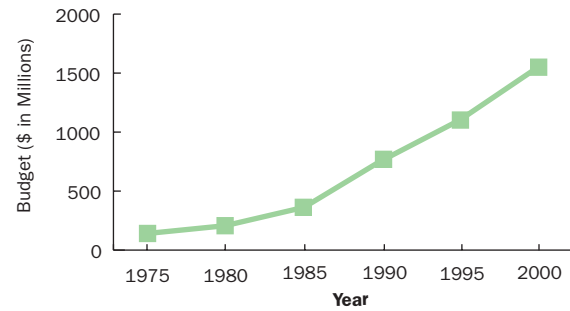
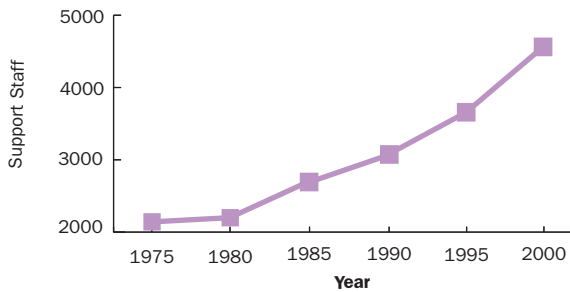
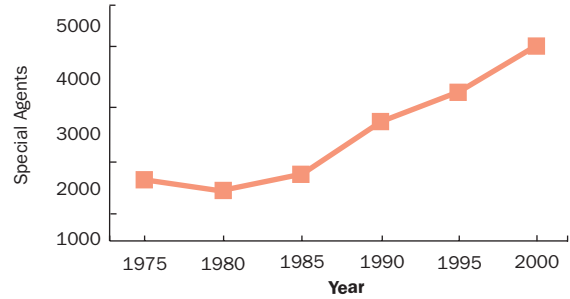
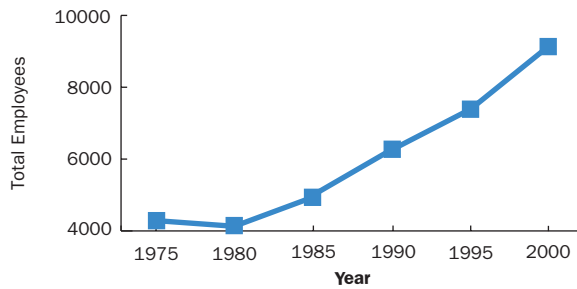


