

World Health Organization

Thomas Jefferson Model United Nations Conference

TechMUN XXXI



High School General Assembly

Co-Chairs: Dilnaaz Talwar & Akul Dixit

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

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Committee Overview

Delegates,

Welcome to TechMUN XXXI and it is our pleasure to be your co-chairs for WHO! As General Assembly delegates ourselves, we have experienced the stress and craziness of it all, but learned to love it with all our hearts.

With regards to this committee, we want it to be an enjoyable experience for everyone. We will be looking for delegates who bring unique, new ideas to the table and understand the importance of being a diplomatic delegate. We are very excited to hear your debates and discussions about the two issues at hand. As countries with various resources, we want to see how each delegation uses their resources to come up with innovative solutions.

All in all, as your co-chairs, we hope to make the committee exciting and something memorable to always hold onto. We want you to leave this committee after doing your best and having no regrets while engaging in new experiences. We can't wait to see how you incorporate your solutions to solve the two crises at hand and gain skills you never thought you could have through collaborating with other delegates. We are beyond ecstatic to meet you! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email us at: whotechmun2024@gmail.com

Dilnaaz Talwar & Akul Dixit

Co-Chairs, WHO

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Topic 1: Addressing Malaria Prevention and Disease Control in Sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction



Malaria is an enduring public health challenge afflicting Sub-Saharan Africa, where it exacts a heavy toll on human lives and socioeconomic development. Despite decades of concerted efforts, the region continues to bear the highest burden of malaria globally, with approximately 94% of malaria cases and deaths occurring in this area. This persistent threat underscores the urgent need for renewed attention and innovative approaches to malaria prevention and control in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The history of the malaria pandemic in this region is marked by recurring outbreaks and endemic transmission, deeply entrenched within the fabric of communities and health systems. Malaria's devastating impact extends beyond individual health, affecting productivity, education, and economic stability, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

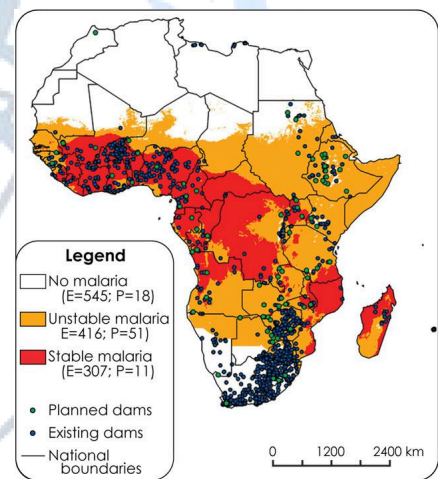
Past initiatives by the United Nations and various stakeholders have sought to combat malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa through interventions such as insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor residual spraying, and antimalarial drug distribution. While progress has been made, significant challenges remain, including drug resistance, insecticide resistance, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure.

As the global community grapples with the complexities of malaria prevention and control, exploring comprehensive solutions tailored to the unique context of Sub-Saharan Africa is paramount. By addressing the root causes of malaria transmission, enhancing access to treatment and healthcare services, fostering community engagement, and leveraging cross-sector partnerships, there exists a pathway towards achieving meaningful and sustainable progress in the fight against malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa.

History of the Malaria Pandemic

Malaria has cast a long shadow over Sub-Saharan Africa, maneuvering itself into the region's history with devastating consequences. The origins of malaria in Africa date back centuries, with evidence of the disease found in ancient Egyptian texts. However, it wasn't until the colonial era that malaria assumed pandemic proportions, fueled by factors such as rapid urbanization, deforestation, and population movements.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, malaria ravaged communities across Sub-Saharan Africa, exacting a heavy toll on human lives and impeding economic development. Colonial powers struggled to contain the disease, resorting to measures such as quinine treatment and mosquito control efforts, albeit with limited success. Malaria became synonymous with hardship and suffering, deeply ingrained in the collective memory of generations.



The post-colonial era saw renewed efforts to combat malaria, with the establishment of national malaria control programs and the introduction of new interventions such as chloroquine and DDT. Despite these initiatives, malaria remained a formidable foe, adapting to interventions and persisting in its grip on vulnerable populations.

