

Free research paper on drug abuse in italy

[Health & Medicine](#), [Addiction](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

(Tutor's Name)

Drug abuse (also known as ' Substance Abuse') is rampant in various parts of the world. It poses unique challenges to a society that is preoccupied with the business of living. It not only affects the quality of life of an individual, but also has a bearing on the social fabric of the community at large. The dependence on drugs shows a deep-seated weakness of the human mind for mood enhancers. One feels transported to a different plane initially.

However, dependence sets in with repeated and prolonged use. The western hemisphere shows similar traits in this regard. Europe in general and Italy in particular are no exceptions to the prevalence of drug abuse. Italy provides a landscape for studying this menace in the context of the Eurozone.

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is an agency involved in the addiction field in the Eurozone. A survey conducted in 2012 classified the use of banned substances. It was found that the youth indulged more in drugs than other age groups. Similar studies were performed to study the prevalence of drugs in the air and in waste water. EMCDDA has defined the term high drug use to include injecting or prolonged use of such substances. More substances have been included in the high risk category as of 2012.

Infectious diseases were found to be more prevalent women who inject drugs than among men. However, the drug induced deaths have been on the decline over the years. As per the EMCDDA data, the average age of death in such cases was 36. 8 years, with opiates causing death in 163 cases. The death rate in Italy is lower than the European average. The drug supply to Italy has been from Columbia, Afghanistan, the Netherlands among other

countries. The drug trade is dominated by organised dealers with strong networks outside the region. Italy was also the entry point for drugs to other European countries. Personal use of drugs can attract a prison term of up to one year, whereas producing, selling or distributing drugs can attract up to 20 years in jail. This term can be reduced depending on the quality and quantity of drugs involved. A person found with drugs for the first time is let off with a warning not to repeat the offence (EMCDDA).

In a study entitled ‘Illegal Substance Use among Italian High School Students’ over a ten year period from 1999, Molinaro et al drew the following conclusions; Illicit drug use was expanding among high school students. In spite of various limitations viz. the cost of drugs, availability, legislations, changing culture and politics etc, the consumption of drugs has remained stable. Though there are well known effects of drug abuse in the long term, not much effort has gone into the short term effects of this issue (Molinaro and Sabrina et al.)

Bologna, capital of Emilia Romagna in Italy, is a situational example for the prevalence of drugs in Italy. It has one of the largest universities in the country and attracts many students, even foreign ones to it. Since it has a young population, it contributes significantly to the Italian economy. This is precisely why it falls prey to drugs. Drugs from Spain, Holland and south-eastern Europe reach Bologna easily. Foreign peddlers are known to control the trade in Bologna. While the use of heroin and cocaine has been falling, there are more people who smoke these drugs. This is where NARCONON International, an agency fighting drugs comes in. It offers two rehabilitation centres near Bologna to take care of the treatment needs of addicts.

The prevention of drug abuse can be tackled at the institution level in various ways. As described in the Fogarty International Center website, The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) agreed with other government officials to improve and promote research and training for better treatment of drug addiction. The research is in developing new medicines, improving early detection and inducing more users to undergo treatment for drug abuse. Towards this end, it exhorted the US and Italy for bilateral co-operation in this area. Visits to each other and improving medical education have been envisaged.

The UNODC is another organisation that is involved at the United Nations level in the field of drug abuse. UNODC joined Italy's Department for Anti-Drug Policies for a programme named ' Prevention Strategy and Policymakers'. The intention is to formulate guidelines for better policies to deal with the menace. It also proposes promoting healthy lifestyle among the youth to tackle drug abuse. This initiative is being started in various parts like Central America, North Africa, Central Asia and East Asia. This is to create regional hubs for training and co-ordinating global efforts on this issue. It was noted that drug prevention was effective in terms of the costs involved.

The issue of rehabilitation and reintegration is a vital step in the fight against drug abuse. This should go hand in hand with preventive measures so that both can be co-ordinated. The first step in this direction comes from the unit of society i. e. the family. Dysfunctional families are not the only root cause for drug abuse. Even perfectly normal families have instances of drug users. Hence, there is a need for open communication between parents and their

children regarding the interests and activities of the children. There is also a need to train teachers at school regarding this menace. School students should be given awareness sessions on the ill-effects of drugs at an appropriate age so that children can say no to drugs.

However vigilant the society may be, there still would be people who fall prey to drugs. It is needed to understand early signs of drug abuse so that appropriate measures for treatment can be taken. This is necessary from the health perspective so that irreversible damage to the body can be prevented in time. However, this is also needed to hasten the recovery process which too becomes delayed due to the prolonged abuse of substances.