**U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY STAFFING AND BUDGETS 1975–2000**



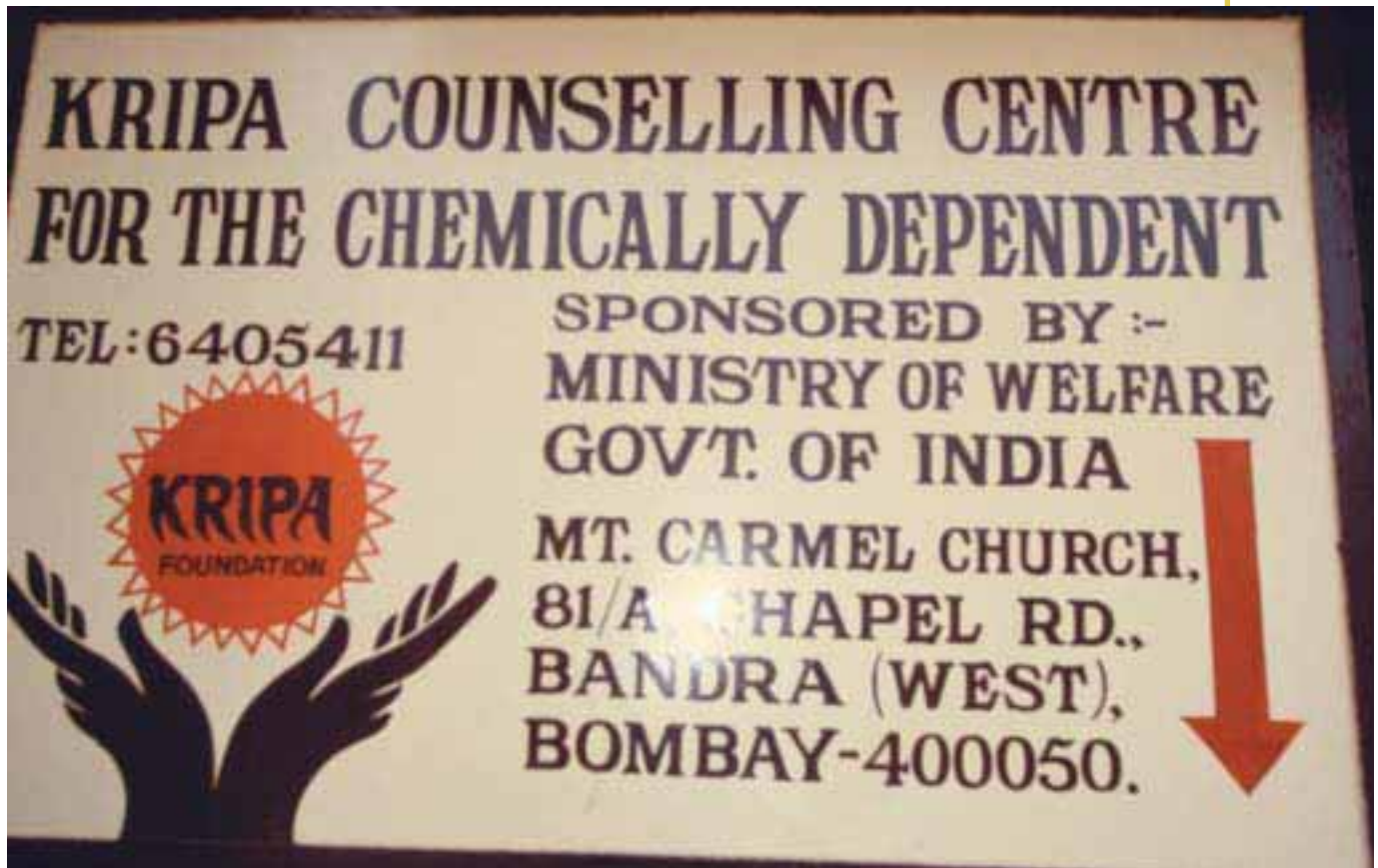
SOURCE: U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. <<http://www.dea.gov/stats/lawstats.htm>>.

The total number of employees and the overall budget of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency increases every year in an effort to further crackdown on drug use, sales, and manufacturing.

supply can never be fully stopped, however, and money spent on this effort is largely wasted. They contend that the money could be better spent on programs aimed at reducing the demand for illegal drugs. Still, U.S. policy remains firmly committed to decreasing the flow of drugs through transit countries. Some progress has been made, but there is much more to be done. To build on its successes, the United States will have to work closely with these other nations. SEE ALSO DRUG PRODUCERS; LAW AND POLICY: CONTROLS ON DRUG TRAFFICKING; LAW AND POLICY: FOREIGN POLICY AND DRUGS.

## Drug Use Around the World

Drug use is a worldwide phenomenon, and drug use occurs in almost every country. The specific drug or drugs used varies from country to country and from region to region. Worldwide, the three main drugs of use are cannabis (such as marijuana), opiates (such as heroin), and cocaine. Although individual countries have their own drug laws, in general, drug possession, sale, and use are illegal. Unfortunately, laws are not always equally enforced in countries around the world.



### The History of Drug Use

Drugs have played a part in every culture throughout history, whether used for medical, religious, or recreational purposes. Records of cannabis use date back thousands of years; hallucinogenic drug use in religious ceremonies shows up worldwide; opium use dates back to the beginning of civilization; and the chewing of coca leaves by laborers extends back thousands of years. Drug abuse most certainly occurred in the past, but it was not until people learned how to process and refine drugs that abuse rose dramatically.

