



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



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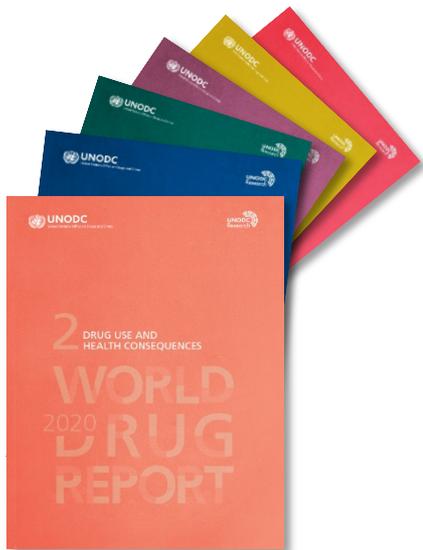


**UNODC**  
Research



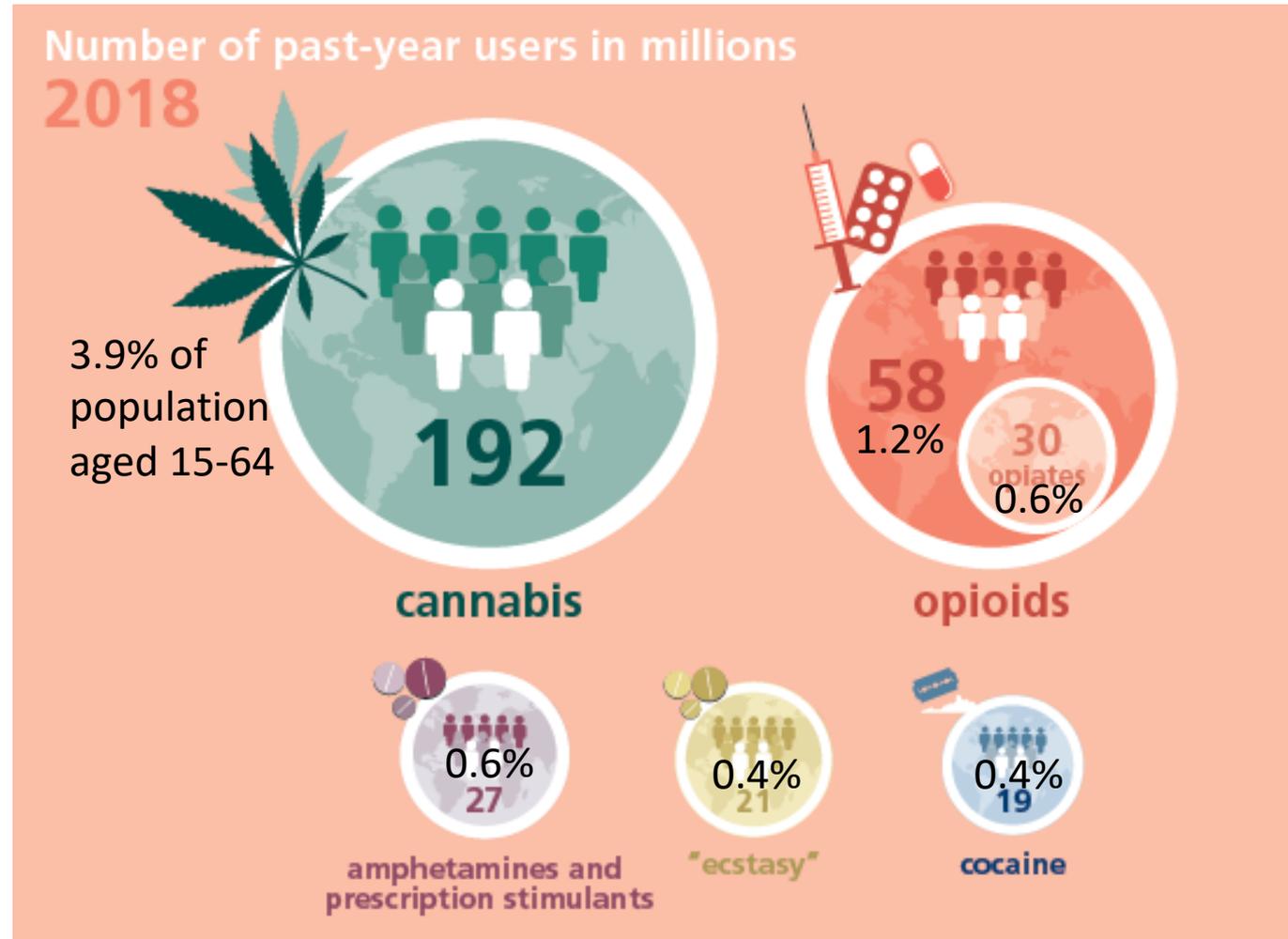
## World Drug Report 2020

Dr. Thomas Pietschmann  
Drug Research Section  
Research and Trend Analysis Branch  
Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs  
UNODC  
Vienna, 27 July 2020



# Estimates of global numbers of people using drugs 2018

Estimated total number of (past-year) drug users:  
**269 million**  
(range: 166-373 million)  
**5.4%**  
of population aged 15-64  
(range: 3.3%-7.5%)



3.9% of population aged 15-64

**cannabis**

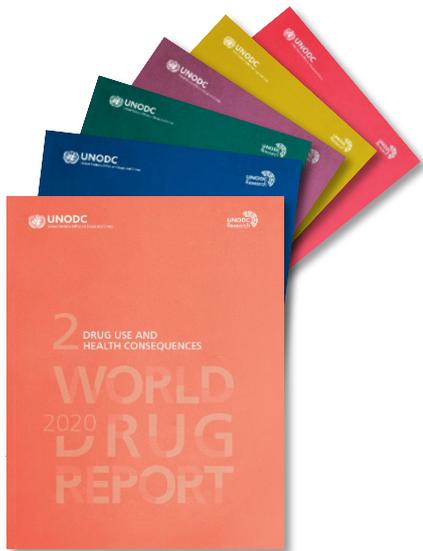
**opioids**

**amphetamines and prescription stimulants**

**"ecstasy"**

**cocaine**

Estimated number of people suffering from drug use disorders:  
**36 million**  
(range: 19-52 million)  
**0.7%**  
of population aged 15-64  
(range: 0.4%-1%)



# Estimates of global numbers of people using drugs 2018

Estimated total number of (past-year) drug users:

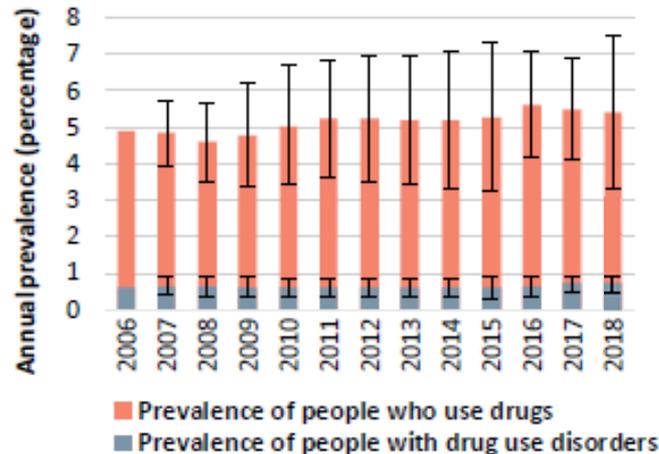
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**5.4%**

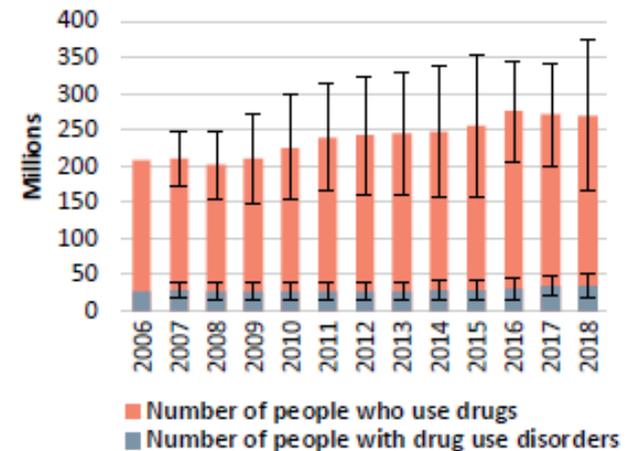
of population aged 15-64  
(range: 3.3%-7.5%)

Prevalence of drug use and drug use disorders, 2006–2018



Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

Number of people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders, 2006–2018



Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

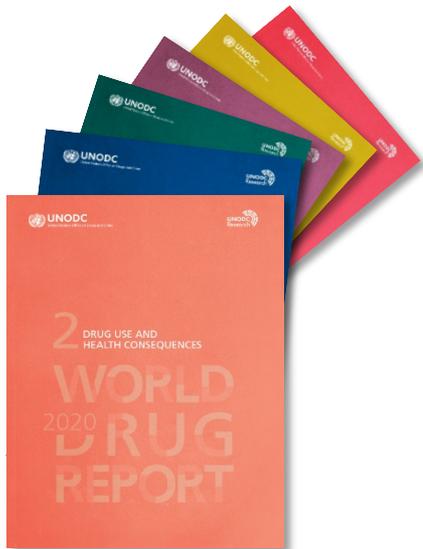
Estimated number of people suffering from drug use disorders:

**36 million**

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**0.7%**

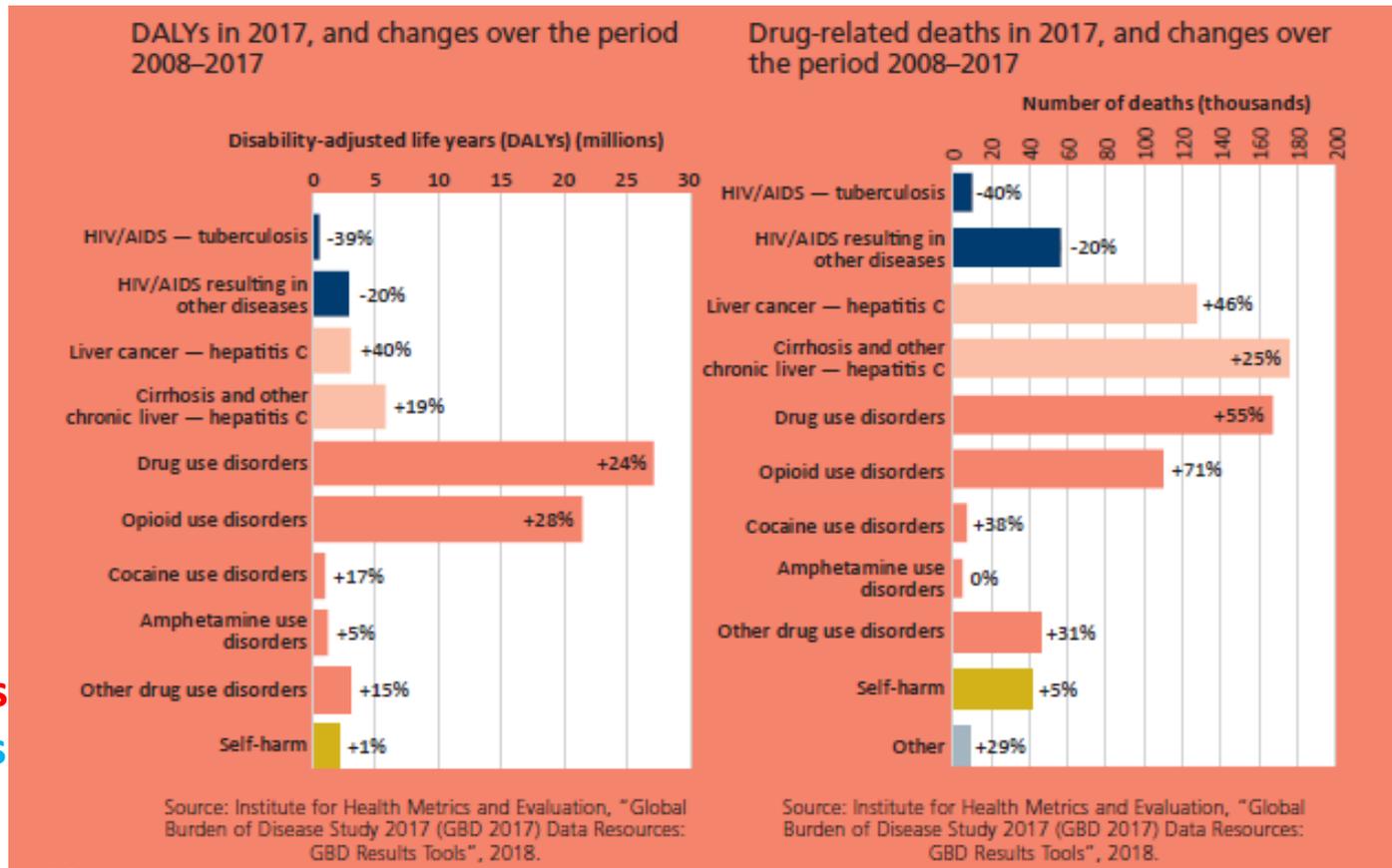
of population aged 15-64  
(range: 0.4%-1%)



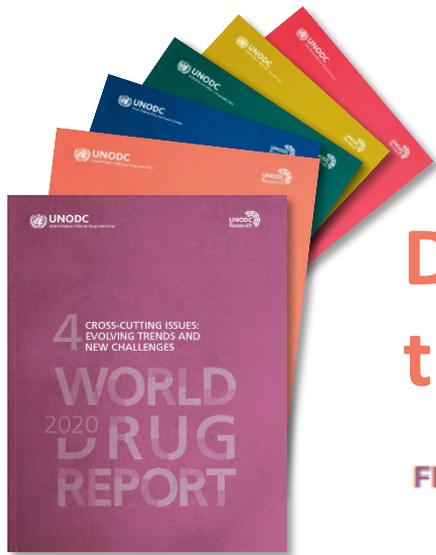
# Drug use accounts for 42 million disability adjusted life-years (DALYs) lost or 585,000 deaths; opioids account for half of DALYs

**Deaths related to tobacco: 8.1 million**  
**alcohol: 2.8 million**  
**i.e. drugs account for 5% of all deaths linked to use of psychoactive substances**

**Healthy life years lost (DALYs) related to tobacco: 213 million years**  
**alcohol: 108 million years**  
**i.e. drugs account for 12% of all DALYs lost linked to use of psychoactive substances**



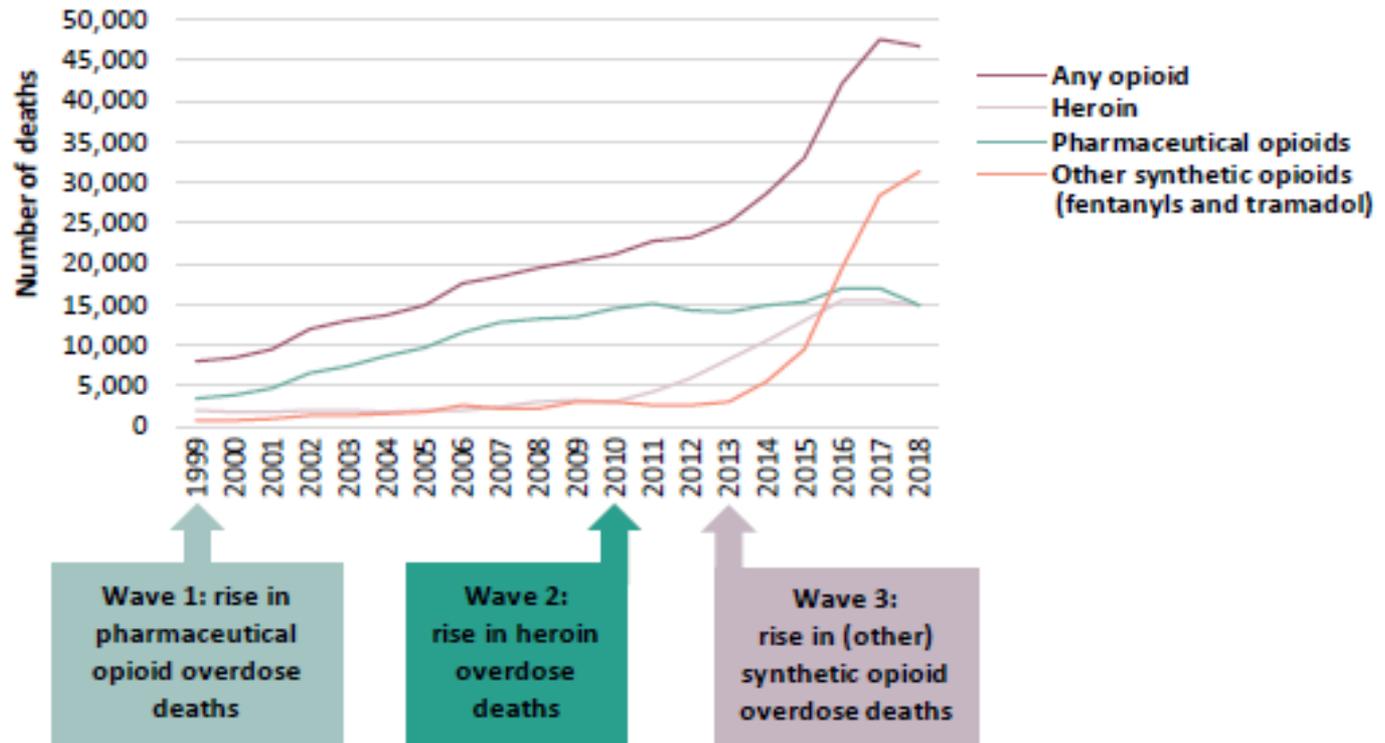
Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, "Global Burden of Disease Study 2017 (GBD 2017) Data Resources: GBD Results Tools", 2018.