In this context, the responsibility of the extended family and the community at large cannot be ignored. These groups can look at children, who are the vulnerable sections in a more objective manner and can gauge the attitude and mood of children better. Adolescents are a group which should be given special attention due to the age that they are in. Peer pressure is seen to be a major factor in taking to drugs. Adolescents should be made to understand that one does not become popular by consuming drugs. It is better to abandon peers who think that it is the in thing to consume drugs.

Care givers have a great challenge in curing addicts. In chronic cases, the recovery process can be prolonged and tiresome. One should ensure that a patient has been completely deaddicted and that he will not lapse back into the earlier situation. The cure can be termed completely only if the former addict is reintegrated into society. This requires co-operation from all quarters. Not only should society be sensitised of the issue, there should be no stigma attached to a former addict's life. The government should step in

by providing employment opportunities to former addicts, who can also work actively as ambassadors to promote deaddiction campaigns.

Research into the medical aspects of drug abuse should be promoted in a big way. Newer medicines with greater efficacy should be developed so that the healing process can be hastened. It is also needed to reduce the ill effects of long term abuse on the human body. This brings into the picture the need for training care givers and the medical fraternity. With newer drugs and treatments available for deaddiction and recovery, it becomes imperative that care givers should be trained in the latest techniques available in this field. Visits to other nations for a hands-on approach on the developments in this area are a welcome measure. This also fosters inter-state co-operation and finally leads to global co-ordination in this area.

Cutting off the source of drugs is a preventive measure that should be assiduously taken up. International agencies and national organisations can co-ordinate efforts to track and bust organised drug trafficking. Legislation and punishment should also be stringent at the same time. All legal loopholes should be plugged so that drug peddlers do not escape the hands of law. Longer prison terms will be an effective deterrent for those involved in this trade. What is also required is to prevent the recruitment of unsuspecting people into the drug trade. Since this is a lucrative business, it is easy to entice children and the youth into this trade. This also acts as a front for the big players who go unnoticed. Hence, there is a need to go to the root of such cartels and root out all the links in a nefarious global network that is a scourge to the world.

The major inducement of drugs is the mood enhancement provided by them.

Hence, substitutes that can bring inner joy to individuals should be promoted. Yoga and meditation are known to bring this change on a long term basis. Positive thinking can also be furthered among the youth and children. People should be made aware that one does not need any drug to find happiness that is within oneself.

Italy requires unique solutions towards this end. While some solutions need only precedents and the guidance of elders, there is also a requirement for tailor-made solutions which take a hands-on approach towards this vexed issue. Apart from the authorities, the extended family, the immediate family and the community play a decisive role in finding a lasting and effective solution. Rehabilitation and reintegration with the society are required to avoid a relapse on the part of the addict. There is an urgent need to revisit the core values instilled in and imbibed by the younger generation which can dissuade them from consuming drugs. Substance abuse ought to be eradicated from the face of the earth if man has to tread the path of peace and progress.

Works Cited

EMCDDA. “ Italy: drug-related information and data”. web. [http://www.](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/countries/italy)

[emcdda.europa.eu/countries/italy](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/countries/italy)

Fogarty International Center. “ Italy and US reach drug abuse research accord”. NIH (2011: 10, 5). NIDA [http://www. fic. nih.](http://www.fic.nih.gov/News/GlobalHealthMatters/Sept-Oct-2011/Pages/italy-nida-agreement.aspx)

[gov/News/GlobalHealthMatters/Sept-Oct-2011/Pages/italy-nida-agreement.aspx](http://www.fic.nih.gov/News/GlobalHealthMatters/Sept-Oct-2011/Pages/italy-nida-agreement.aspx)

Molinaro, Sabrina and Siciliano, Valeria et al. “ Illegal Substance Use among Italian High School Students: Trends over 11 Years (1999–2009)”. PLOS ONE

<https://assignbuster.com/free-research-paper-on-drug-abuse-in-italy/>

(June 10, 2011). Web [http://www. plosone. org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal. pone. 0020482](http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0020482)

NARCONON International. “ Drug Abuse in Bologna, Italy”. Web [http://www. narconon. org/drug-information/drug-abuse-bologna-italy. html](http://www.narconon.org/drug-information/drug-abuse-bologna-italy.html)

UNODC. “ UNODC and Italy launch initiative to promote international standards on drug use prevention”. Web [http://www. unodc. org/unodc/en/frontpage/2012/September/unodc-and-italy-launch-initiative-to-promote-international-standards-on-drug-use-prevention. html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2012/September/unodc-and-italy-launch-initiative-to-promote-international-standards-on-drug-use-prevention.html)