During the past 100 years, advances in chemistry and pharmacology (the science of drugs) have allowed new drugs to be created from old sources. Opium was processed and refined into morphine and heroin. Coca leaves were processed and refined into cocaine and crack. Amphetamines, a new class of stimulants, were synthesized in the laboratory, as were new **hallucinogenic** drugs such as LSD, ecstasy, and MDA. These new drugs and refined old drugs are more powerful and addictive than any drugs in the past. While great advances have been made in the creation and use of drugs for medical

Drug use and addiction are international problems, with many countries in need of substance abuse clinics. The Kripa Counselling Centre for the Chemically Dependent is located in Bombay, the capital of India.

**hallucinogenic** substance that can cause hallucinations, or seeing, hearing, or feeling things that are not there

purposes, drug use for religious reasons has declined, while use for pleasure has increased sharply.

### Current Global Trends in Drug Use

Throughout the 1990s, the use of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) increased dramatically worldwide. The main regions of use of ATS are in North America, Western Europe, and Asia. By the end of the 1990s, ATS use had stabilized or declined in North America and Western Europe. By contrast, use has continued to increase in Asia. Asia is the leading region for use and manufacture of ATS, and the potential for spreading the problem to other regions continues.

Worldwide, cocaine use has been reported in more than two-thirds of all countries. Although the use of cocaine is declining in North America, the rate of use still leads the world. In Western Europe, cocaine use has continued to rise since 1980. The lowest rates of cocaine use are found in Asia. Law-enforcement efforts have brought down the rate of production in cocaine-producing nations in recent years.

The use of opiates has been increasing worldwide at an alarming rate, with more than two-thirds of the countries in the world reporting increases. Opiate use is highest in developing nations and nations in transition, while use in developed nations is stable or declining. One possible reason for the increase in use worldwide is that production of opium has increased dramatically. Production of opium has been shifting from Southeast Asia to Southwest Asia. Afghanistan leads the world in opium production, producing 79 percent of the total.

Cannabis remains the most widespread drug in use worldwide. The use of cannabis is increasing overall, but in some regions, notably North America, Russia, China, and parts of Asia, use has stabilized or decreased in recent years. Cannabis will probably remain the most widely used drug because the crop is easily grown in many different climates and requires no processing for use as drugs.

Opium and opiate drugs are most widely used in Asia. Opiate use is much lower in North America, Central America, South America, and Europe than it is in Asia. However, there is still enough use to consider opium a problem drug in those regions. Cocaine use is highest in the United States, but use is also high in other countries throughout the Americas and Europe. In general, rates of cocaine use are higher in more affluent countries. The use of amphetamine-type stimulants is highest in Europe and significant in selected other countries in the Americas. Africa has the lowest overall use of opium, and



African rates of cocaine use are low. African countries generally show more amphetamine-type stimulant use than use of opium and cocaine.

### Worldwide Drug Production

The production of amphetamine-type stimulants is a worldwide problem. ATS can be manufactured wherever the chemicals are located. In most world regions, **illicit** laboratories produce the drugs. In a few countries in South America and Africa, **pharmaceutical** companies that produce ATS for medicinal use are the primary producers. ATS production is difficult to control because of the wide range of ATS drugs available. For example, in some countries a chemical variation of a particular ATS compound can create a new ATS that is not illegal.

The leading countries that grow coca and produce cocaine are Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia. North American countries are the main market for cocaine because of easy access to the South American source.

Opiates are derived from the opium poppy plant, which is grown in many parts of the world. The principal growing areas for opium

Opium, and drugs made from opium (e.g., heroin), are used more widely in Asia than in other parts of the world. Here Burmese women prepare opium for smoking.

