

## Rapid Situation Assessment of the Status of Drug and Substance Abuse in Kenya, 2012

### Introduction

The Government of Kenya recognizes the threat posed by alcohol and drug abuse and has enacted a legal and institutional framework to control both licit and illicit drugs, and set up institutions to combat both the supply of and demand for drugs. The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) is mandated to facilitate, conduct, promote and coordinate research on alcohol and drug abuse to guide policy and programmes.

The Authority conducted a national survey on alcohol and drug abuse in 2012 to establish whether there are any shifts in alcohol and drug abuse in Kenya. The survey is a follow-up to the 2007 Rapid Situation Assessment conducted by NACADA.

### Methodology

The target population was categorized into two groups: those aged between 15–65 years and 10–14 years. A stratified multi-stage random sampling technique was used to identify Enumeration Areas (EA). The survey covered 3,362 randomly sampled households which were proportionately distributed across the eight regions (Nairobi, Central, Eastern, Rift Valley, Western, Nyanza, Coast and North Eastern) and 30 purposively selected counties.

### Findings

**Ever use:** Results show a decline in ever use of at least one substance of abuse among those aged 15-65 years from 48.3% in 2007 to 37.1% in 2012. About 30% of those aged 15-65 years have ever used an alcoholic drink. Among the 10-14 years age group, there is a decline in ever use of alcohol from 7.8% in 2007 to 3.0% in 2012. A general decline in ever use of tobacco was also reported among those aged 15-65 years and 10-14 years. Overall, 16.7% of those aged 15-65 years have ever used tobacco in their lifetime.

The ever use of miraa among those aged 15-65 years has declined from 11.3% in 2007 to 8.9% in 2012. Disaggregated data for miraa and muguka shows the ever use of khat to be 8.1% and 2.3% respectively. Similarly, among those between 10-14 years, the ever use of miraa has dropped from 2.4% in 2007 to 0.5% in 2012. While there is a slight reduction in ever use of bhang among those aged 15-65 years (from 6.5% in 2007 to 5.4% in 2012), the other narcotics recorded a slight increase i.e. hashish (0.3% in 2007 to 0.6% in 2012), cocaine (0.4% in 2007 to 0.6% in 2012) and heroin (0.4% in 2007 to 0.7% in 2012). On the other hand, the ever use of bhang for those aged 10-14 years shows an increase from 0.3% in 2007 to 1.1% in 2012.

Among those aged 15-65 years who reported that they have never used drugs, there is an improvement from 51.7% in 2007 to 62.9% in 2012.

**Current use:** Those aged 15-65 years who reported current use of at least one substance of abuse reduced from 22.2% in 2007 to 19.8% in 2012. In general, there is a reduction in the use of alcohol from 14.2% in 2007 to 13.6% in 2012. On the basis of regions, Nairobi reported the highest proportion of respondents using alcohol (22.0%) followed by Rift Valley (15.7%) and Eastern (14.6%). Worth noting is North Eastern region which has recorded 5.4% in 2012 against insignificant levels of alcohol use in 2007.

**Current use** of tobacco products for those aged 15-65 years reveals a reduction, especially for cigarettes (from 10% in 2007 to 8.6% in 2012) and sniffed/ chewed/ piped tobacco (from 1.5% in 2007 to 0.7% in 2012). North Eastern has the highest reported current use of tobacco (16.1%) followed by Nairobi (14.4%) and Central and Eastern (10%). Current use of miraa has reduced from 5.5% in 2007 to 4.2% in 2012. In terms of regions, highest use is reported in North Eastern (28%) followed by Nairobi (7.2%) and Coast (6.2%). Current use of narcotics compared to other substances of abuse is low. For narcotics, bhang (1.0%) has a higher reported use compared to hashish (0.1%) and heroin (0.1%). Furthermore, the differences between 2007 and 2012 for current use of narcotics are insignificant.

**Abuse and dependence:** The survey shows that 5.8% of Kenyans are abusing alcohol and another 5.5% are dependent on alcohol use, 3.7% are abusing tobacco and 4.5% are dependent on tobacco use, 1.6% are abusing miraa and 1.5% are dependent on miraa use, 0.4% are abusing bhang and another 0.4% are dependent on bhang use.

### Conclusion

Overall, the data supports a gradual shift towards lower rates for most substances of abuse from year 2007 to 2012.

### Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- Total compliance with the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act 2010;
- Involvement of community based and other civil society organizations, in promoting health and responsible behaviour change messages to communities;
- Empowering organized groups of women and youth to provide support to those in need before they can find their place in rehabilitation centers;
- Involving recovered addicts as exemplars of those who have reformed in order to provide the link between alcohol and substance abuse and the negative effects resulting thereof;
- Using school-going children as agents of change against ADA;
- Using a Social Norms Approach to address the popularly held beliefs to gradually shift those beliefs in a positive direction so as to achieve the set programme goals.