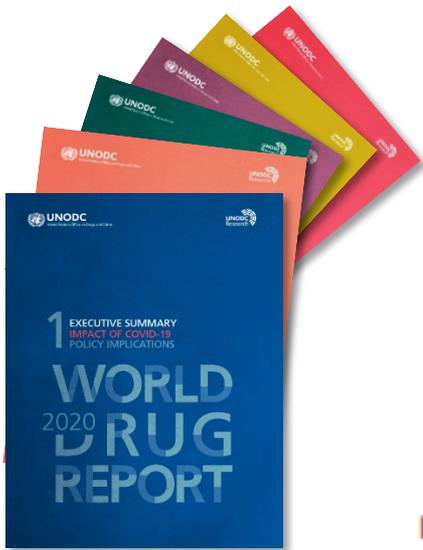
# Development of the opioid crisis in the United States

Gains in the reduction of overdose deaths attributed to pharmaceutical opioids partly offset by the continuing increase in deaths attributed to synthetic opioids

FIG. 27 Opioid overdose deaths in the United States, 1999–2018

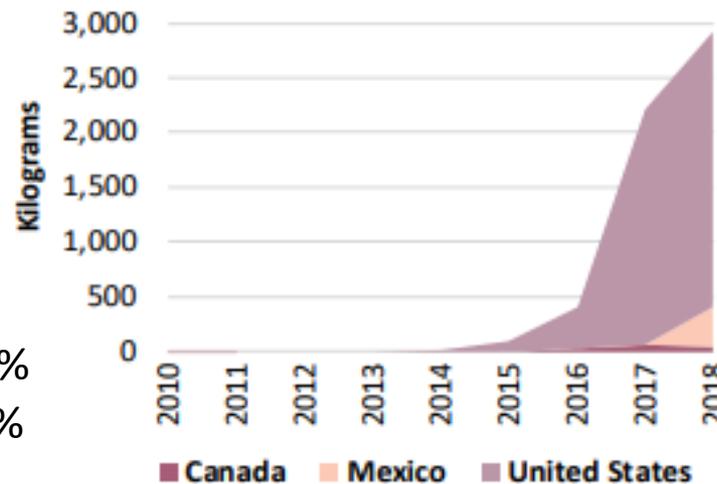


Source: United States, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (CDC WONDER), "Multiple cause of death 1999–2018".



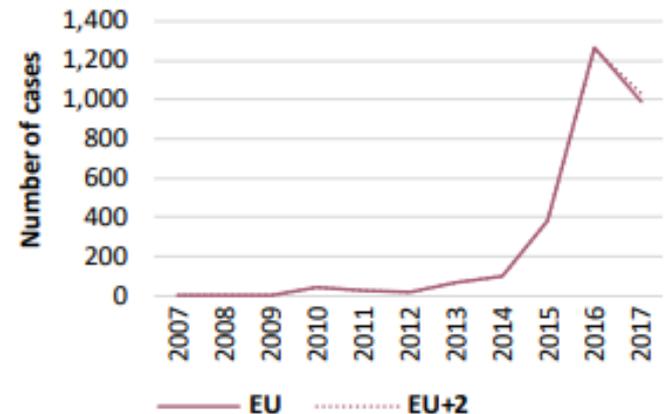
## Trends in new opioids seizures (mostly fentanyl and fentanyl analogues)

**FIG. 39** Quantities of fentanyl seized in North America, 2010–2018



Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

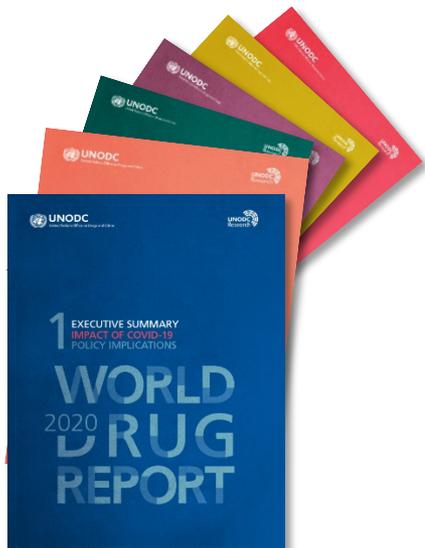
**FIG. 45** Seizures of new opioids, European Union, 2007–2017



Source: EMCDDA and Europol, *EU Drug Markets Report 2019* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2019).

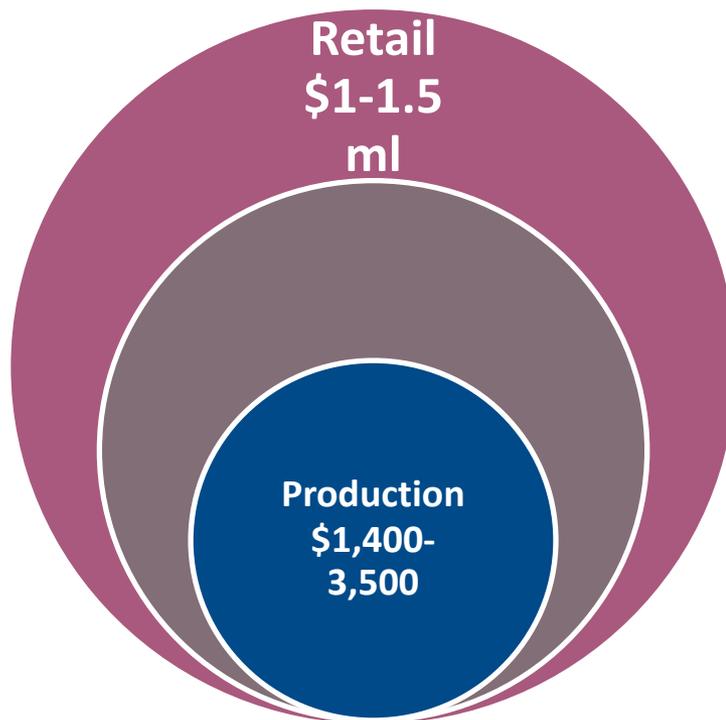
### Quantities of fentanyls seized, 2014–2018

North America: 98.9%  
Europe: 0.6%

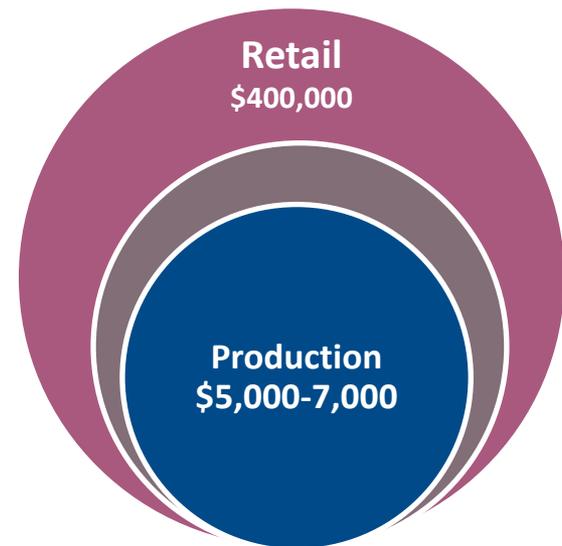


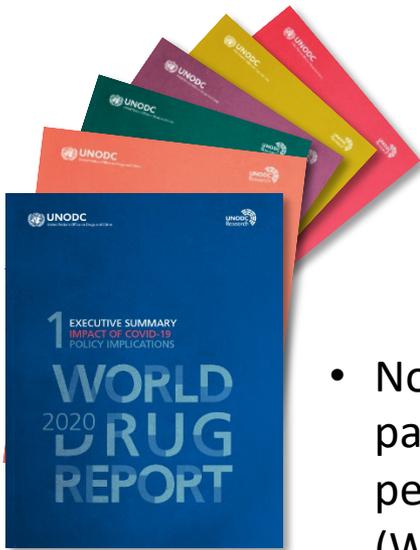
# The threat of synthetic opioids: high profits and high harm

Fentanyl profits



Heroin profits

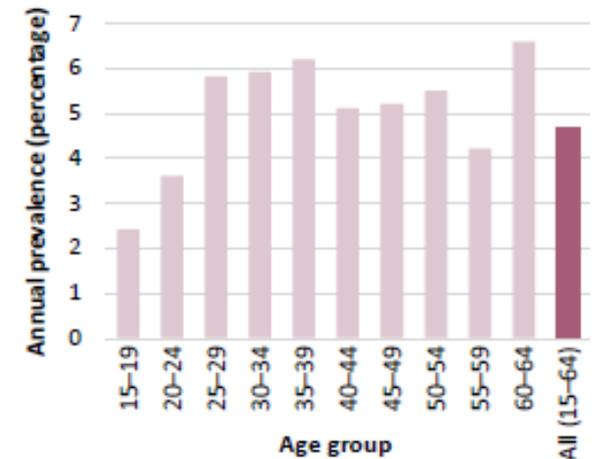




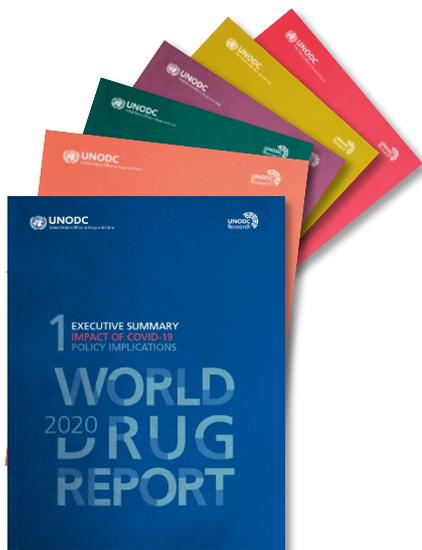
# Non-medical use of tramadol: the other opioid crisis

- Non-medical use of tramadol is of particular concern among young people in many countries in Africa (Western Africa and Northern Africa)
- Non-medical doses often 2-3 times stronger than tablets used for medical purposes
- In Nigeria (and several other countries of Western Africa) tramadol appears to be a more accessible opioid than heroin
- In Nigeria, 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)

**FIG. 48** Non-medical use of pharmaceutical opioids (mainly tramadol) by age group, in Nigeria, 2018



Source: National Bureau of Statistics and UNODC, *Drug Use Survey in Nigeria 2018*.



**Double crisis: "too little and too much"; extremely uneven access to pharmaceutical opioids for medical purposes: 12% of the global population has access to 90% of pharmaceutical**

Systems and influences affecting access to and availability of controlled medicines

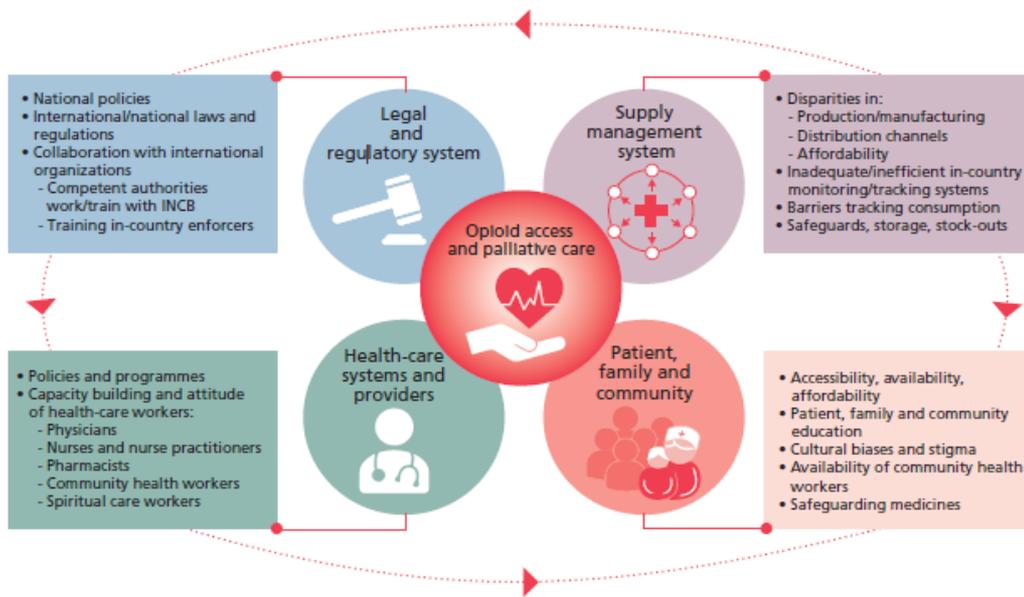
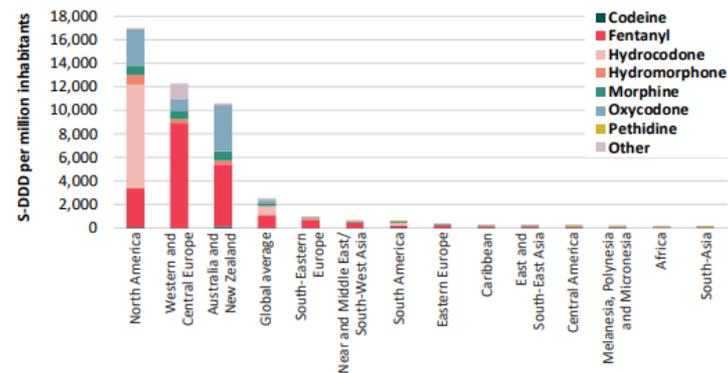
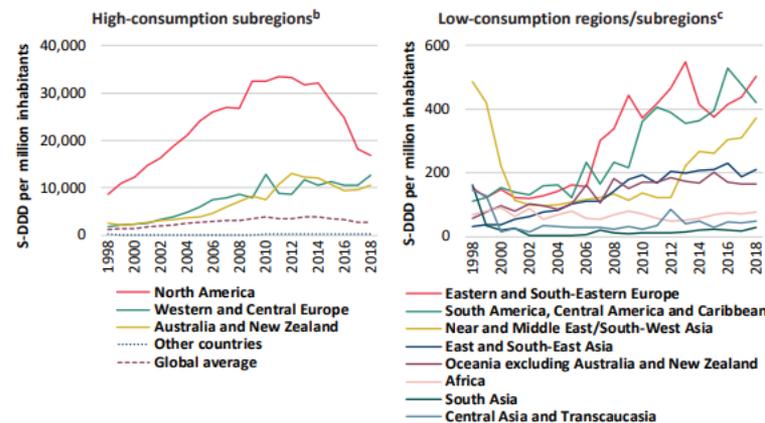


FIG. 6 Amounts available for medical consumption of codeine, fentanyl, morphine, pethidine and other opioids, by region and subregion,<sup>a</sup> 2018



Source: UNODC calculations based on *Narcotic Drugs 2019: Estimated World Requirements for 2020 – Statistics for 2018* (E/INCB/2019/2).