The latter half of the 20th century witnessed a resurgence of malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa, driven by factors including drug resistance, insecticide resistance, and weak healthcare systems. The emergence of HIV/AIDS further compounded the malaria burden, as co-infection rates soared, creating a deadly synergy between the two diseases.

Today, malaria remains a defining feature of life in Sub-Saharan Africa, shaping health outcomes, economic opportunities, and social dynamics. As the region grapples with the complexities of malaria prevention and control, it is essential to acknowledge the historical roots of the disease and draw lessons from the past to inform future strategies. Only through sustained commitment, innovation, and collaboration can the cycle of malaria be broken, paving the way for a healthier and more prosperous future for all in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Past UN Action

The United Nations, particularly through the World Health Organization (WHO) and initiatives like the Roll Back Malaria partnership, has spearheaded comprehensive efforts to combat malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa. These initiatives have encompassed prevention strategies such as distributing insecticide-treated bed nets and conducting indoor residual spraying campaigns, as well as ensuring access to effective treatments like artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs). Advocacy for increased political commitment and funding, in alignment with global development goals, has been central to UN efforts in tackling malaria.

Despite notable progress in reducing malaria incidence and mortality, challenges persist, including drug resistance, insecticide resistance, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure. Moreover, achieving universal coverage of malaria interventions, particularly in remote and underserved areas, remains a pressing concern.

Possible Solutions:

Addressing the challenge of malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa demands a comprehensive and integrated approach that tackles both immediate needs and underlying systemic issues. Enhanced control measures, including the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor residual spraying campaigns, and targeted larval control efforts, are essential for reducing

mosquito populations and interrupting malaria transmission. These interventions must be tailored to local transmission dynamics and implemented alongside community engagement initiatives to ensure effective coverage and sustained impact.

Secondly, improving access to prompt and effective treatment is paramount for reducing malaria morbidity and mortality. This entails strengthening healthcare infrastructure, training healthcare workers, and enhancing diagnostic capabilities to ensure timely diagnosis and appropriate case management. Moreover, empowering communities to take ownership of malaria prevention and control through education, behavior change communication, and community-based surveillance can foster sustainable progress and resilience against malaria outbreaks.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the primary drivers of malaria transmission in Sub-Saharan Africa, and how do they vary across different regions and population groups?
2. What lessons can be learned from past malaria control efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa, and how can they inform future interventions?
3. What are the key challenges hindering effective malaria prevention and control in the region, and how can they be addressed through policy, innovation, and resource mobilization?
4. How can community engagement and empowerment contribute to sustainable malaria control strategies, particularly in remote and underserved areas?
5. How can partnerships between governments, NGOs, research institutions, and the private sector be leveraged to accelerate progress towards malaria elimination in Sub-Saharan Africa?

Helpful Links

https://www.who.int/health-topics/malaria#tab=tab_1

<https://endmalaria.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/malaria/index.html>

<https://www.malariaconsortium.org/>

<https://africacdc.org/disease/malaria/>



Topic 2: Developing Comprehensive Strategies to Counteract Substance Abuse Among Adolescents

Introduction

In recent years, substance abuse among adolescents has become a prominent concern. Children have begun overdosing in schools, eventually resulting in their demise. It is a global concern that desperately needs comprehensive strategies to mitigate its adverse effects. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports about 11% of individuals aged 15 to 19 have experimented with substance use. Substance is used as a broad term for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs.

Substance abuse among adolescents has significant implications for individual health, social well-being, and public health systems. Many present risks can contribute to adolescent substance abuse, like environmental influences such as family dynamics and peer pressure, genetic predispositions, or mental health and conditions. One of the most serious aspects is the easy access to substances whether it be from family, friends, or classmates. All of these factors combined can increase the likelihood of substance abuse in teenagers.



Substance abuse can have profound effects on adolescent health. One aspect of the effects can be physical health.

Some short-term effects are intoxication, increased heart rate, or impaired coordination. There are also long-term effects, such as organ damage or infectious diseases. Along

with physical issues, substance abuse can cause an increase in mental health disorders, like depression, anxiety, psychosis, and substance-induced conditions. Additionally, it can cause adolescents to experience strained relationships, declined academic performance, and isolation.

