



# **World Health Organization (WHO)**

## **Tracking Opioid Epidemics**

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### **DESCRIPTION OF COMMITTEE**

The World Health Organization (WHO), is one of the primary committees within the United Nations (UN). Founded in 1948, the WHO is dedicated to building a better and healthier future for people worldwide. The UN staff made up of 194 member states across 6 regions are dedicated to achieving UN goals, so that people across the world have better access to healthcare. The company's main location is in Geneva, Switzerland. A main component of this organization is the third Sustainable Development Goal. This target is closely related to health and well-being. It is the primary emphasis of WHO and its members, and is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that the UN has supported.

WHO's development and accomplishments have been notable over the years. They have contributed to enriching the lives of many people worldwide, by creating solutions to diseases that could not be discovered without them. The WHO officially declared the eradication of smallpox by 1980. At the time, smallpox was a devastating disease that caused unprecedented deaths, and ailments such blindness and other disfigurements. The cure for smallpox became the biggest modern achievement of international public health. The WHO also helped to nearly eradicate polio. By 1994, polio had been eliminated by the Americas and by the year 2000, the Western Pacific was polio free. From 2003 to 2006, the number of countries where Polio was still endemic decreased by 2, going down from 6 to 4. The WHO also introduced a vaccine to help combat Ebola: a ravaging disease most commonly known to be in the Western countries of Africa. The World Health Organization has also acted on tuberculosis and malaria, other infectious diseases.

The WHO has been playing a very crucial role in the UN by working together with governments of developing countries helping with all of their health issues. They provide civilians all over the world with the information and standards people need; thus, hoping to reach health equity for everyone.



## **INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC**

The number of people who have died because of a drug overdose in 1999 has increased over six times till 2021. The drug overdose number of deaths has increased significantly, almost more than 16%. 107,000 people had drug overdose deaths in 2021 that were involved with the opioid, this was over 75%. As states and communities work to identify crises, gather data, respond to overdoses, and offer treatment for people in their communities, the CDC is dedicated to helping states and municipalities in their fight against the opioid and/or overdose crisis. Throughout a 4-year operation agreement called Overdose Data to Action, the CDC has provided funds for monitoring and prevention programs to health departments in 16 cities and countries across the United States of America.

These projects include better medication drug tracker programs, improving connection to care for people with opioid use disorder and risk for opioid overdose, tracking nonfatal and fatal drug overdose more quickly, improving toxicology to better track polysubstance involved deaths, tracking nonfatal and fatal drug overdose, working with public safety, and starting other cutting edge observation and prevention initiatives.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE TOPIC**

More Americans are affected by chronic pain than by diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined. The most common way to define pain is by its duration, followed by its kind (nociceptive, neuropathic, or inflammatory) and intensity (mild, moderate, or severe). According to data from 2012, 126.1 million people across the US experience chronic pain. There are many various diseases, illnesses, and accidents that cause this type of pain. For example, discomfort following surgery occurs in 80% of patients who had surgery, with less than half feeling good pain treatment. Sixty percent of women giving birth for the first time describe their pain as intense, and up to 18% of them continue to have pain a year after giving birth. In the previous three months, 15.3%, 14.9%, and 28.4% of Americans over the age of 18 reported having frequent headaches or migraines, neck pain, or lower back pain, each, according to survey data from the National Center for Health Statistics from 2016.

Millions of Americans suffer from serious diseases, death, and disability due to pain. When pain is not properly or correctly treated or handled, it affects more than just the person who is in pain; it also has an effect on the family, the healthcare system, productivity at work, and society as a whole.



Many patients continue to experience pain without the accessibility of analgesics and other pharmacotherapies. In a 2006 survey of 303 individuals with persistent pain who were using an opioid for therapy, it was shown that 51% of participants believed they had little or no control over their suffering. In addition, 77% said they felt sadness, 70% had problems focusing, and 86% had trouble sleeping properly because of pain.

### **CURRENT SITUATIONS OF THE TOPIC**

Since 1999-2002, almost 645,000 people have died because of a drug overdose that involves opioids. The opioid epidemic has been plaguing the US for many decades since the late 1990's. Throughout the years, the only thing that has changed is the type of drugs. These drugs have killed half a million people during the past 20 years.

There are many harmful and fatal drugs around the world. One of the most known drugs is Fentanyl, which is the deadliest drug in the US and is almost always combined with other types of drugs. This new synthetic drug has been increasing in illicit pills. As these deadly pills increase, the opioid epidemic affects more people daily.

As already mentioned, deaths have been on the rise and there are different reasons why people drug themselves. These reasons include stress, to feel physically better, mental illness, relaxation, anxiety, etc. The group of people most susceptible to drug addiction are today's youth.

An example of an untimely death related to a drug overdose was Matthew Loudon's case. Matthew was a hockey player who struggled with uncontrollable anxiety. He started dabbling himself in 10th grade, which had side effects. At first, his grades began to decline. He was using Xanax to help him get rid of distress and anxiety.

In his case, Matthew was said to be a very honest boy. He told his mom he tried different types of drugs to make him feel better before he discovered Xanax. It was the most potent and powerful drug of them all. One day before Matthew's death, he talked to his mom about fentanyl, because there had been an increase of that type of drug in pills within his neighborhood.

On November 3, 2020, Matthew's mom found his 21-year old son on the floor of the basement. Matthew's autopsy report said his cause of death was because of despropionyl fentanyl intoxication.

There have been many cases like this one in which many young people die, and this situation of drugs needs to be addressed immediately. A solution must be



found so that the number of people who are facing addiction can get out of it unharmed.

### **INTERNATIONAL ACT OF THE TOPIC**

Numerous countries have tried to propose different solutions for this widespread issue. Over the past ten years, the administration of opioids has increased significantly in several Western nations (such as the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Israel), while it is still not at North American proportions. More developing countries are experiencing the quickest growth.

American businesses, such as Mundipharma, which, like Purdue Pharma, is controlled by the Sackler family, are a major contributor to the recent rise. By aggressively and illegally advertising OxyContin, particularly by minimizing its potential for addiction when used for chronic, non-cancer pain, Purdue had a major role in the development of the U.S. opioid epidemic.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING A RESOLUTION**

When the position paper is done, there will need to be various solutions to make a change for the better in consideration of the problem. Some tips and recommendations to create a resolution paper are:

- Identify the cause of the problem.
- Identify the goals that the resolutions are intended to achieve.
- Determine whether your nation is in favor of or against the topic at hand.
- Analyze the issue from various perspectives.
- Develop the strategies that have already been used.
- Consider both immediate and enduring solutions.
- Think about the objectives' potential impact on society.
- Make the resolutions comprehensible, assured, and essential.
- Emphasize the participation of other nations with relevant stances on the issue..
- Be sure to choose phrases that accurately reflect what the resolutions are supposed to mean.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How many deaths are caused by this every year?
- What are some solutions for this situation?
- What are the main causes of addiction?
- What is your delegation's country contributing?
- What are the most common drugs?
- In which places are drugs most consumed
- What are the most common effects of fentanyl?

## TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Fentanyl: a powerful opioid drug used in the treatment of severe pain.
- Headquarters: the place or building serving as the managerial and administrative center of an organization.
- Opioids: a compound resembling opium in addictive properties or physiological effects.
- Tuberculosis: an infectious bacterial disease characterized by the growth of nodules (tubercles) in the tissues, especially the lungs.
- Xanax: proprietary term for alprazolam (a drug used in the treatment of anxiety)
- Illicit: forbidden by law, rules, or custom.
- Toxicology: the study of the form, meaning, and use of words.
- Polysubstance: the use of more than one drug.

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