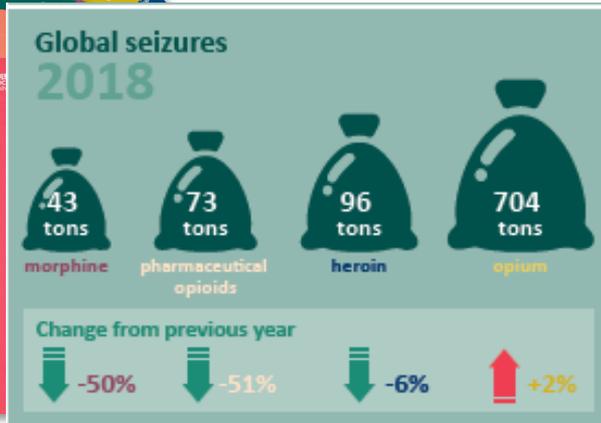
FIG. 7 Trends in availability of opioid analgesics for medical consumption, by region/subregion,<sup>a</sup> 1998–2018



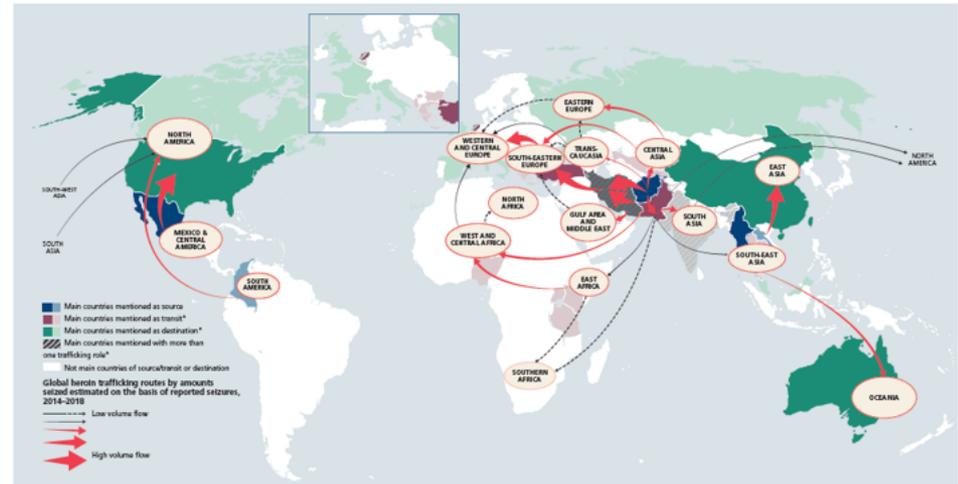
Source: UNODC calculations based on *Narcotic Drugs 2019: Estimated World Requirements for 2020 – Statistics for 2018* (E/INCB/2019/2) and previous years.



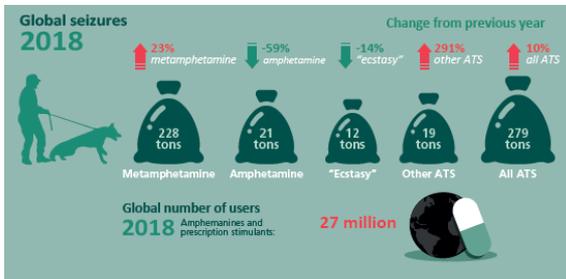
# Opiates



MAP 1 Main heroin trafficking routes as described in reported seizures, 2014–2018

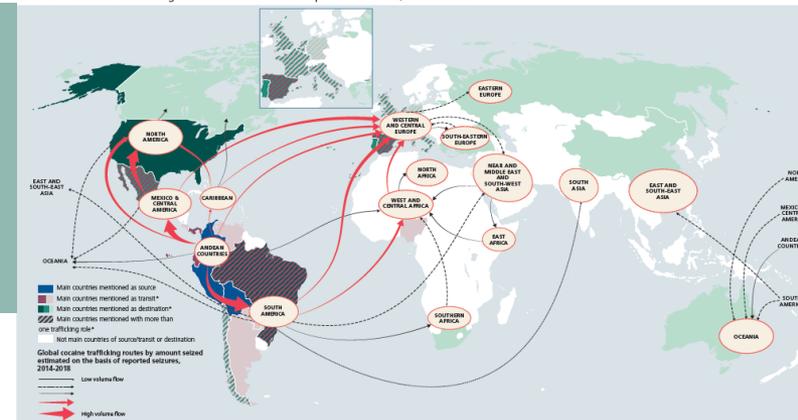


# ATS

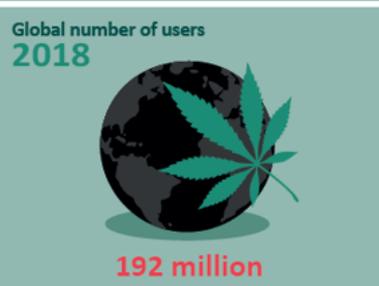


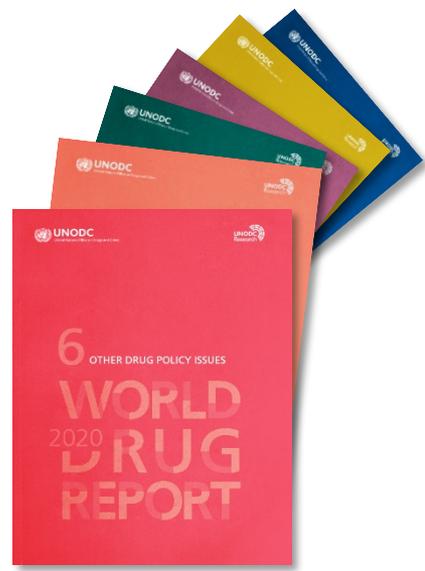
# Cocaine

MAP 3 Cocaine trafficking routes as described in reported seizures, 2014–2018



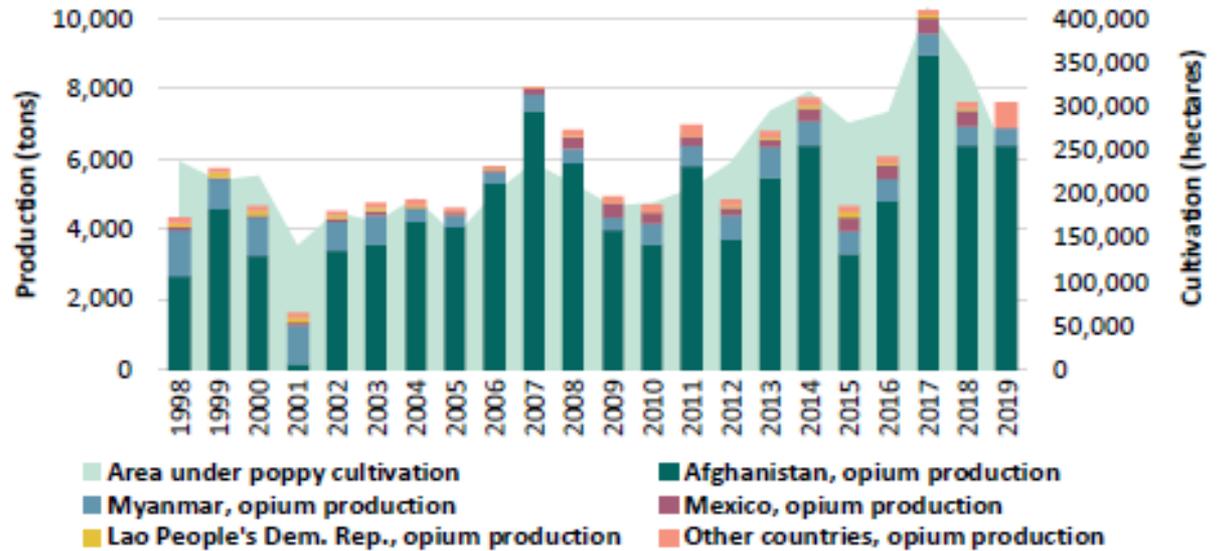
# CANNABIS





# Global opium cultivation and production

**FIG. 1** Opium poppy cultivation and production of opium, 1998–2019



Source: UNODC calculations based on illicit crop monitoring surveys; and UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.  
 Note: Data for 2019 are preliminary. For countries for which no estimates for 2019 are as yet available, the 2018 estimates have been used as a proxy and those countries are included in the category of "other countries".

## Opium poppy cultivation in

### - Afghanistan:

2017: 328,000 ha  
 2018: 263,000 ha **-20%**  
 2019: 163,000 ha **-38%**

### - Myanmar:

2017: 41,000 ha  
 2018: 37,300 ha **- 9%**  
 2019: 33,100 ha **-11%**

### - Mexico:

2016/17: 30,600 ha  
 2017/18: 28,300 ha **- 8%**

## Average opium production 2015-2019

### South-West Asia

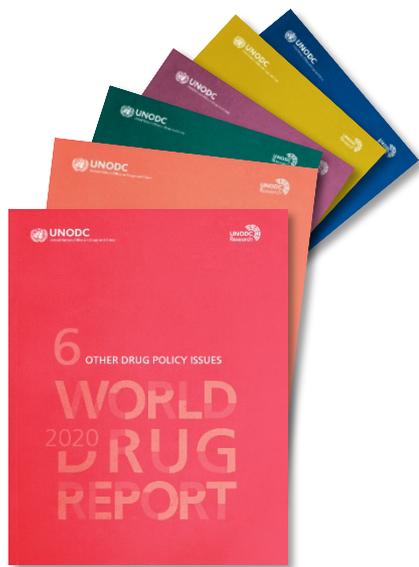
Afghanistan: 84%

### South-East Asia

Myanmar: 7%  
 Lao PDR: ≈1%

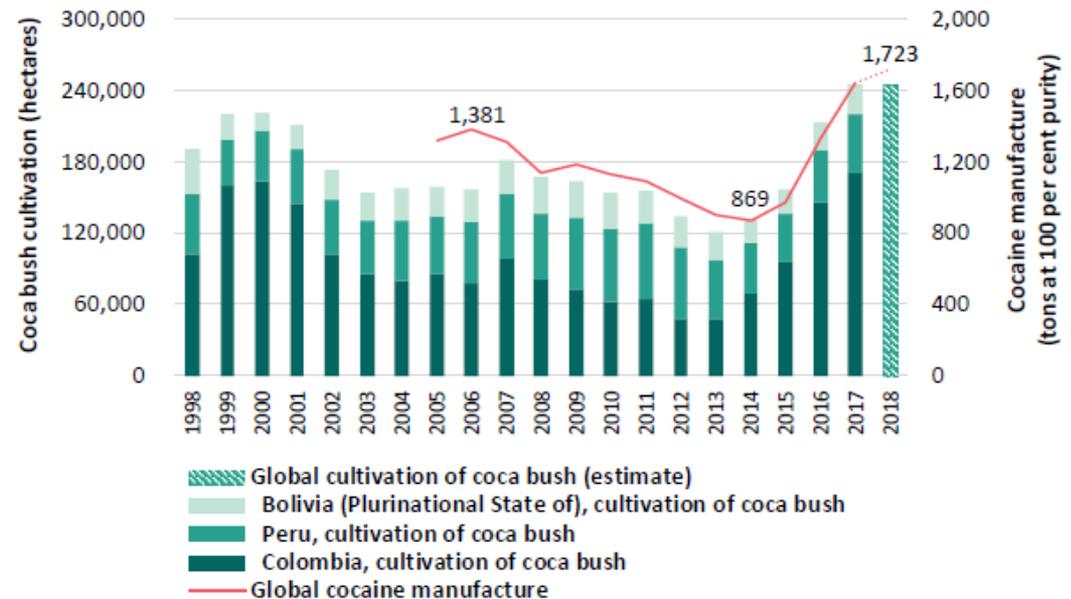
### Latin America:

Mexico: 6%  
 Colombia and Guatemala: <1%



## Coca cultivation and cocaine manufacture: record high

FIG. 9 Global coca bush cultivation and cocaine manufacture, 1998–2018



### Coca cultivation in

#### Colombia:

| Year  | Cultivation (ha) | Change | % of total |
|-------|------------------|--------|------------|
| 2017: | 171,000 ha       |        | 70%        |
| 2018: | 169,000 ha       | - 1 %  |            |
| 2019: | 154,000 ha       | - 9 %  |            |

#### Peru:

|       |           |  |     |
|-------|-----------|--|-----|
| 2017: | 49,900 ha |  | 20% |
|-------|-----------|--|-----|

#### Bolivia (Plurinational State of):

|       |           |      |     |
|-------|-----------|------|-----|
| 2017: | 24,500 ha |      | 10% |
| 2018: | 23,100 ha | - 6% |     |

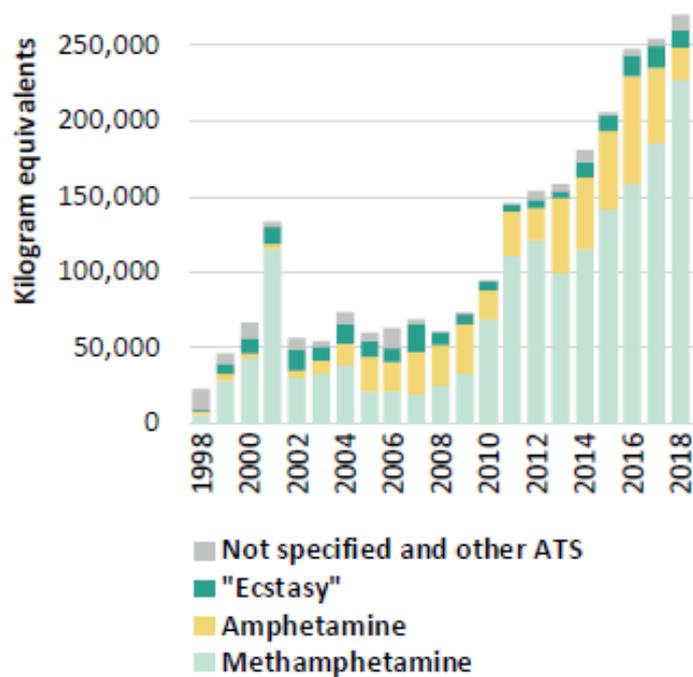
Sources: UNODC, coca cultivation surveys in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru, 2018 and previous years; United States Department of State, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, various years.

Note: The 2018 global estimate is preliminary as comparable data for Peru are not available.



