, at present, a concentrated HIV/AIDS epidemic country. WHO/UNAIDS estimates that there are between 46,000-210,000 adult HIV positive cases in Pakistan. The overall sero-prevalence of HIV among IDUs is 21% with high variability between cities¹. The highest prevalence was in Hyderabad (30.5%), Larkana (28.5%), Karachi (23.1%) and Sargodha(22.8%). The findings of another study² conducted by an NGO in the cities of Lahore, Sargodha and Faisalabad to assess the risks of spouses of IDUs revealed that 15-20% of the spouses inject drugs. Sexual networking between commercial sex workers (i.e. FSWs, MSWs and HSWs) and IDUs will increase the potential for an HIV epidemic. The greater the overlap between high-risk populations, the quicker the spread of HIV to other groups and subsequently to the general population.

¹ HIV Second Generation Surveillance in Pakistan National Report Round III 2008

² The Hidden Truth: A study of HIV vulnerability, risk factors and prevalence among men injecting drugs and their wives, Nai Zindagi. 2008





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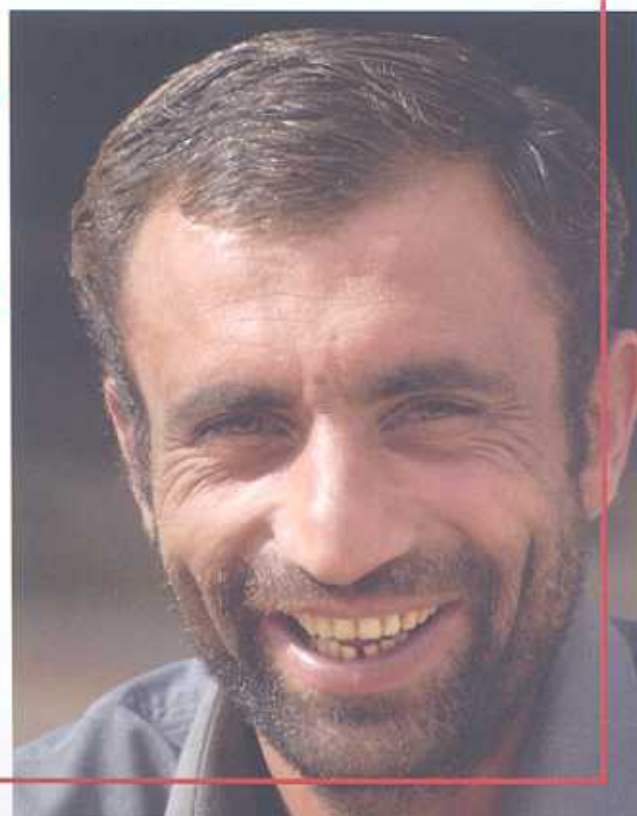


The primary objective of this project is:

“To assist governments and communities to scale up comprehensive HIV prevention and care programs for drug users especially among IDUs and their regular sex partners”

The key components include;

- Increased advocacy with policy-makers for the comprehensive drug treatment;
- Demonstration of effective harm reduction approaches;
- A ‘comprehensive package’ of services including an established pilot Oral Substitution Treatment (OST) programme.



Our Mission



The mission of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is to contribute to the achievement of security and justice for all by making the world safer from crime, drugs and terrorism.





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