Drug use in Nigeria

- The past year prevalence of any drug use in Nigeria is estimated at 14.4 per cent or **14.3 million people** aged between 15 and 64 years.
- **One in seven persons** aged 15-64 years had used a drug (other than tobacco and alcohol) in the past year.
  - One of every four drug user is **woman**.
- The highest levels of any past-year drug use was among those aged **25-39 years**.
  - One of five people who had used drugs in the past year is suffering from **drug user disorders**.

(UNODC and Government of Nigeria, Drug Use Survey in Nigeria, 2018)
Number of Past Year Users in Nigeria, 2017

- Cannabis → 10.6 million
- Opioids → 4.6 million
- Cough syrup → 2.4 million
- Tranquilizers and sedatives → 481 thousand
- Ecstasy → 340 thousand
- Solvents and inhalants → 300 thousand
- Amphetamines & prescription stimulants → 238 thousand
- Cocaine → 92 thousand

(UNODC and Government of Nigeria, Drug Use Survey in Nigeria, 2018)
Prevalence of Drug Use by Regions

Prevalence of drug use in Nigeria by geopolitical zones and states, 2017

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
High-risk drug use:

• High-risk drug users were defined as those who had used opioids, crack/cocaine or amphetamines in the past 12 months, and had used those drugs on at least 5 occasions in the past thirty days.

• Numbers of people who are defined as high-risk drug users are concerning!
  • Estimated 376,000 high risk drug users in Nigeria.

(UNODC and Government of Nigeria, Drug Use Survey in Nigeria, 2018)
High-risk drug use:

- From those who are high risk users nearly 90% of them had been regularly using pharmaceutical opioids such as tramadol, codeine or morphine.
- **ONE of FIVE** high risk drug users, injects drugs (80,000 users inject drugs in Nigeria)
  - The most common drugs injected in the past year were **pharmaceutical opioids**, followed by cocaine and heroin.
- An estimated 4.7 per cent of the population, i.e. **4.6 million people had used opioids** (such as tramadol, codeine, or morphine) for non-medical purposes in the past year.

*(UNODC and Government of Nigeria, Drug Use Survey in Nigeria, 2018)*
Tramadol:
• An opioid medication used to treat moderate to severe pain.
• It is not under international control but is under national control in a number of countries in all regions.
• It has dual properties as an opioid analgesic with energy- and mood-enhancement properties.
• This is why the non-medical use of tramadol has spread in various subregions, in particular North Africa, West Africa and the Middle East.
In West, Central and North Africa and the Middle East, tramadol, a pharmaceutical opioid not under international control, has emerged as a major opioid of concern.

The drug, in addition to being diverted from the legal market, is mainly trafficked into those subregions in dosages higher than those prescribed for pain management:

→ Resulting in an increasing number of people with tramadol use disorder entering treatment in recent years.
Why does Tramadol cause risks?

- Easily accessible
- More profitable for traffickers
- Absence of international regulations
- Demand driven
Consequences of drug use:

Health consequences:

• Drug dependence & inadequate treatment services.
• High blood pressure and chronic pain, heart diseases
• Diabetes and asthma.

Social consequences:

• Family issues (conflict or breakup),
• Loss of work or employment,
• Legal issues (criminality or arrests),
• Domestic violence.

(UNODC and Government of Nigeria, Drug Use Survey in Nigeria, 2018)
Drug supply in Nigeria

According to the 2017 Report by the International Narcotics Control Board:

• West Africa is still a key transit point for drug trafficking.
• Synthetic opioid tramadol, which is not under international control, is increasingly being misused in Nigeria and in the West African Region.
• The illicit manufacturing of amphetamines and cultivation and production of cannabis are also areas of concern in Nigeria.

According to the World Drug Report 2017, yearly seizures of tramadol in the region have risen since 2013 from 300 kg to over 3 tonnes.
Nigeria in World Drug Reports

WDR 2021:

• In 2018, 4.6 million people were estimated to have used opioids (mainly tramadol but also codeine and morphine)
  • 6% male,
  • 3.3% female.

• Nigeria has been identified as the most frequently mentioned country, after India as a country of origin, departure and transit of tramadol over the period 2015–2019.

• The global quantities of tramadol seized → 122 tons in 2017

WDR 2020:

• Tramadol is more accessible opioid than heroin, although it is still relatively costly if used frequently.

• Use of tramadol appears to cost about one third the price of heroin ($3.60 versus $10 per day of use in the past 30 days).

WDR 2018:

• In Nigeria, the non-medical use of opioids is of concern.

• In 2016, cannabis 45%, and opioids 36% were the main substances.

• Most people treated for opioid use disorders were misusing tramadol, codeine and pentazocine.
After the Covid19 pandemic, people with substance use disorders have become even more vulnerable due to inadequacy of treatment and rehabilitation services in Nigeria.

Use of tramadol has risen to its highest points on 2017, and slowly decreased after that year. But, it is still too reachable, affordable and common, and people who suffer from tramadol use cannot find an accessible treatment service even though 40% of them would like to receive a drug treatment.
How do we improve our work?

• We, as Green Crescent Health Development Initiative based in Nigeria, are working on **prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services** for people who suffer from addictions.

• With the data from UNODC and Government of Nigeria’s document on “Drug use in Nigeria 2018” and World Drug Reports provided by UNODC, we are able to **monitor our country’s recent situation** regarding drugs and we are using these documents to **improve our capacity** while integrating these valuable datasets and evidence.
Thank you for listening!