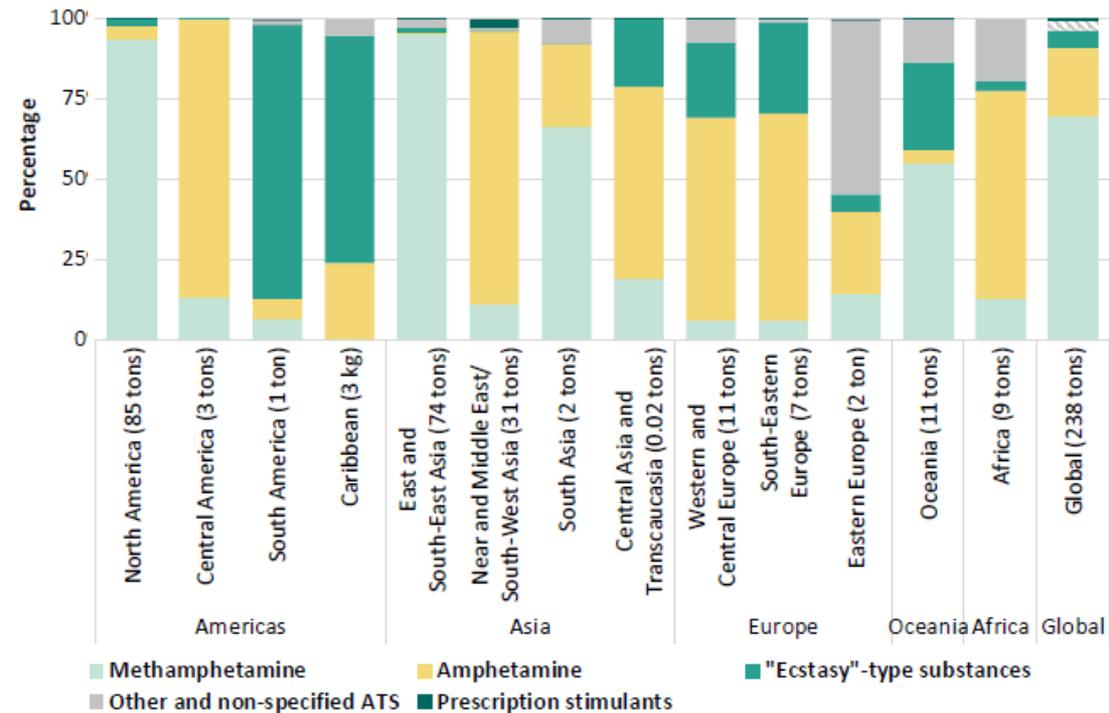
## Expansion of ATS market

**FIG. 16** Global quantities of amphetamine-type stimulants seized, 1998–2018

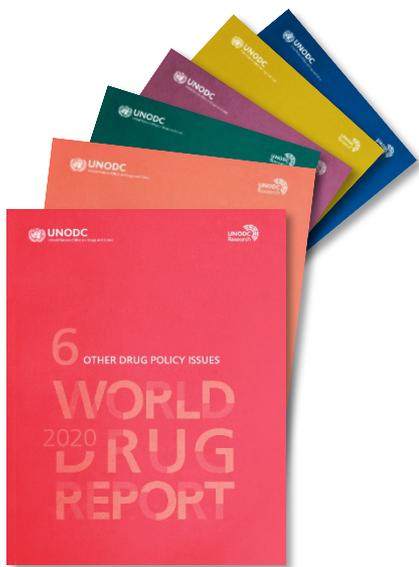


Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

**FIG. 17** Distribution of the average annual quantity of amphetamine-type stimulants seized, by subregion, 2014–2018



Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

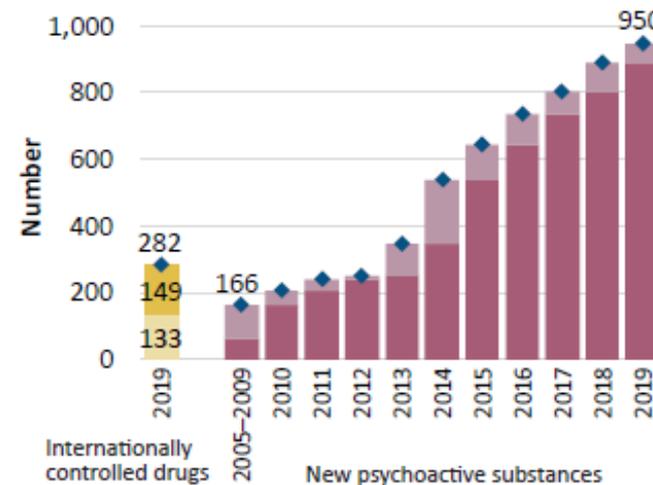


# NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

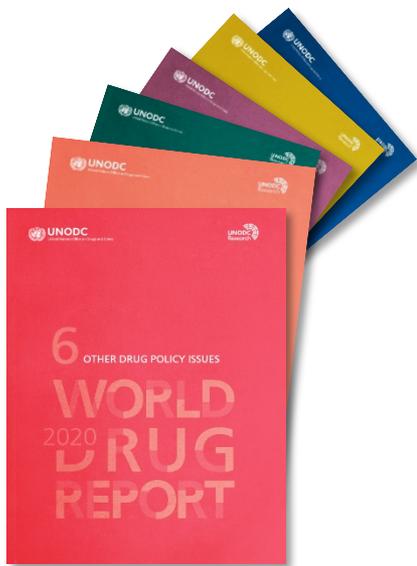
**NPS: three times the number of controlled substances**

Sources: UNODC, *World Drug Report 2013* (Vienna, 2013), updated with UNODC, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Scheduling Decisions. Available at [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/Mandate\\_Functions/Mandate-and-Functions\\_Scheduling.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/Mandate_Functions/Mandate-and-Functions_Scheduling.html); and UNODC early warning advisory on new psychoactive substances.

**FIG. 61** Number of internationally controlled drugs in 2019 and new psychoactive substances identified at the global level, 2005–2019 (cumulative figures)



- Psychotropic substances (1971 Convention)
- Narcotic drugs (1961 Convention)
- NPS identified for the first time in current year
- NPS identified in previous years
- ◆ Total number of substances



## NPS market: constant state of flux

However:

Potentially harmful opioid new psychoactive substances are on the increase

Use of NPS may become cemented among vulnerable population groups (homeless, prisoners etc.)

Regulating new psychoactive substances appears to have a containment effect

The market for NPS is in a constant state of flux

48 newly emerging NPS in 2018

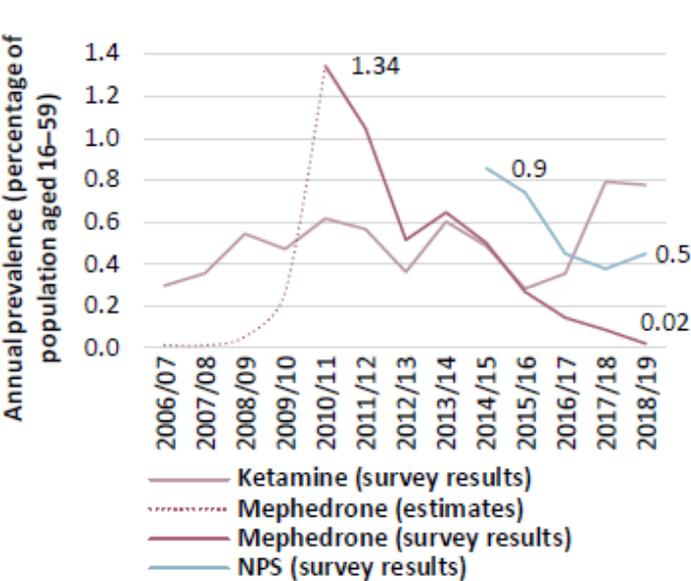


118 NPS not reported since 2015

# Effects of NPS control



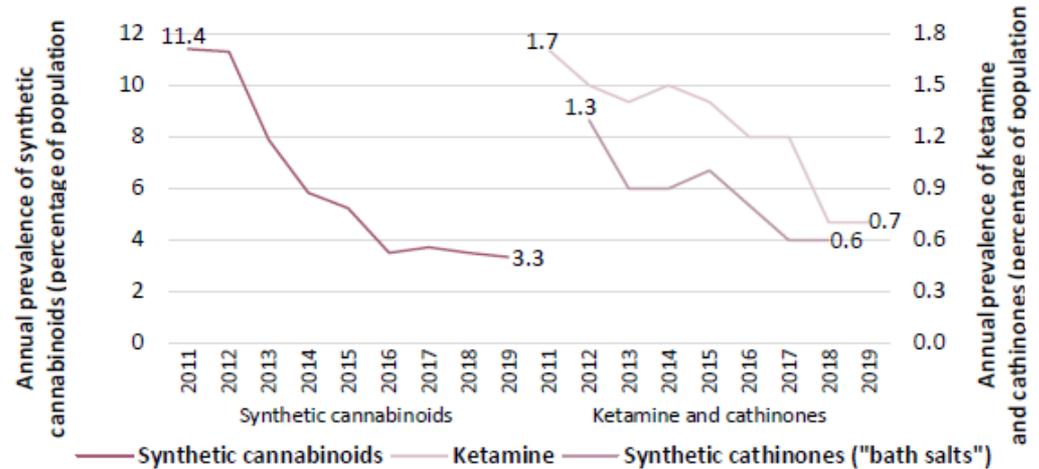
**FIG. 58** Use of new psychoactive substances in England and Wales, United Kingdom, 2006–2019



United Kingdom, Home Office, *Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2018 to 2019 Crime Survey for England and Wales*, Statistical Bulletin 21/19 (London, September 2019).

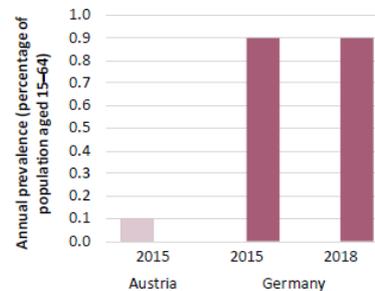
<sup>a</sup> Estimates derived from the British Crime Survey, conducted in 2010/11, and seizure statistics from the Forensic Science Service.

**FIG. 59** Use of new psychoactive substances among twelfth-grade students in United States high schools, 2011–2019



Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Monitoring the Future* survey.

**FIG. 60** Use of new psychoactive substances in Austria and Germany, 2015–2018



Sources: Julian Strizek and Alfred Uhl, *Bevölkerungserhebung zu Substanzgebrauch 2015* (Vienna, Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, 2016); German Ministry of Health / SUCHT, *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Praxis*, vol. 62, October 2016; T. N.-N. Seitz, K. Lochbühler, J. Atzendorf, C. Rauschert, T. Pfeiffer-Gerschel, L. Kraus, "Trends des Substanzkonsums und substanzbezogener Störungen. Auswertung des Epidemiologischen Suchtsurveys von 1995 bis 2018", *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International*, vol. 116, Nos. 35–36; and UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

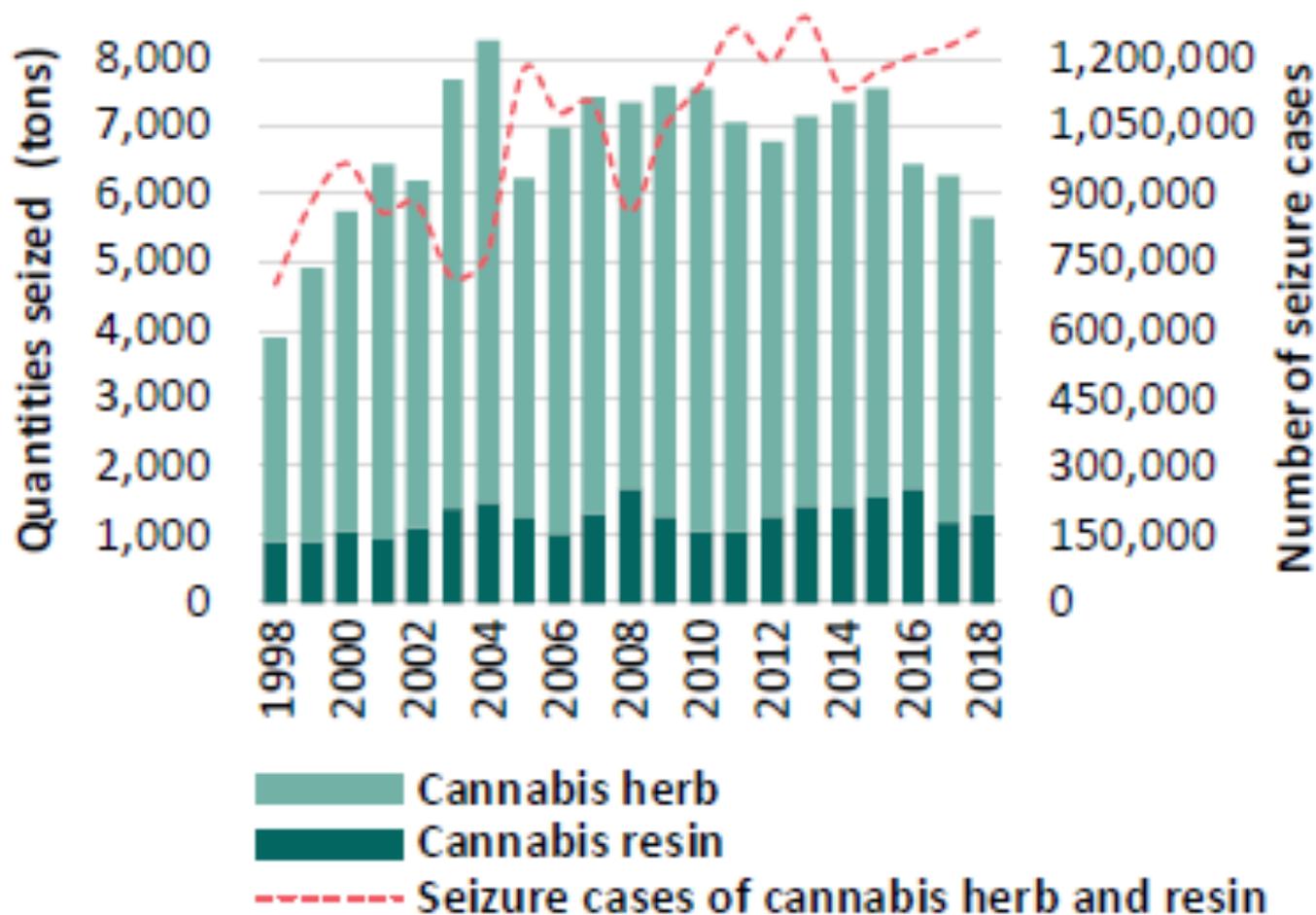
➔ Following the introduction on NPS legislation, in Austria (2008 and 2012) use of NPS remained low in Austria.

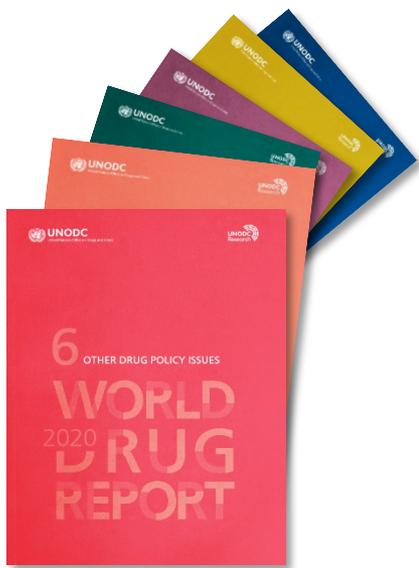
➔ NPS use appears to have increased in Germany for several years; once NPS legislation was introduced in 2016, NPS use stopped growing.



# Cannabis seizure trends

**FIG. 39** Global cannabis seizures: quantities and seizure cases, 1998–2018

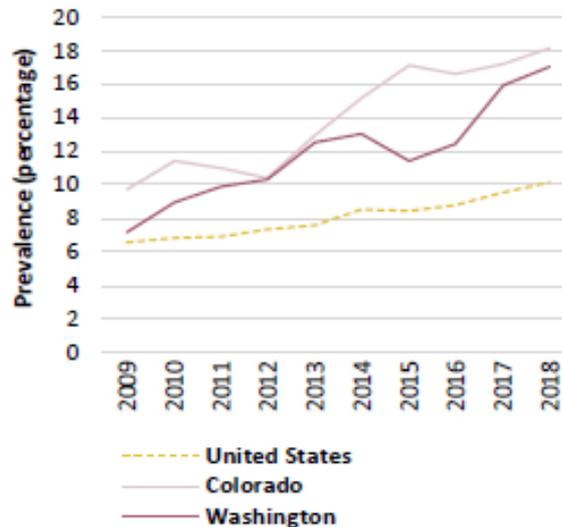




# Cannabis use in Colorado and Washington where cannabis was first legalized

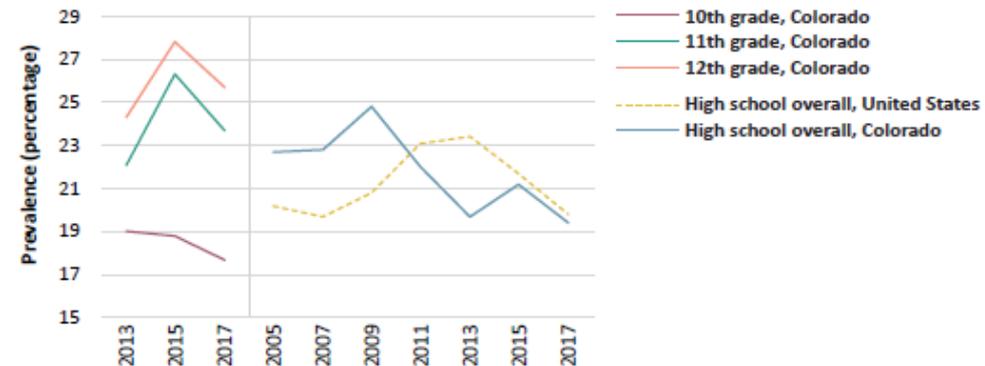
**Cannabis users USA:**  
Change 2008-2018  
Past year use: +68%  
Past month use: +81%  
Daily or near daily use: +124%

**FIG. 88** Use of cannabis in the past month in Colorado, Washington and the United States, 2009–2018



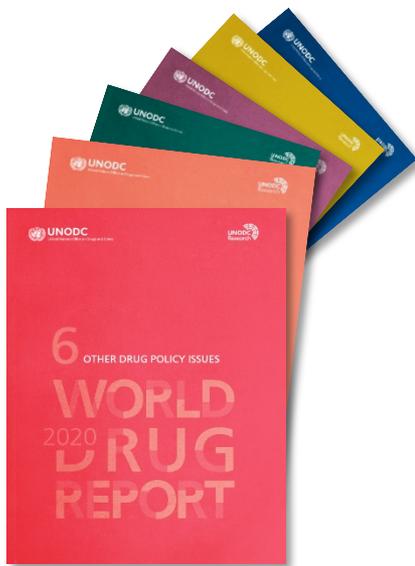
Source: United States, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, *Results from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health*; and state-level estimates.