**illicit** something illegal or something used in an illegal manner

**pharmaceutical** legal drug that is usually used for medical reasons

poppies are in Southwest Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan), Southeast Asia (Laos or Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam), and Latin America (Colombia and Mexico). In 1999, Afghanistan accounted for 79 percent of world opium production, Myanmar produced 15 percent of the world opium, and the remaining 6 percent was produced by other nations. Because production of opium is centered in Southwest and Southeast Asia, the highest levels of use are found in countries close to the source.

In the last decade, more than 120 nations reported cannabis growing. However, little reliable information exists on just how much is grown. The amount of cannabis seized in drug raids gives some idea of annual cannabis production, but estimates vary widely, ranging from 10,000 to 300,000 metric tons a year. The major growers of cannabis and major suppliers for the world market are Morocco, South Africa, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mexico, Colombia, and Jamaica. Another trend in cannabis growing in developed nations is hydroponics and other indoor growing techniques. Improved cannabis growing techniques result in a plant with a much higher concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol, the active ingredient in marijuana and other cannabis drugs. As a result, the drugs from these crops are more powerful.

### The Economic Impact of Drug Production

The growing and processing of drugs usually takes place in developing nations or nations in transition. For developing nations, drug production may form the basis of the country's economy. Drug growing and processing usually employs a large percentage of the population and may be a major source of income. The money from growing and processing drugs boosts local economies, even though most of the profits do not directly benefit the growers and production workers. The economic value of cannabis and ATS to the countries that produce them is probably just as high as opium and coca are to the countries that grow these crops.

The economic impact of opium growing and production is dramatic. Afghanistan produced 4,565 metric tons or 79 percent of the world opium supply in 1999, with a potential economic value of \$251 million (all values are in U.S. dollars). Myanmar, the second-leading producer of opium in 1999, produced 895 metric tons or 15 percent of the world opium supply, with a potential economic value of \$116 million.

The economic impact of coca production is also significant, based on the numbers for 1999. In that year, Colombia produced 520 metric tons of coca worth an estimated \$494 million. Peru produced 305

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The United Nations' *World Drug Report* estimates that cannabis, or marijuana, is the most widely abused substance in all parts of the world, with around 141 million people using it.

metric tons of coca worth an estimated \$134 million. Bolivia produced 70 metric tons of coca worth an estimated \$63 million.

The huge economic impact of drug production on source countries makes elimination of this production a major problem. In poor nations, people usually consider the money-making opportunities worth the risks. Many times, the risks are lessened through corrupt governments that make profits from the illicit drug production. Some countries simply lack the resources or manpower to combat illicit drug growing and production. SEE ALSO DRUG PRODUCERS; DRUG TRAFFICKERS; DRUGS USED IN RITUALS; HALLUCINOGENS; MARIJUANA; OPIATE AND OPIOID DRUG ABUSE.

## Drugs of Abuse

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Drugs that are used and abused by humans for nonmedical purposes can be grouped into several major categories. The drugs in each category have similar effects on the user, even though they may differ in the way they produce those effects. The major categories include:

1. alcohol (ethanol)
2. nicotine and tobacco
3. depressants (barbiturates, benzodiazepines)
4. stimulants (amphetamines, cocaine)
5. marijuana
6. opioids (morphine, heroin, methadone)
7. psychedelics (LSD, mescaline, ecstasy)
8. inhalants (glue, nitrous oxide)
9. phencyclidine (PCP)

This article describes and discusses drugs from each category. The discussion begins with alcohol and tobacco, which are both legal and relatively easy to obtain. The worldwide use and abuse of these drugs is far more widespread than all the other categories of abused drugs combined. Next in the discussion is depressants used as prescription drugs. Doctors write more prescriptions for diazepam (Valium) and the related benzodiazepines each year than for any other drug. The discussion then turns to illegal, or illicit, drugs. The illicit use of heroin, cocaine, and other drugs remains a major social, legal, financial, and health problem in the United States in the twenty-first century. However, fewer people are physically dependent on illegal drugs than on the legal drugs listed above.