

A Comparison of Drug Abuse Situation in Hong Kong with Selected Countries

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This study attempted to compile drug statistics of Hong Kong and eight other selected countries, and to compare the situation of drug abuse between Hong Kong and these countries.
2. Relevant literature and data of drug abuse were identified by computerised search of databases. Relevant departments or offices of selected countries were also liaised in order to obtain raw data of drug statistics. The data were cleaned, triangulated, and summarised in graphical format (Appendix).
3. The situation of drug abuse of Hong Kong was milder than the western countries (i.e., USA, UK, Australia) selected in the study. However, many drug abuse indicators of Hong Kong were slightly worse than Singapore and Malaysia. The situations of drug abuse of Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan were similar.
4. Cannabis was the commonest substance of abuse in USA, UK, and Australia whilst heroin and opium were the commonest substance of abuse in most Asian countries selected in the study. The epidemic potential of cocaine and amphetamine was discussed. Polydrug abuse was relatively rare in Hong Kong, compared with other countries.
5. Multivariate analysis of 26 socio-economic factors showed that divorce rate and tourism (as measured by receipts from visitors) contributed to a linear regression model of prevalence of drug abuse. The higher the divorce rate and earning from tourism, the higher the prevalence rate of drug abuse. The implications and the limitations of this modeling were discussed.
6. Eight recommendations were made. Hong Kong should strengthen her liaison with China and Taiwan in terms of mutual exchange of drug statistics and intelligence. Apart from heightened vigilance of drug abuse situation of the neighbourhood, Hong Kong could conduct regular household surveys and more frequent school surveys.

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