**FIG. 90** Colorado: trends in past-month use of cannabis among high-school students, United States, 2005–2017

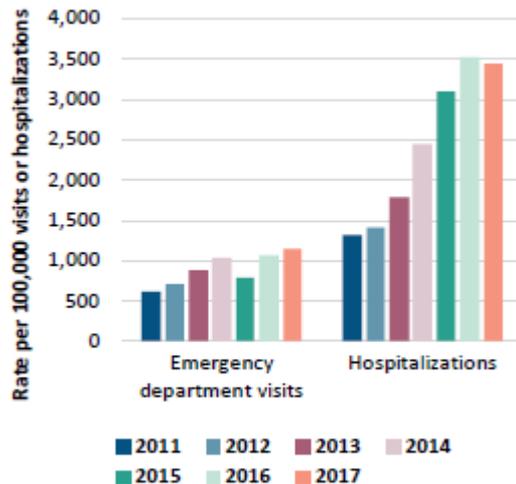


Sources: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, "Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 2005–2017"; and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behaviour Survey".

# Public health outcomes: emergency department visits and hospitalization in Colorado

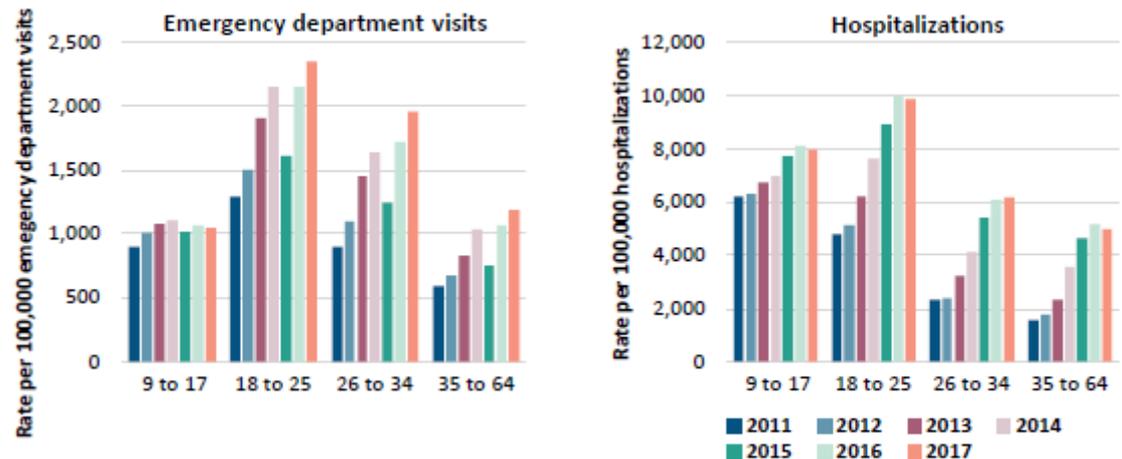


Colorado: cannabis-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations, United States, 2011–2017



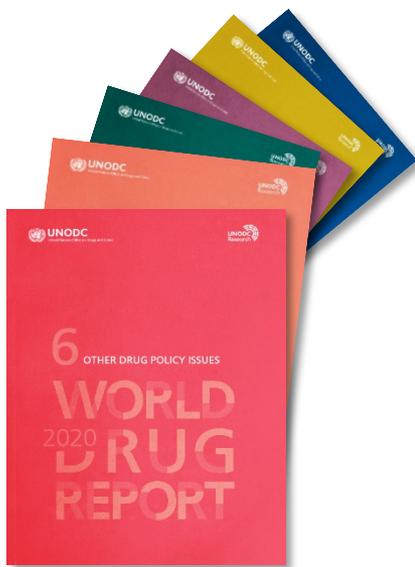
Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, "Colorado Hospital Association data".

Colorado: cannabis-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations, by age group, United States, 2011–2017

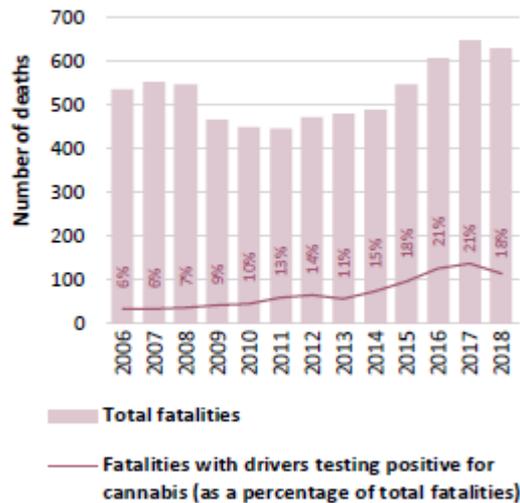


Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, "Colorado Hospital Association data".

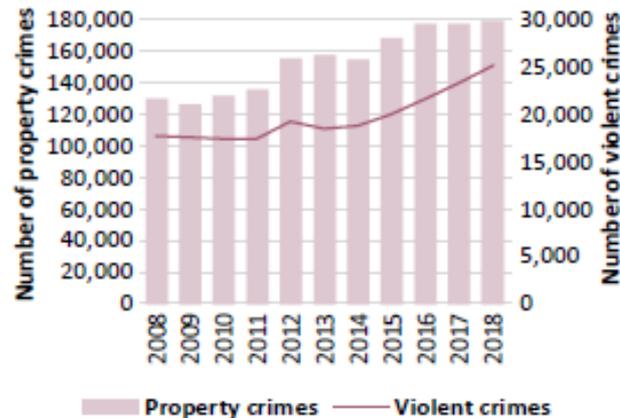
# Public safety outcomes: Cannabis-related driving and crime in Washington and Colorado



**FIG. 99** Colorado: traffic deaths related to cannabis, United States, 2006–2018

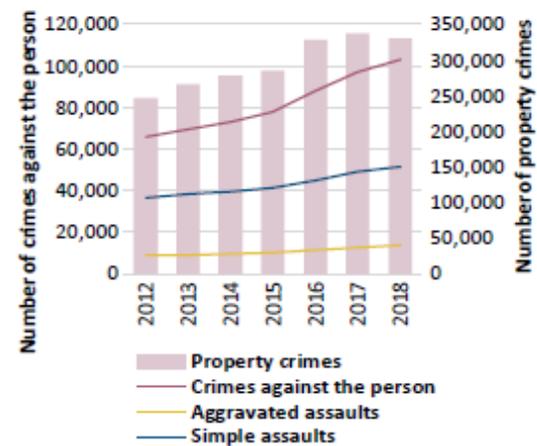


**FIG. 103** Colorado: reported property and violent crimes, United States, 2008–2018

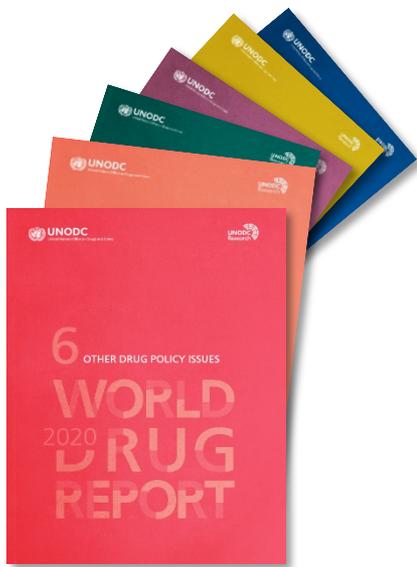


Source: Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

**FIG. 104** Washington: reported property crimes and crimes against the person (including assault), United States, 2012–2018



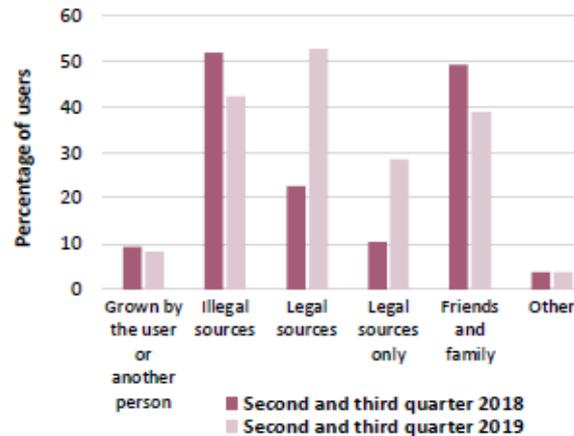
Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, annual reports 2012–2018.



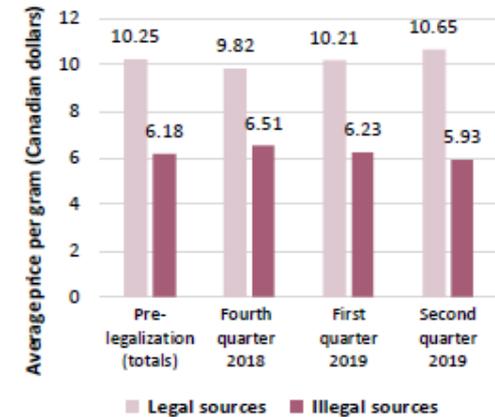
## Many cannabis users continue purchasing cannabis from illegal sources

Despite legalization significant numbers of people (some 40% of cannabis users in Canada in 2019) obtain their cannabis from the illicit market

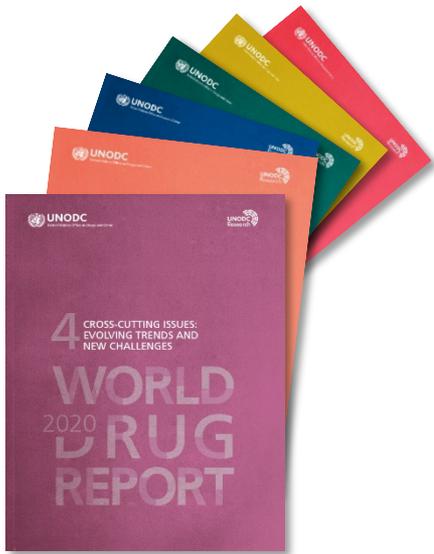
**FIG. 83** Sources of cannabis among those who reported cannabis use in the past three months, Canada, 2018 and 2019



**FIG. 87** Price of cannabis on the legal and illegal markets, Canada, 2018–2019

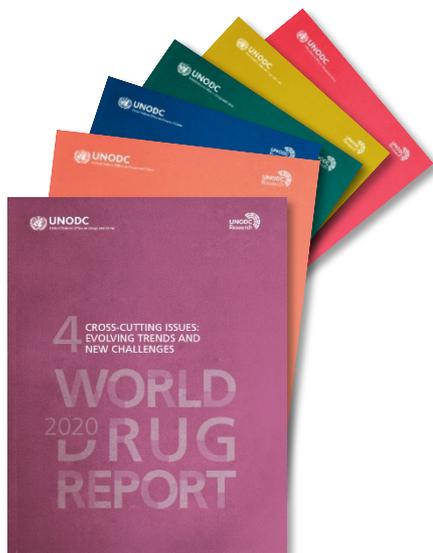


Source: Statistics Canada, "Quarterly cannabis prices, 2019".

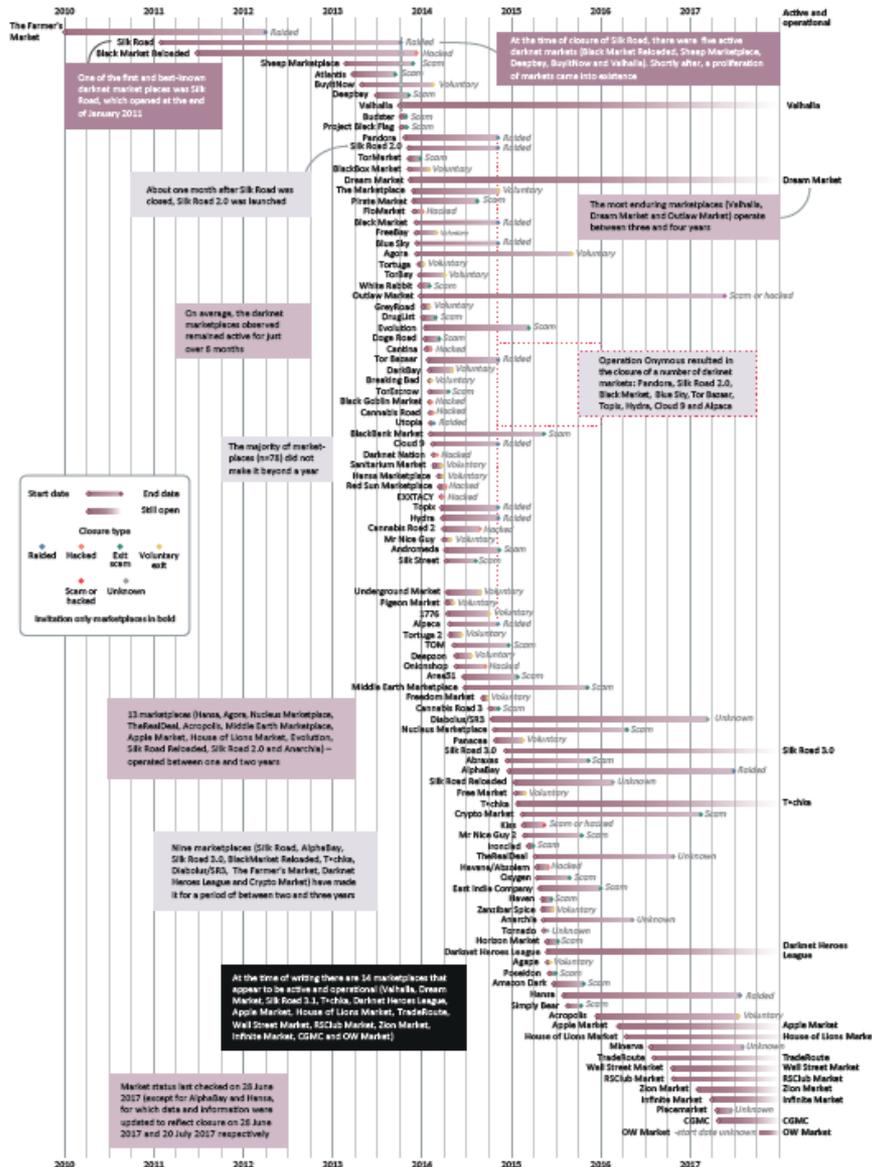


## Darknet as a source of drugs: markets shutdowns and resilience

- Long-term upward trend
- Short-life span of darknet markets
- Temporary loss of confidence following the dismantling of darknet markets, market shutdowns and exit scams in recent years
- The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have increased again trafficking over the darknet in 2020, notably retail trafficking



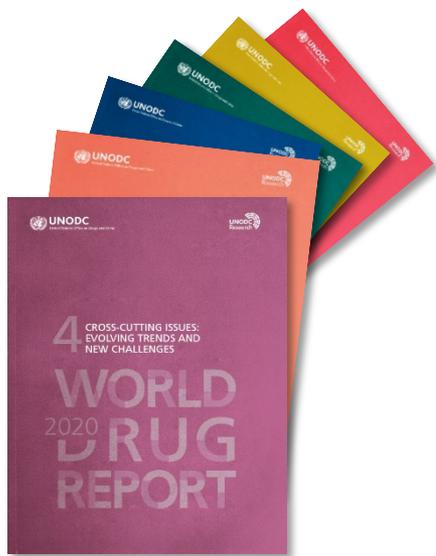
**FIG. 65** Lifespan of darknet markets, 2010–2019



Source: EMCDDA and Europol, *EU Drug Markets Report 2019* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2019).

