

The 170th International Training Course
“Treatment of Illicit Drug Users”

1. Duration and Participants

- From 22 August to 21 September 2018
- 18 overseas participants from 15 countries / jurisdictions
- 7 domestic participants

2. Programme Overview

Scientific research has provided considerable evidence on the connection between drug use and crime. Although drug use does not automatically lead to crime, it can act as a catalyst for existing criminal activity. Meanwhile, criminal behavior may in turn stimulate further drug use. But even in countries where drug use itself is not criminalized, drug use has a tendency to lead to the commission of other crimes, such as property crimes, drug trafficking and so on. Thus, in addition to cases where drug use itself constitutes a crime, its high affinity with crime causes broader criminal and societal problems.

On the other hand, dependence on drugs also entails a complex multifactorial health disorder characterized by a chronic and relapsing disease with social causes and consequences. It is a result of a long series of biological and environmental factors that can be prevented and treated in a health-oriented framework. Therefore, it is necessary not only to instruct users to desist from using drugs, but also to have awareness that it is a disease that can be recovered from by continuous treatment and support.

Bearing these characteristics of drug use in mind, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, underlines the importance of strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse (Goal 3.5). Also, the UNGASS Outcome Document 2016, adopted on 4 May 2016 at the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem, highlights the importance of taking effective and practical measures to prevent progression to severe drug use disorders through appropriately targeted early interventions for people at risk of such progression (1(b)). It also emphasizes the importance of effective scientific evidence-based drug treatment, care and rehabilitation programmes, including community-based programmes, and strengthening capacity for aftercare for, and the rehabilitation, recovery and social reintegration of, individuals with substance use disorders, including through assistance for drug offenders as they re-enter the labor market and other support services (1(i)). The Outcome Document also

recommended promoting and strengthening regional and international cooperation in developing and implementing treatment-related initiatives, enhancing technical assistance and capacity-building and ensuring non-discriminatory access to a broad range of interventions, including psychosocial, behavioral and medication-assisted treatment, as well as rehabilitation, social reintegration and recovery-support programmes, including access to such services in prisons and after imprisonment (1(k)). Furthermore, it points out the significance of developing and strengthening the capacity of health care, social welfare, law enforcement and other criminal justice authorities to cooperate, in the implementation of comprehensive, integrated and balanced responses to drug abuse and drug use disorders (1(l)).

The range of interventions, as pointed out above, consists of various treatment interventions, such as pharmacological treatment and psychosocial treatment (e.g. motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, 12-step group facilitation) in institutional and community settings. With regard to psychosocial treatment, in particular, cognitive behavioral therapy has been demonstrated to be effective. In addition, it is said that applying the “12-step group facilitation” of Narcotics Anonymous, motivational interviewing, etc. — and applying them in a combined manner — is effective when focused on the target’s needs (such as psychological factors leading to problems) and his/her characteristics (such as gender, age, mental/physical disorder). There is no single-treatment approach that fits every targeted individual, and a continuum of accessible and evidence-based care or treatment is essential.

Given that drug users have a high affinity with crime and complex multifactorial health disorders as described above, different agencies, such as criminal justice, health care and social welfare agencies, should cooperate with one another in providing effective treatment in order to respond to the challenges in dealing with them. Even if drug users were once accommodated in institutions for rehabilitation, evidence suggests that treatment programs mandating aftercare have higher success rates than those that do not. Therefore, ensuring aftercare is as important as choosing which treatment approach to take.

It is also useful to allow for alternatives to criminal sanctions or imprisonment for drug users, which leads to providing them with community-based treatment, as long as it satisfies the principle of proportionality. Therefore, for some jurisdictions, it may be necessary to consider introducing a system ensuring the availability of such alternatives. To date, many countries have been exploring different alternatives to criminal sanctions or imprisonment, diverting drug users from formal criminal procedure to treatment.

With the aim of promoting desistance from drug use, this training program offers participants an opportunity: to deepen their understanding of the actual situation of drug use; to deepen their

knowledge and understanding of effective systems and practices for withdrawal from drug use; and to establish bases for future improvement and development of systems and practices.

3. Lectures

The following visiting experts from overseas and ad hoc lecturers from Japan, as well as professors of UNAFEI, gave lectures:

○ Visiting Experts

- Ms. Anja Busse
Programme Officer,
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Dr. Alexander David Wodak
Director,
Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation
- Dr. Sheldon Xiaodong Zhang
Professor and Chair of the School of Criminology and Justice Studies,
University of Massachusetts Lowell

○ Ad hoc lecturers

- Dr. Tatsuya Ota
Professor,
Faculty of Law, Keio University
- Dr. Toshihiko Matsumoto
Director,
Department of Drug Dependence Research, National Institute of Mental Health
- Ms. Junko Ushiki
Instructor, Fukushima Women's Prison
- Mr. Yasunori Umeda
Hospital & Institution Committee, Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
- Ms. Harue Kamioka
Director,
Women's Darc, Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Center (DARC)