“Moderate Drug Use”

an innovative theoretical framework and its potential for future harm reduction policies

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Theories and Philosophies of Harm Reduction

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“Harm Reduction – the Next Generation”
Harm Reduction @ the Beginning of the 3rd Millennium

- HR in past 30 Years world widely gained influence
  - Today’s Question:
    - How to expand harm reduction to a broader range of psychoactive drugs and drug users?

- Common ground:
  - A certain amount of drug use is inevitable
  - Interventions should conform to human rights
  - Effectiveness should be assessed by contribution to higher individual and societal well-being

- Disagreement:
  - Valuation of drugs consumption as such, even in a moderate way
The Concept of “Moderate Use” in Contrast to “Abstinence”

Abstinence

- **In general:**
  - Voluntary, total restraint from indulging a desire or appetite for certain activities that are widely experienced as giving pleasure

- **In narrower sense of drug policy:**
  - Focusing of all efforts on total abstinence from drug use for all members of society and especially among drug addicted persons

Moderate Use

Voluntary, moderate restraint to indulge in the lust or desire for consumption (certain activities), knowing the adverse effects resulting from excess

“All things are poison and nothing is without poison, only the dose permits something not to be poisonous.“

(Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Paracelsus - physician, naturalist and philosopher, 1493 to 1541)
## Classification of Substances' Risk Potential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Risk Potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>8.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>6.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbiturates</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadone (illicit trafficking)</td>
<td>5.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>5.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketamine</td>
<td>5.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzodiazepines</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphetamines</td>
<td>4.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buprenorphine (trafficking)</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solvents (inhalants)</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine</td>
<td>3.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>3.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methylphenidate</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anabolic steroids</td>
<td>3.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHB</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AlkylNitrate (Poppers)</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kath</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Drugs adviser sacked for comments

The UK's chief drugs adviser has been sacked by home secretary Alan Johnson after criticising government policies.

Professor David Nutt, head of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, criticised the decision to reclassify cannabis to Class B from C.

He accused ministers of devaluing and distorting evidence and said drugs classification was being politicised.

The “Preaching Water While Drinking Wine” - Situation

- World's adult population drinks an average of 6.2 litres of pure alcohol per year

- 200 billion cigarettes smoked in Germany per year (2000 – 2005)

- Prescription of stimulants tripled from 1993 to 2003

- 2008 global production of illicit drugs:
  - Cannabis herb: 40,000 tons
  - Cannabis resin: 6,000 tons
  - Amphetamines / Ecstasy: 500 tons
  - Opium: 8,000 tons
  - Cocaine: 900 tons

- Widely use of legal and illegal performance-enhancing drugs in the world of sports (Doping)


Moderate Use-Concept‘s Implications on Level of Society

Value-System of Reference

- Strength of Sanctions
- Cultural Status
- (Market-)Regulation

MMT

Drugscene
Implications for Prevention

JUST SAY NO

DRUGS
JUST SAY KNOW

Substanzen
Risiken
Nebenwirkungen
Safer Use

Ecstasy
Cannabis
Implications for Individual Drug Use

• Effects:
  – Positive
  – Negative

• Reference Frame:
  – Individual User (Set)
  – Substance(s)
  – Setting

• Consumption Patterns:
  – Frequency of consumption
  – Dosage
  – Forms of application
Implications for Treatment

• Moderate Use is possible and normal for a large part of society members

• Some individuals need treatment

• Moderate Use as Treatment Goal is feasible
Moderate Use In Summary

Counter concept to total abstinence orientation, but not to temporal, local, situational abstinence

Akin to the concept of harm reduction, but goes further by involving possible positive effects of substance use

In line with broader direction of social change

Can refer to different analytical levels and contexts:
- Society, Groups, Individuals
- Beyond legal – Illegal
- Medical and non-medical applications
- Beyond psychoactive drugs

Concrete meaning of "moderate" is relative, individual and context related

Conforms to unifying ATOD-paradigm and general, neuro-physiological model
Thank you for your attention!

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