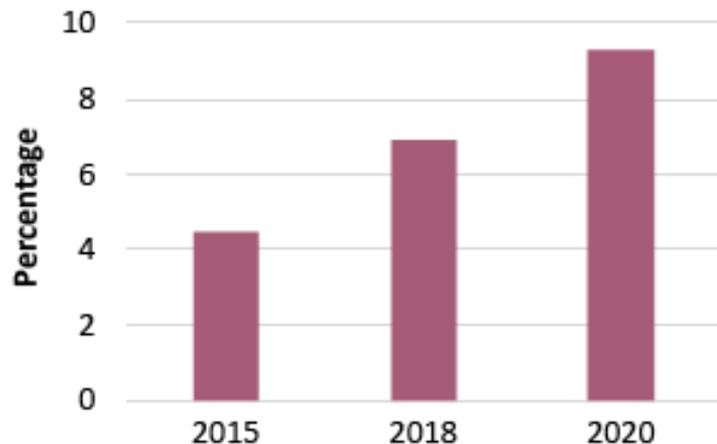
**Short lifespan of darknet markets (on average ≈ 8 months)**

Most of the darknet markets selling drugs operational in 2019 had been launched only in 2018.



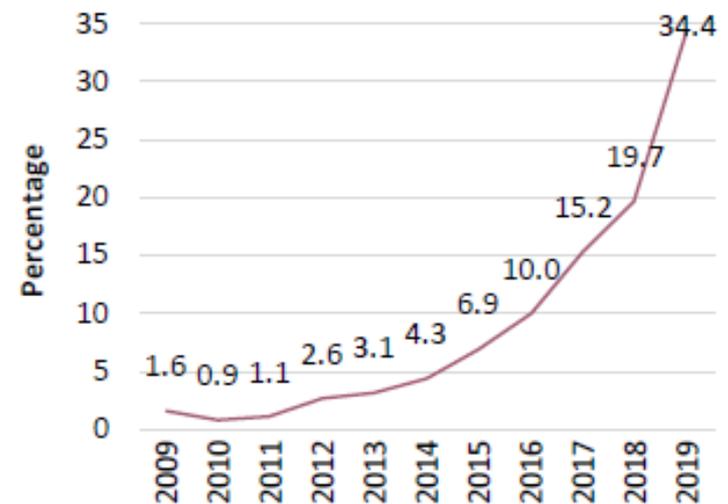
## Darknet: attracting new users

**FIG. 74** Share of people who had not consumed drugs prior to their first purchase of drugs on the darknet, among Internet users purchasing drugs over the darknet, 2015–2020

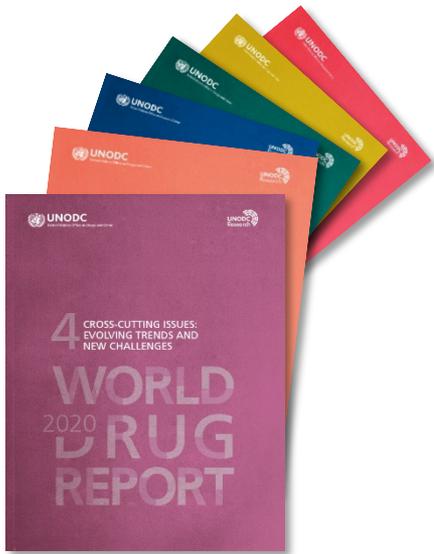


Source: *Global Drug Survey 2020* and previous years: detailed findings on drug cryptomarkets.

**FIG. 76** Year in which Internet users who purchase drugs via the darknet obtained their first drug through the darknet, reported in January 2020

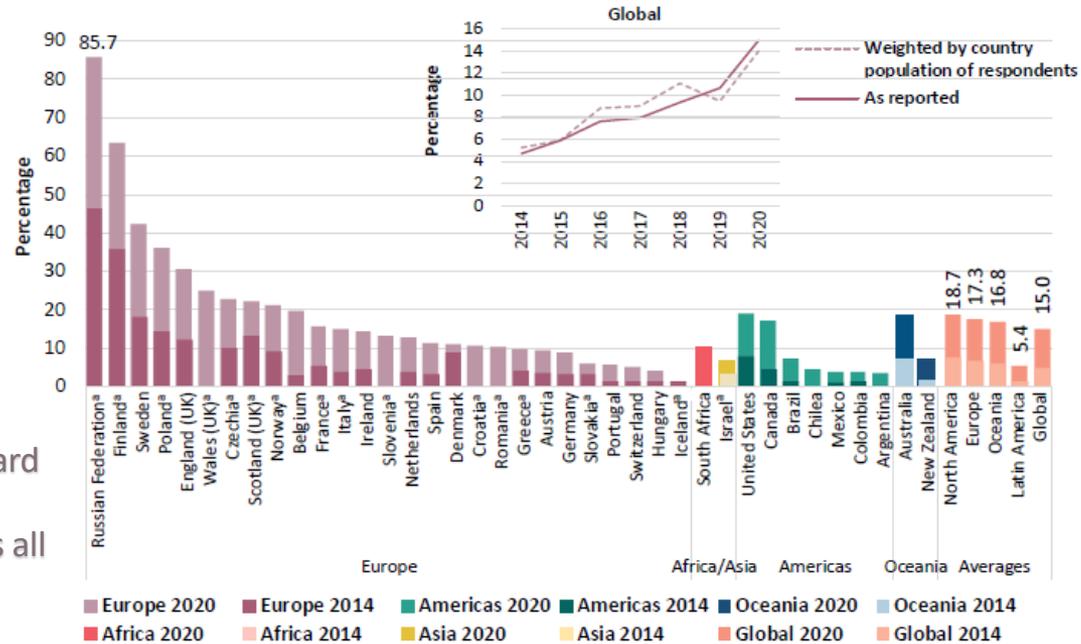


Source: *Global Drug Survey 2020*: detailed findings on drug cryptomarkets.



# DARKNET

**FIG. 75** Proportion of surveyed Internet users using drugs (in the past year) who purchased drugs over the darknet, global average and selected countries, January 2014 and January 2020

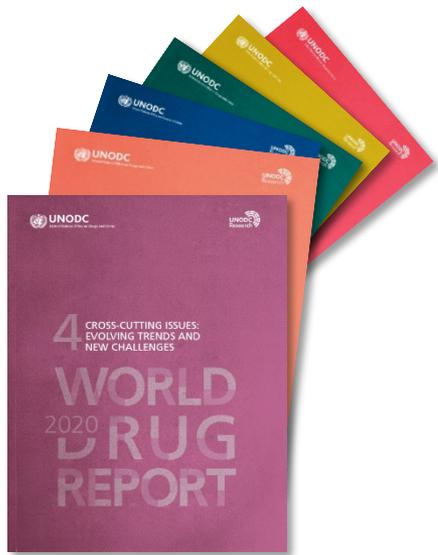


➔ Long-term upward trend in most countries across all regions

Source: UNODC calculations based on the *Global Drug Survey 2020* data and previous years: detailed findings on drug cryptomarkets.

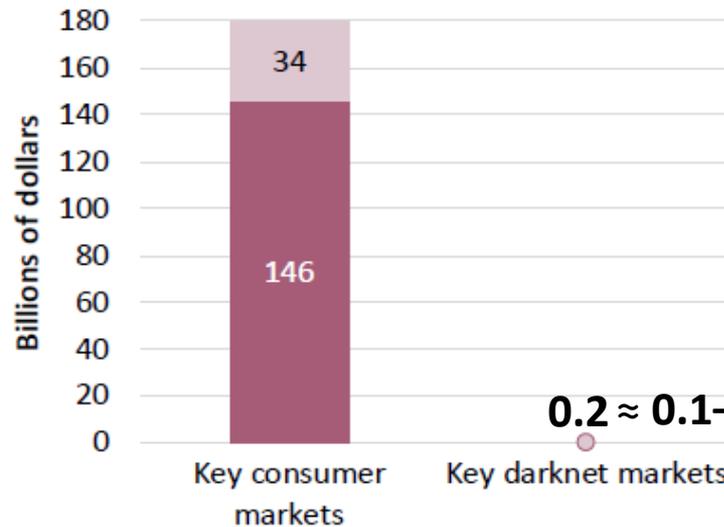
Note: The *Global Drug Survey* is based on a convenience sample of 100,000 to 500,000 people every year, of whom 50,000 to 90,000 replied to questions on drug purchases over the darknet. All regional averages are weighted by the population of each country. North America: averages based on information from respondents in Canada and the United States; Europe: averages based on information from respondents in 25 European countries (not included are data from the Russian Federation, which are only available for 2018 and 2020); Oceania: averages based on information from respondents in Australia and New Zealand; Latin America: averages based on information from respondents in Brazil, Colombia and Mexico (not included are data from Argentina and Chile, which are only available for 2020 and 2019, respectively).

<sup>a</sup> Data for either January 2014 or January 2020 were not available; data from the most recent year available were taken as a proxy.



# DARKNET

**FIG. 67** Annual illicit retail drug sales in the United States (2016) and Europe (2017) versus annual illicit drug sales through key darknet markets (2017–2018)

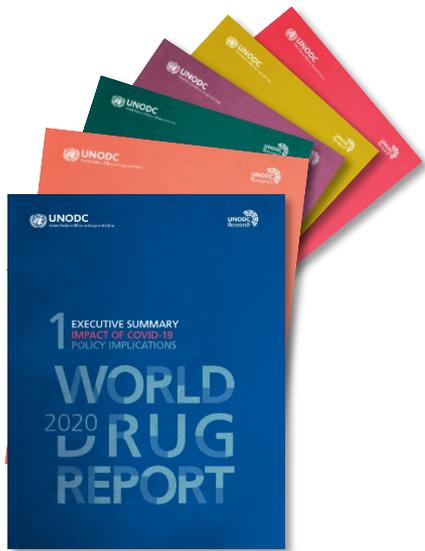


**0.2 ≈ 0.1–0.2% of US and EU drug retail sales**

➔ Drug supply over darknet – though rising fast - remains modest compared to overall illicit retail drug sales

- Illicit retail drug sales, European Union (2017)
- Illicit retail drug sales, United States (2016)
- Illicit drug sales over the darknet (2017-2018)

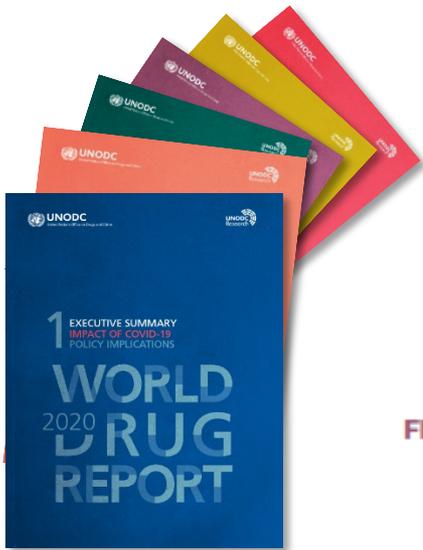
Sources: Gregory Midgette, Steven Davenport, Jonathan P. Caulkins and Beau Kilmer, What America's Users Spend on Illegal Drugs, 2006–2016 (RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California, 2019); EMCDDA and Europol, EU Drug Markets Report 2019; EMCDDA, "Analysis of the supply of drugs and new psychoactive substances by Europe-based vendors via darknet markets in 2017–18".



# Global drug market: Expansion

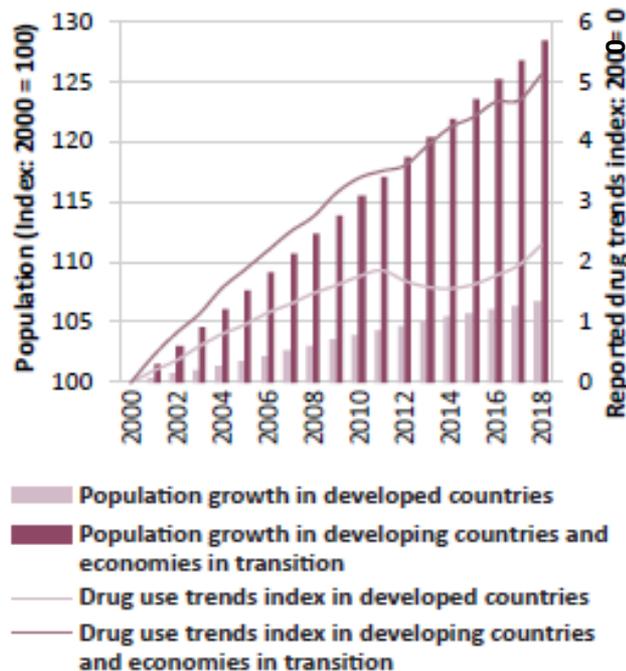


- 30% more users between 2009-2018
- 2008-2017: deaths increased by a quarter
- Highest cocaine production in 2018
- Abundant opium production
- Seizures of ATS quadrupled between 2009-2018



# Expansion in developing countries

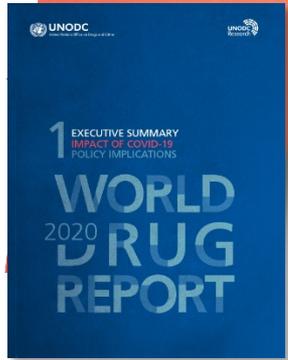
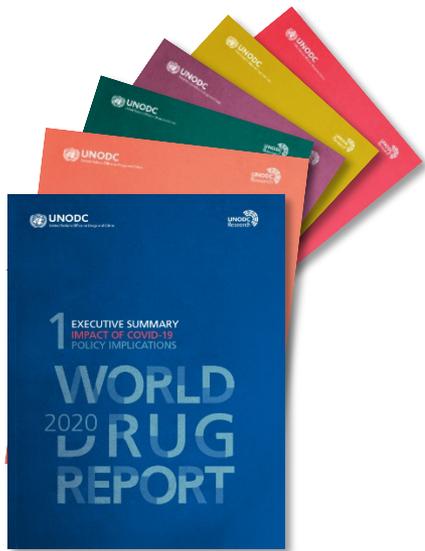
**FIG. 5** Population growth and reported drug use trends in developed countries as compared with developing countries and countries with economies in transition, 2000–2018



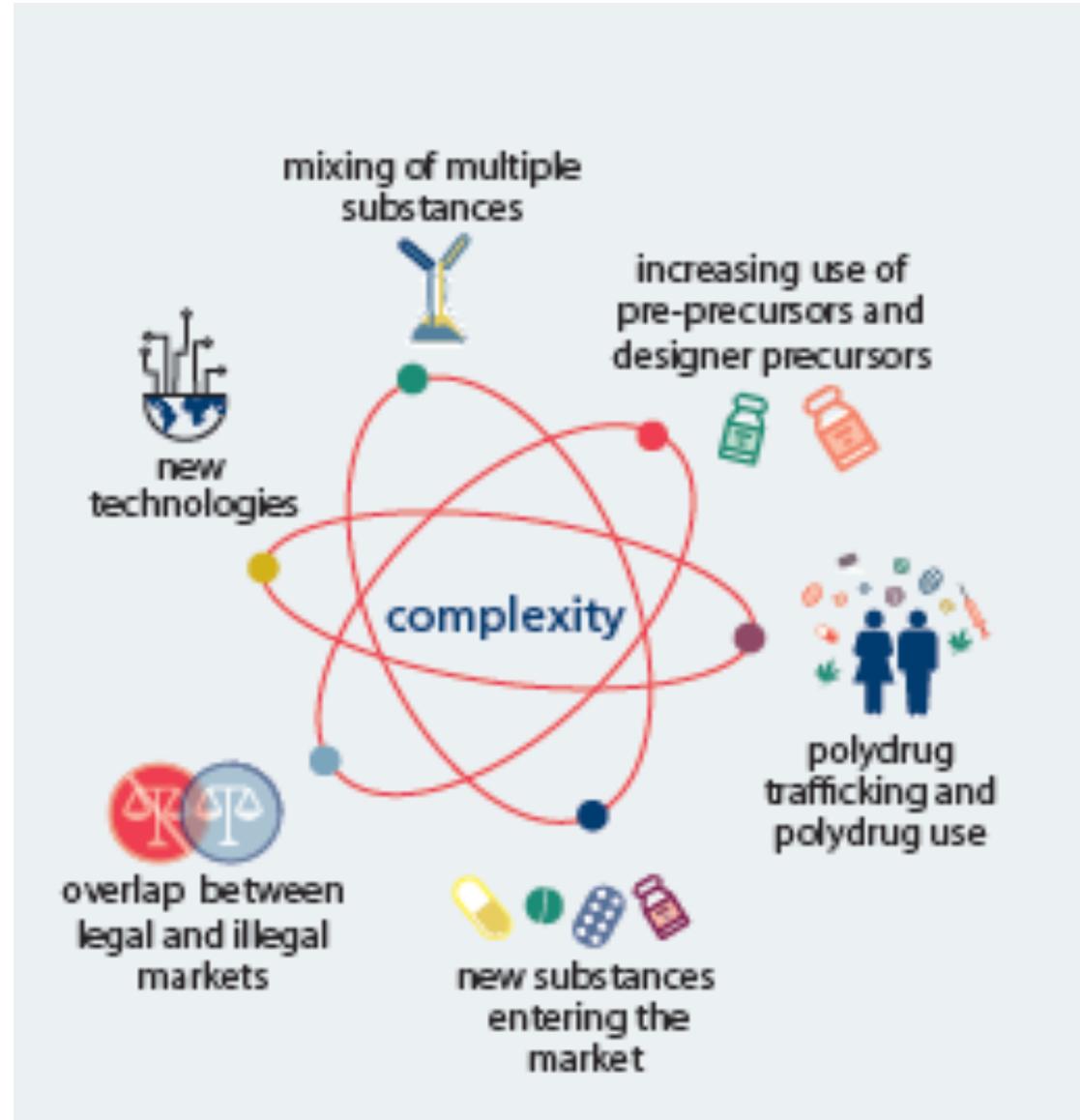
## Between 2000-2018

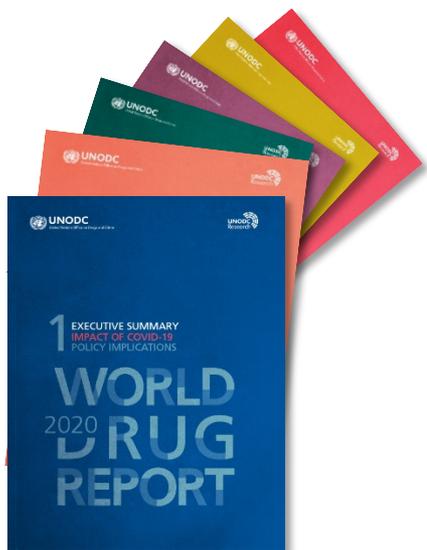
- Total population grew by 28% in developing countries and by 7% in developed countries
- Population 18-25 grew by 18% in developing countries and decreased by 10% in developed countries

Sources: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire; and United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.



