

# Substance abuse intervention : A challenge to regional public health cooperation

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## ABSTRACT

Different extent of substance abuse prevails in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Opium abuse is common in the rural population of these countries. However, in Vietnam, injection of opium solution is also observed in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city. Heroin abuse confines mainly to urban area of stimulants and large clandestine production of methylamphetamine, increase alcoholic beverage consumption and related health problems are new concern in Thailand. Abuse of cannabis, medicinal drugs particularly the tranquilizers, inhalation of industrial products, paint thinner and glue, and polydrug use is also evident in Myanmar and Thailand. Selected information and statistics on abuser population characteristics, pattern of substance use, socio-economic and health impact are presented. Discussion is made on the epidemiological linkages of substance abuse in different geographical area mediate through population mobility, socio-economic development and drug abuse interventions. The close relationship between supply and demand of consumption of substance underline the importance of well coordinated law enforcement, prevention, public health and medical interventions in curbing substance abuse problem. The success of interventions abuse problem. The success of interventions do not need only effective national effort. International and regional collaboration is also essential.

**Key words :** Southeast Asia, Drug use, Substance abuse, Drug dependence

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