



NACD

National Advisory
Committee on Drugs

Prevalence
Consequences
Treatment/Rehabilitation
Prevention
Early Warning/Emerging Trends

Prevention
Consequences
Prevalence
Treatment/Rehabilitation

Our goal is to advise the Government on problem drug use in Ireland in relation to prevalence, prevention, consequences and treatment based on our analysis and interpretation of research findings.

Research
Knowledge
Policy
Analysis
Dissemination
Influence

The Drug Problem in Ireland

A recent review of the Government's drug policy outlined the nature and extent of the drug problem in Ireland. It showed that "...cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug in Ireland, followed by Ecstasy. However, in terms of harm to the individual and the community heroin has by far the greatest impact" (*Minister Eoin Ryan T.D. at the launch of the National Drug Strategy, Building on Experience 2001*). Gathering information, developing our knowledge and building our understanding of why some people develop drug problems and not others is essential. We need to know what to do, when to do it and how, if we are to make any difference to the lives of people affected by problem drug use.

What is the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD)

The NACD was established in response to the drug problem and the continued need to improve our knowledge and understanding of problem drug use. The NACD's primary role is to provide analysis of research findings and information commissioned or available to it and advise the Government in relation to the following:

Prevalence	how many people use drugs, what types of drugs at what age, and in what areas
Prevention	activities aimed at reducing drug use in the general and specific population(s)
Treatment/Rehabilitation	activities aimed at changing or modifying behaviour to reduce drug use, harm and prevent relapse
Consequences	the impact of drug use on individuals, families and communities

According to Minister Ryan "the new National Advisory Committee will make a very valuable contribution to the development of drugs policy in Ireland by providing a more focused and integrated approach to the analysis of data."

The Committee is funded directly by the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation and reports to the Minister of State with special responsibility for the National Drug Strategy. A budget of £3million over three years has been allocated to the NACD. Further information can be obtained from our website www.nacd.ie.

Composition of the NACD

The membership reflects the different perspectives in the field of drug misuse. They have been drawn from the statutory, community, voluntary, academic and research sectors together with senior level representation from the relevant Government Departments, by invitation of the Minister. An up to date list of members, describing their backgrounds and the expertise/experience they bring, can be seen on our website.

Meetings

The NACD meets monthly and whilst the full membership is 20 people a quorum of seven is needed for decisions to be ratified. Five Sub Committees have been established in line with the prioritised work programme:

- Prevention
- Prevalence
- Consequences
- Treatment/Rehabilitation
- Early warning and emerging trends

The membership of these committees comprises NACD members and additional people co-opted for their relevant expertise.

Principal Functions of the NACD

1. Review current information and research capacity
2. Identify gaps in our knowledge and understanding
3. Ensure better use of information available from all sectors
4. Provide analysis and interpretation of research findings
5. Respond to Government requests to research issues of relevance to policy
6. Work with the Drug Misuse Research Division of the Health Research Board; assist with the establishment of a National Documentation Centre
7. Implement the three year programme of research and evaluation liaising with all the relevant agencies and avoiding duplication of work; co-ordinate and advise on appropriate research projects; commission research projects
8. Promote and encourage debate through the dissemination of research findings.

National Advisory Committee on Drugs - Three Year Work Programme

Inventory of Research and Information

- to compile a comprehensive inventory of existing research, information and data sets relating to the prevalence, prevention, treatment/rehabilitation and consequences of problem drug use in Ireland

Improved co-ordination of research and data collection

- to open communication channels with key agencies to ensure that the NACD is kept informed of any new research being undertaken or new data being collected
- to establish a research network which will ensure better co-ordination and integration of research projects among relevant agencies and maximise resources in the context of the NACD's programme of research

Prevalence

- to determine the size and nature of drug problems in Ireland
- to determine the extent and nature of opiate use, poly-drug use and patterns of drug use (experimental, occasional, regular, non-medical, and problem use) particularly among young people under 25
- to identify emerging trends and geographical spread
- to determine the extent and nature of problem use of prescription drugs
- to determine the prevalence of problem drug users not in contact with treatment services

Prevention

- to examine the effectiveness in terms of impact and outcomes of existing prevention models and programmes, with particular regard to evaluation instruments developed at European level
- to undertake comparative studies of different models with particular reference to those in operation in Task Force areas
- to determine transferability of models among different target groups

Treatment/Rehabilitation

- to examine the effectiveness in terms of impact and outcomes of existing treatment and rehabilitation models and programmes
- to undertake longitudinal studies of the effectiveness of existing treatment and rehabilitation models
- to examine the context in which relapse occurs
- to examine the impact of the treatment setting

Consequences

- To examine the impact of drug problems on society in terms of:
 - drug related deaths
 - the effect of drugs on the family and communities
 - the relationship between drugs and crime
 - the methods for tackling social nuisance related to drug misuse

Building Research Capacity

Research projects identified by the Committee are commissioned through the public tendering process. In addition, the NACD will operate a number of research grants to extend our knowledge base and build capacity in drugs research.

If you are interested in receiving more information about any of the above contact us on the numbers below. Alternatively visit our website at www.nacd.ie.

Staffing

We have a small team based in Shelbourne House. A Director and Researcher have been appointed together with a Higher Executive Officer and a Clerical Officer who have been seconded from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation.

NACD Membership

Chairperson

Dr Des Corrigan, Head of School of Pharmacy, Trinity College

Vice Chairperson

Dr Mary Ellen McCann, Voluntary Sector, Ballymun Youth Action Project

Members

Ms Anna Quigley, Dublin Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign

Ms Kathleen Stack, Drug Strategy Unit, Department Tourism, Sport & Recreation

Dr Mark Morgan, St Patrick's College, Dublin

Ms Mary Jackson, Department of Health and Children

Detective Superintendent Finbarr O'Brien, Garda National Drug Unit

Dr Hamish Sinclair, Drug Misuse Research Division, Health Research Board

Mr Willie Collins, Southern Health Board

Dr Joe Barry, Eastern Regional Health Authority

Mr William Byrne, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Mr Gary Broderick, Voluntary Sector, Ana Liffey Project

Fr Liam O'Brien, Community Drug Treatment Sector

Dr Eamon Keenan, Consultant Psychiatrist, Eastern Regional Health Authority

Dr Derval Howley, National Drug Strategy Team

Dr Louis O'Carroll, Eastern Regional Health Authority

Dr Shane Butler, Trinity College, Dublin

Mr David Moloney, Department of Health and Children

Mr Jimmy Connolly, Institute of Alcohol and Addiction Counsellors

Ms Ruby Morrow, Department of Education and Science

Chairpersons of sub committees

Prevention Ms Ruby Morrow

Prevalence Dr Des Corrigan

Consequences Ms Anna Quigley

Treatment Mr Gary Broderick

Early Warning Ms Mary Jackson

Director Ms Mairéad Lyons

Researcher Ms Aileen O'Gorman

Secretariat Mr Pat O'Grady

Mr Declan Crean



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National Advisory
Committee on Drugs

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