# Global drug market: increased complexity





**With controls  
on precursor  
chemicals drug  
manufacturers  
innovate**

Seizures of amphetamines chemical precursors under international control and emergence of amphetamines pre-precursors and designer precursors





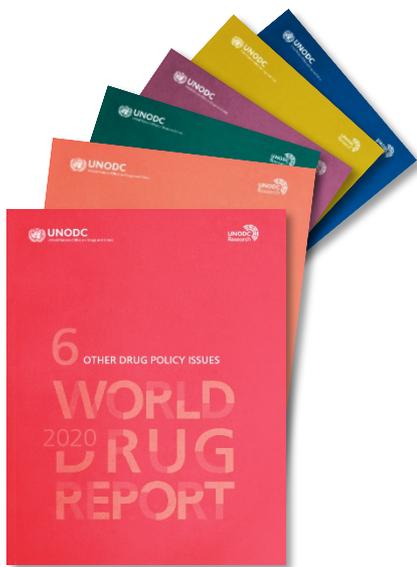
*Higher socioeconomic groups may have a greater propensity to initiate drug use than lower socioeconomic groups, but it is the people in the lower socioeconomic groups that are more likely to progress from drug use to drug user disorder and therefore pay the highest price*

Vicious cycle between socioeconomic disadvantage and drug use disorders

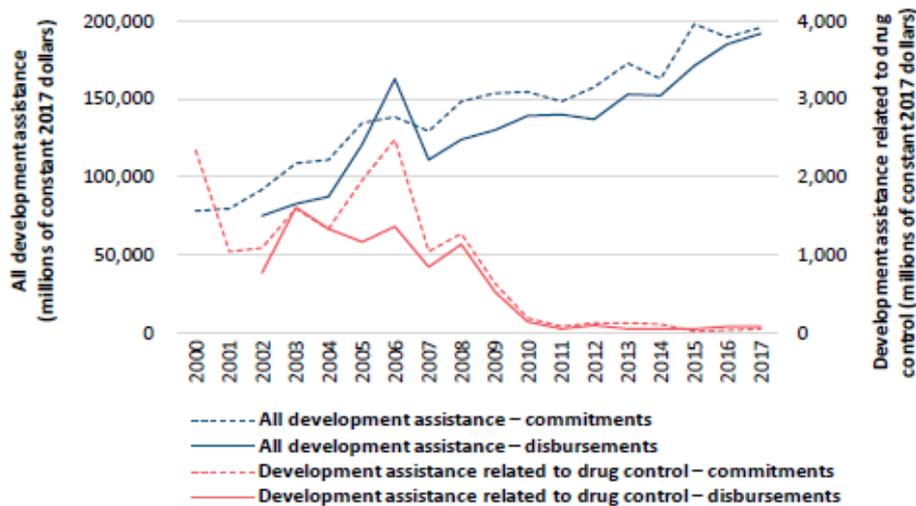


**Zoom on: women, sexually diverse populations, indigenous and aboriginal peoples, ethnic groups and immigrants, displaced persons, people in rural settings**

# International cooperation: development assistance



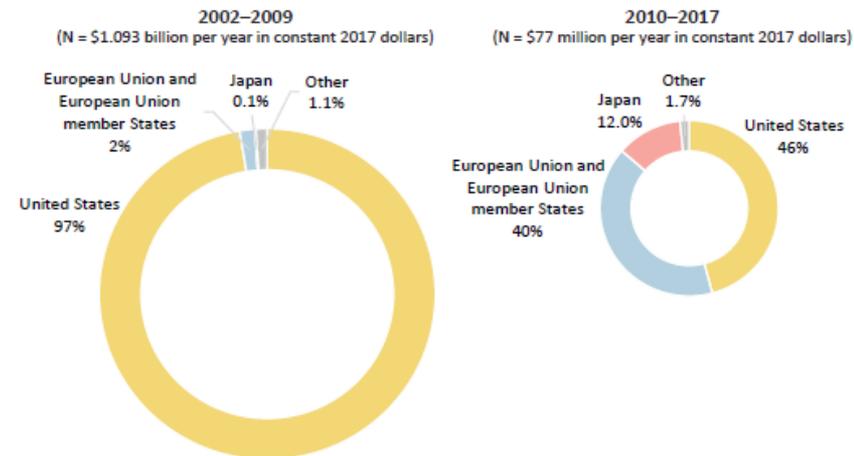
**FIG. 19** Commitments and disbursement of funds by donor countries reporting to the Development Assistance Committee on development assistance in general and development assistance dedicated to drug control, 2000–2017



Source: OECD, OECD.Stat, Development, Flows based on individual projects, "Creditor Reporting System (CRS)".

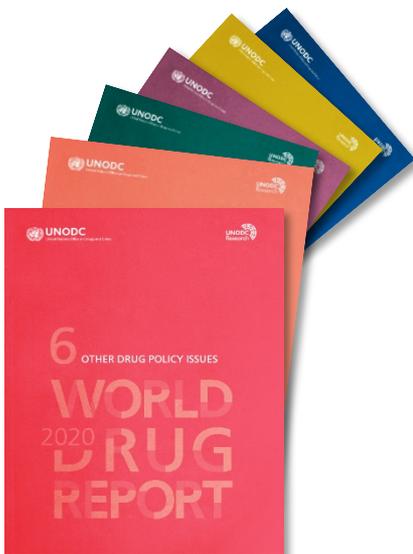
Note: The statistics include information provided by observers of international institutions such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and various regional development banks, as well as by other OECD member countries and non-OECD-member DAC "participants", including several oil-producing countries, such as Gulf States, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

**FIG. 21** Donors of development assistance funds dedicated to drug control, 2002–2017

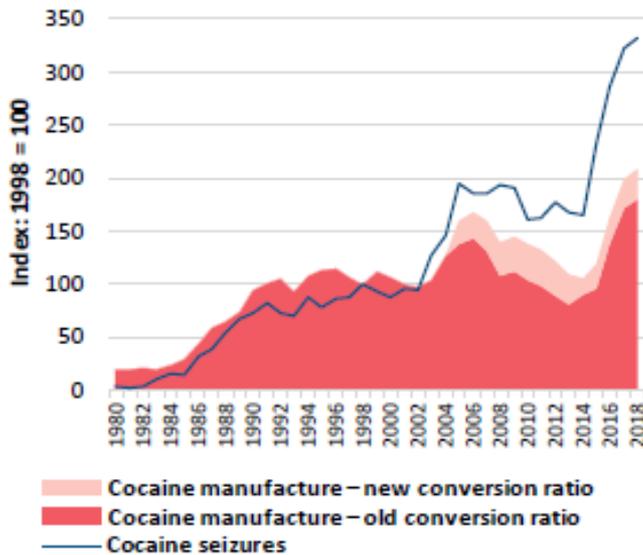


Source: OECD, OECD.Stat, Development, Flows based on individual projects, "Creditor Reporting System (CRS)".

# DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE – Impact ?



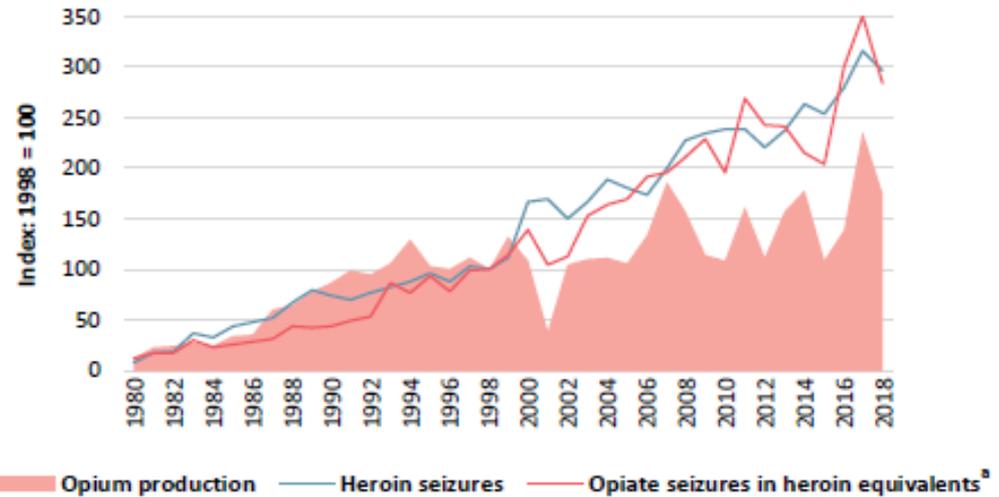
**FIG. 23** Growth in global cocaine manufacture and global quantities of cocaine seized, 1980–2018



Sources: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire (for data on seizures); UNODC coca cultivation surveys; and United States, Department of State, International Narcotics Control Strategy Reports (for cocaine manufacture estimates).

Note: The 2018 estimates of cocaine manufacture are provisional.

**FIG. 24** Growth in global opium production and global quantities of opiates seized, including heroin, 1980–2018



Sources: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire (for data on seizures); UNODC, opium poppy surveys, and responses to the annual report questionnaire; and United States, Department of State, International Narcotics Control Strategy Reports (for opium production estimates).

<sup>a</sup> Applying a conversion ratio of 10 kg of opium per 1 kg of morphine or heroin.

# Alternative development

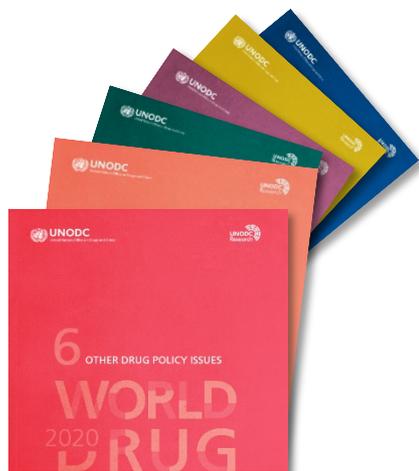
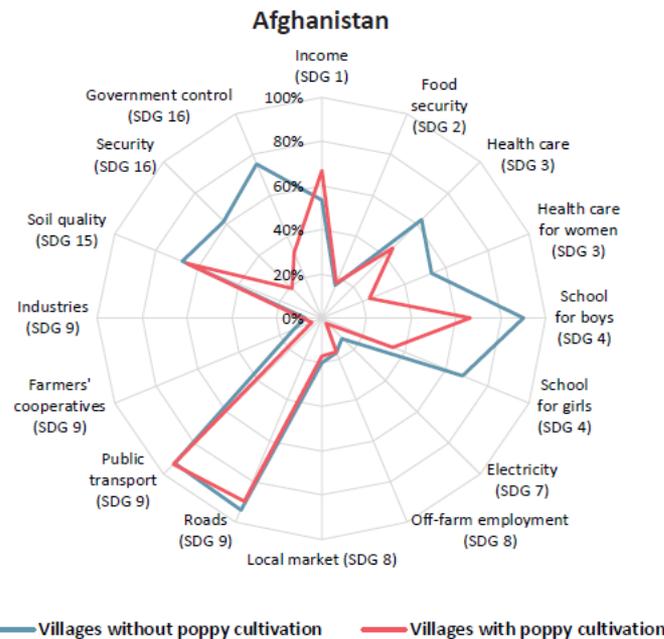


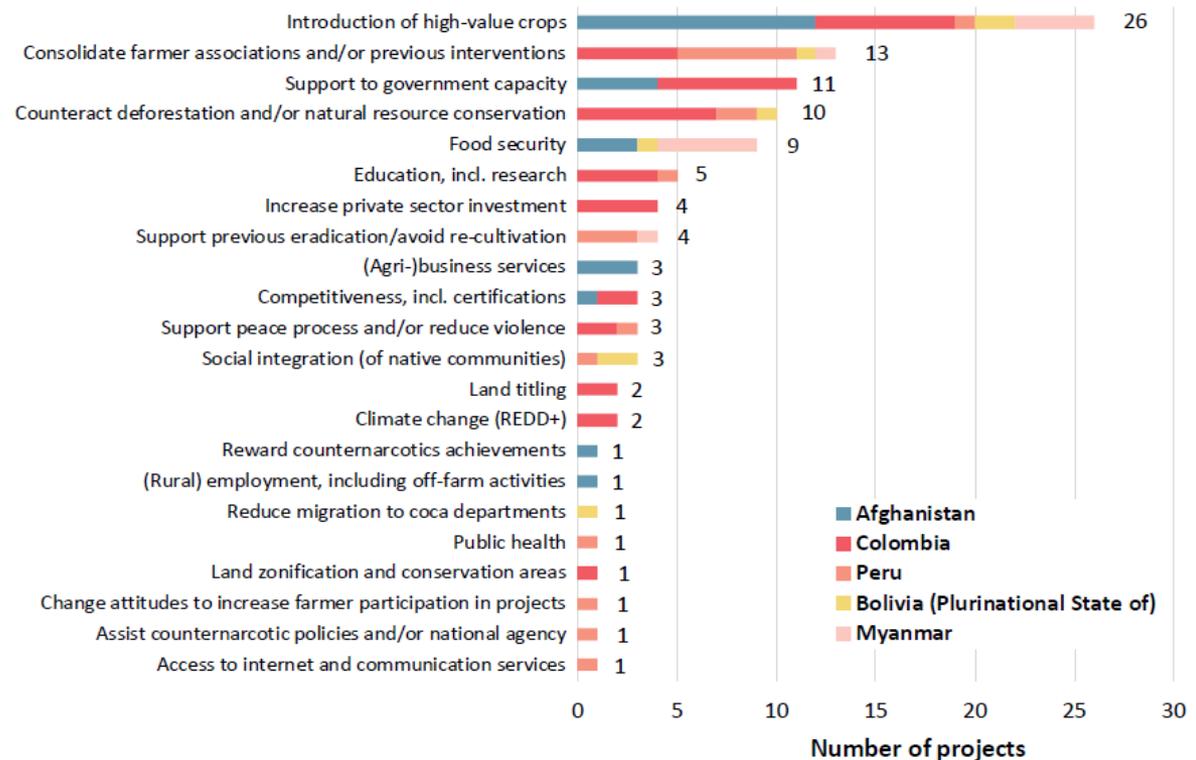
FIG. 26 Development gap



Source: UNODC and Afghanistan, Minister of Counter-Narcotics *Opium Survey Report 2016* (May 2017) and UNODC and *Building Resilience to Opium Poppy Cultivation in Shan State, Myanmar 2017*.

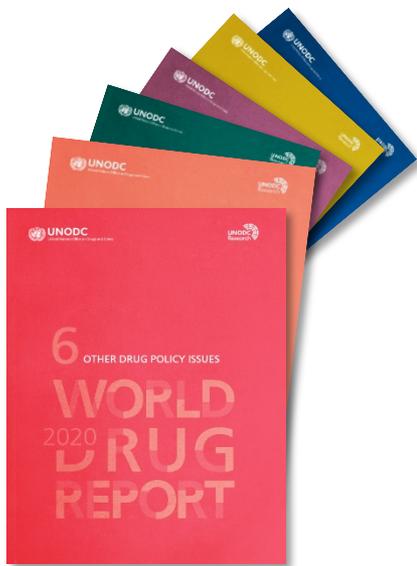
Notes: The SDG indicators in the graphs are interpretative elements of Goal indicators themselves, of which there are 247. The development villages affected (red line) and villages not affected (blue line) by illicit the better the situation of the villages is in relation to the Sustainable

FIG. 33 Number of alternative development projects, by main objective and country, 2013–2017



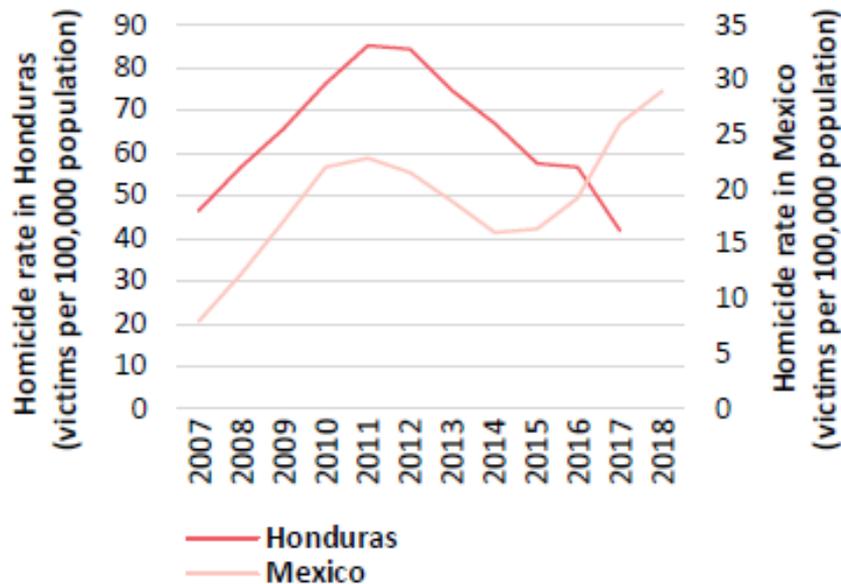
Source: UNODC, "Research brief: global overview of alternative development projects, 2013–2017".

Notes: N = 53. The main objectives are those as stated in the project documents and are not mutually exclusive. The numbers refer to the number of projects for each stated main objective. The projects had one or more main objectives.



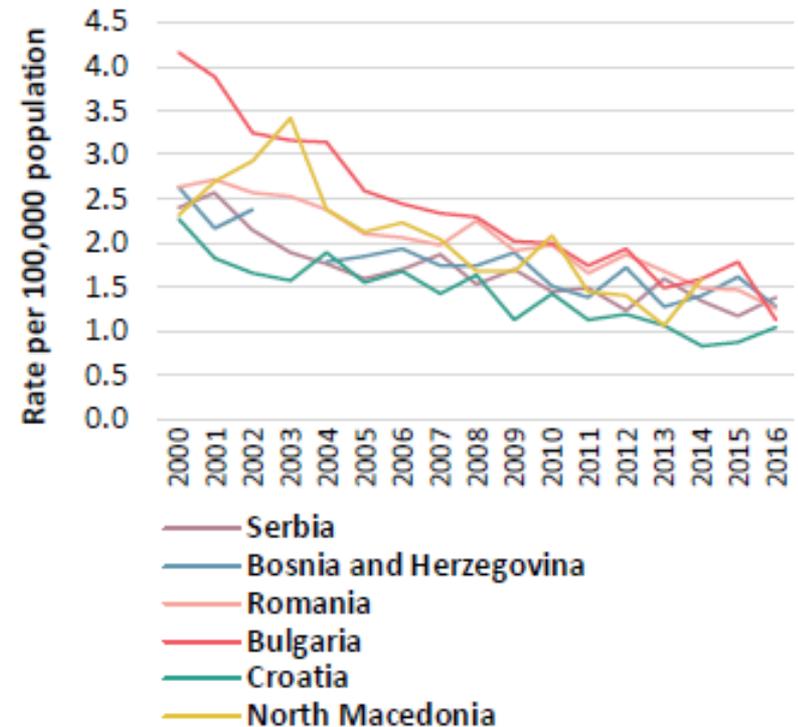
# Drugs and violence

**FIG. 38** Homicide rates in Honduras and Mexico, 2007–2018

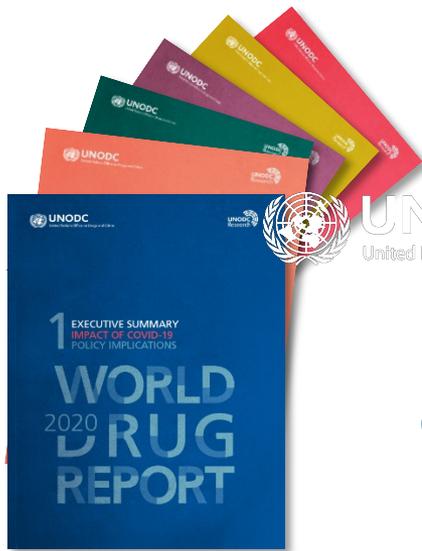


Source: UNODC, homicide statistics, and national sources.

**FIG. 37** Homicide rates in South-Eastern Europe, selected countries, 2000–2016



Source: UNODC, homicide statistics.

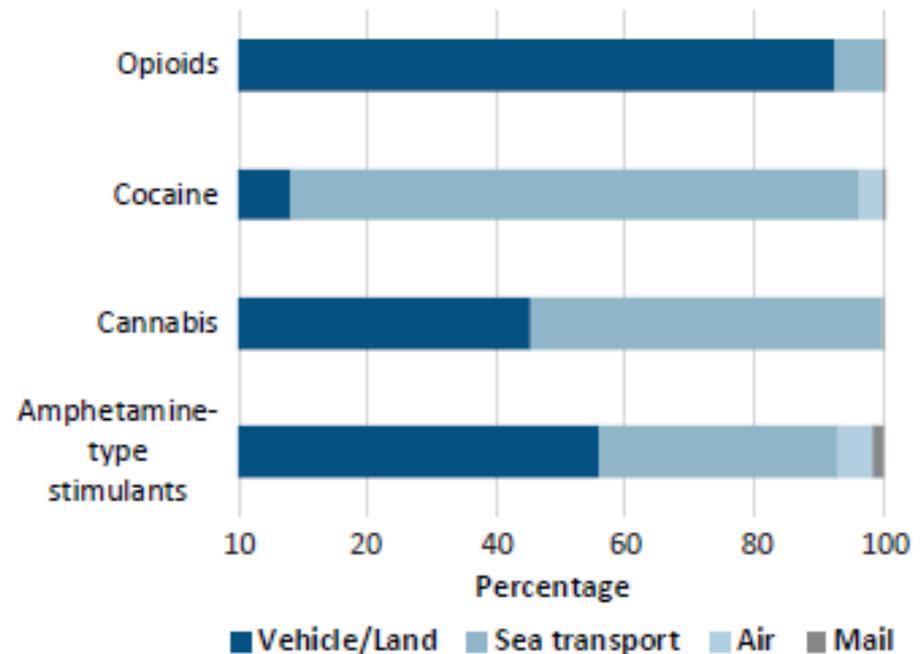



**UNODC**  
 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

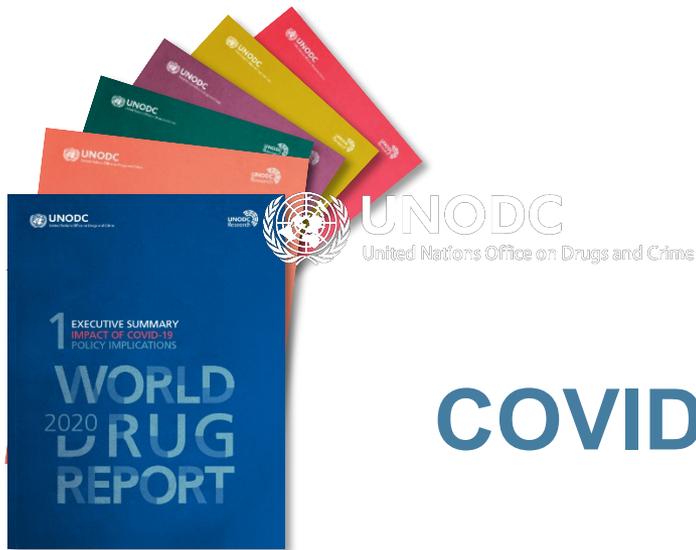
# COVID: changed risks and opportunities

- Production: reduced opportunity to sell and shortage of precursor chemicals
- Trafficking: it depends by mode of transportation, softer impact on maritime routes
- Increased border controls in the Americas leading to a reduction in trafficking
- Use: shortage in some countries, reduced accessibility to services

Modes of transportation used in significant drug seizures, by substance, January 2017–April 2020



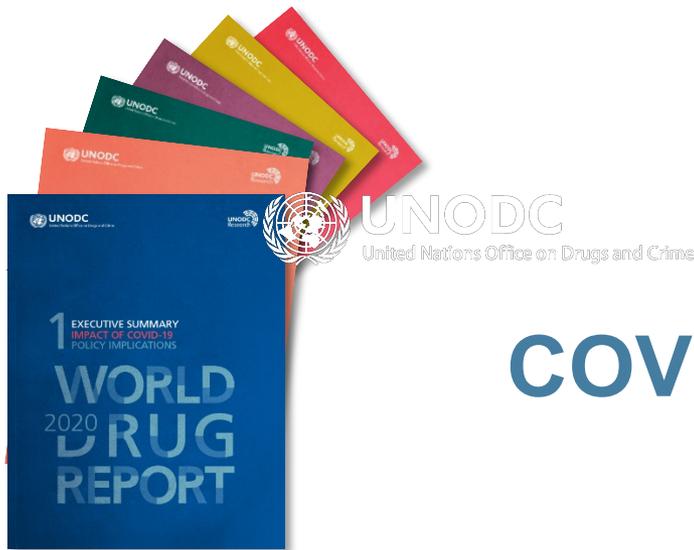
Source: UNODC, Drugs Monitoring Platform.



# COVID-19: the threat

- Risk for low-cost, high-quality drugs from stockpiles when restrictions are lifted
- Drug production and often trafficking is related to precarious situation of the local (rural) population
- Worsening of living conditions in producing countries may lead to an increase in drug production and manufacture on the long run

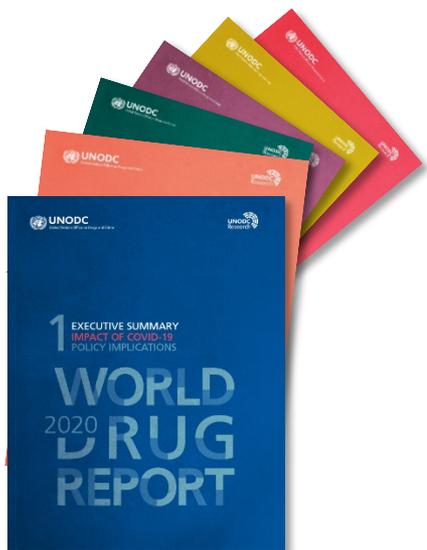




# COVID-19: the threat

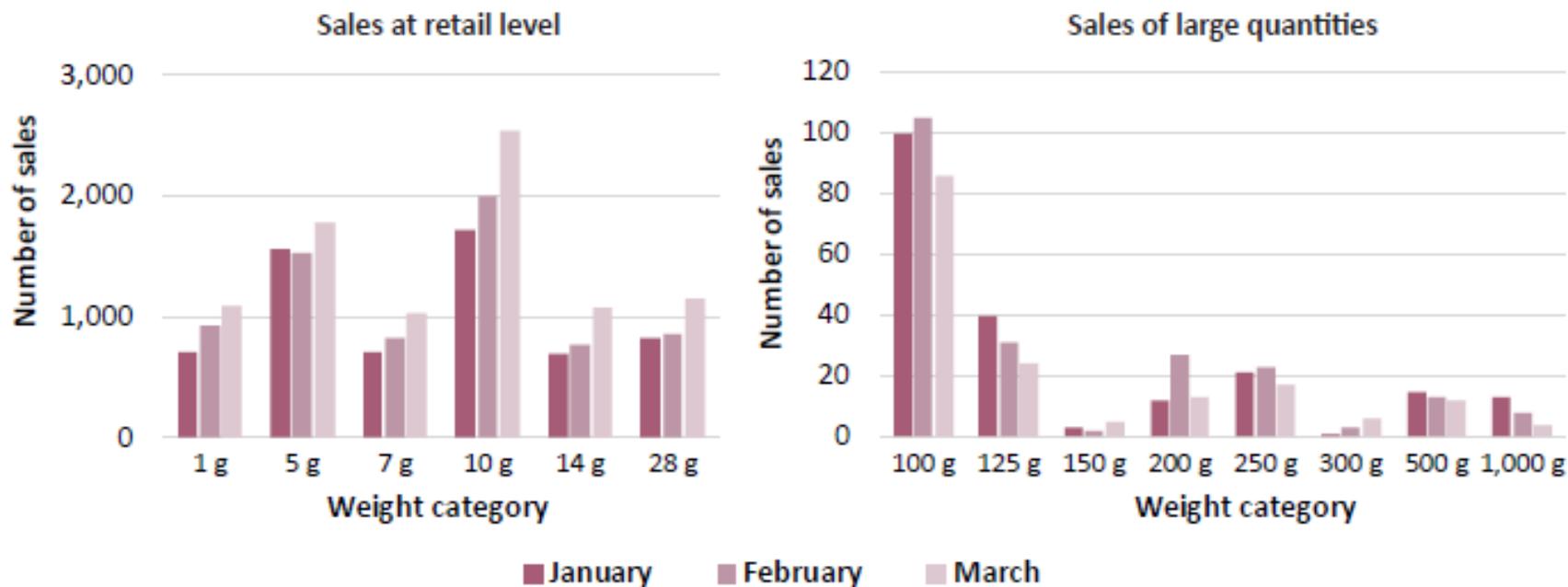
- In the short term, drug use may have decreased, although specific problems for marginalised groups remain
- In the long term, the looming economic crisis may lead to a lasting transformation of the markets
- Poverty, unemployment and a more precarious socio-economic situation can be conducive to substance use and to related (often criminal) behaviour
- Studies from the 2008 financial crisis showed that
  - Drug use patterns became more harmful
  - A shift to cheaper drugs and towards injecting drug use
  - While government budgets to address the drug problem decreased



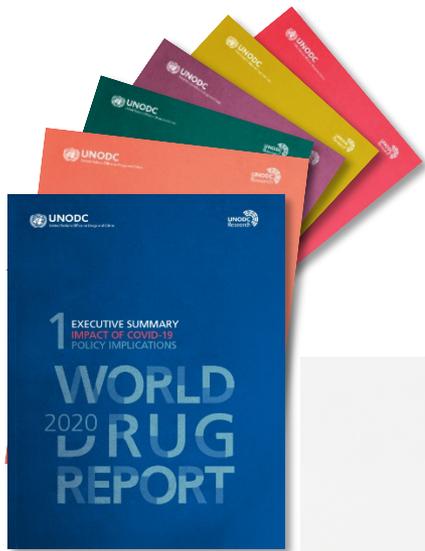


# COVID-19: darknet

**FIG. 78** Sales of cannabis by weight category on Cannazon market, January–March 2020



Source: EMCDDA, *Special Report: COVID-19 and Drugs – Drug Supply Via Darknet Markets*.



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



## World Drug Report 2020

For more information:

<http://www.unodc.org/>

<https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2020/index.html>