Experiencing these effects of substance abuse can truly change and ruin a young person's life and cause an addiction for a lifetime.

Global History of Issue

Youthful drug use became a widespread issue by the 1940s, focusing on heroin. However, it was limited to specific groups, like the white youth. Once we reached the 1970s, drugs had become as popular as alcohol amongst adolescents, in a sense it had become normalized.

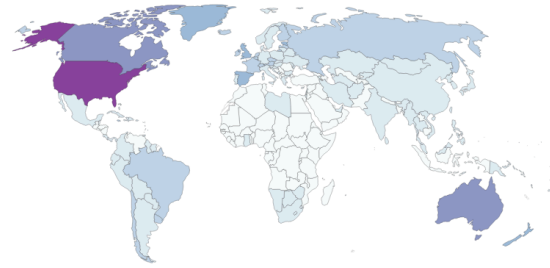
One of the most critical aspects of this issue has become regulatory measures. The WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health has failed to look at the impact of age restrictions, marketing bans, and taxation policies to reduce alcohol consumption to reduce alcohol consumption. Although these policies have been put in place to create barriers to accessing substances, we still see an increase in the amount of substance addiction in adolescents.

The global issue of substance abuse amongst adolescents is prevalent as it affects communities worldwide irrespective of geographical boundaries or cultural differences. The effects of substance abuse on adolescents' health, well-being, and social functioning are universally recognized, yet the approaches to tackling this issue vary significantly across regions and countries. Some nations have well-established prevention, intervention, and treatment programs supported by funding and strong healthcare programs. On the other hand, a lot of nations lack the necessary infrastructure or can prioritize resources for the issue of substance abuse among adolescents.

Share of population with drug use disorders, 2019

Drug dependence is defined by the International Classification of Diseases as the presence of three or more indicators of dependence for at least a month within the previous year. Drug dependency includes all illicit drugs and excludes alcohol and tobacco.

Our World in Data



No data 0% 0.5% 1% 1.5% 2% 2.5% 3% 3.5% 4%

Data source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease (2019)

Note: To allow for comparisons between countries and over time, this metric is age-standardized.

OurWorldinData.org/illicit-drug-use | CC BY

A lack of awareness and concern about the negative impacts of this issue is quite concerning. There has been a lack of attention towards substance abuse in teenagers, resulting from misconceptions, social stigma, different priorities, or pure ignorance. Another important aspect is socioeconomic disparities and inequities making access to the right healthcare and support services difficult. This leaves vulnerable adolescents without any resources to help them, making their situation more difficult to end.

Past UN Action

The United Nations has implemented various prevention programs based on research by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). There has been evidence that interventions and schools have shown success in reducing substance abuse among adolescents, like the Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention for Early Childhood. Another aspect the United Nations has focused on has been integrating mental health services with substance abuse treatment as recommended by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). It has helped improve results in helping adolescents fight substance abuse addiction.

WHO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have launched global campaigns and awareness programs to educate the public, policymakers, and stakeholders about the dangers of substance abuse among adolescents.



Examples include the WHO's "Health for the World's Adolescents" initiative and the UNODC's "Listen First" campaign. A lot of countries have also implemented national policies, strategies, and action plans that can address the issue at hand. Much of this stems from partnerships and collaborative efforts between NGOs, private sector organizations, governments, and communities to implement comprehensive strategies.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions to this problem require education and awareness. Although deemed to be a basic solution, a lack of understanding of the problem has been one of the main barriers to creating feasible and proper solutions to the problem. This will help create parental and familial involvement to prevent situations from worsening. Families must have the ability to locate the beginning signs of substance abuse in their children to prevent the situation from worsening. This is why it is key to have early intervention.

Another important solution to this problem is to ensure the proper application of mental health resources and other services. Many times such solutions are created, but there is no one making everything run smoothly and being executed to its full extent. Additionally, a need for more policy and regulation is critical in restricting access to substances, such as tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, especially targeting advertising and marketing tactics that appeal to adolescents. Having a combination of strategies that tackle different aspects of the problem is key to preventing and reducing substance abuse among adolescents and promoting healthier communities.

Helpful Links

https://www.aamft.org/Consumer_Updates/adolescentsubstanceabuse.aspx

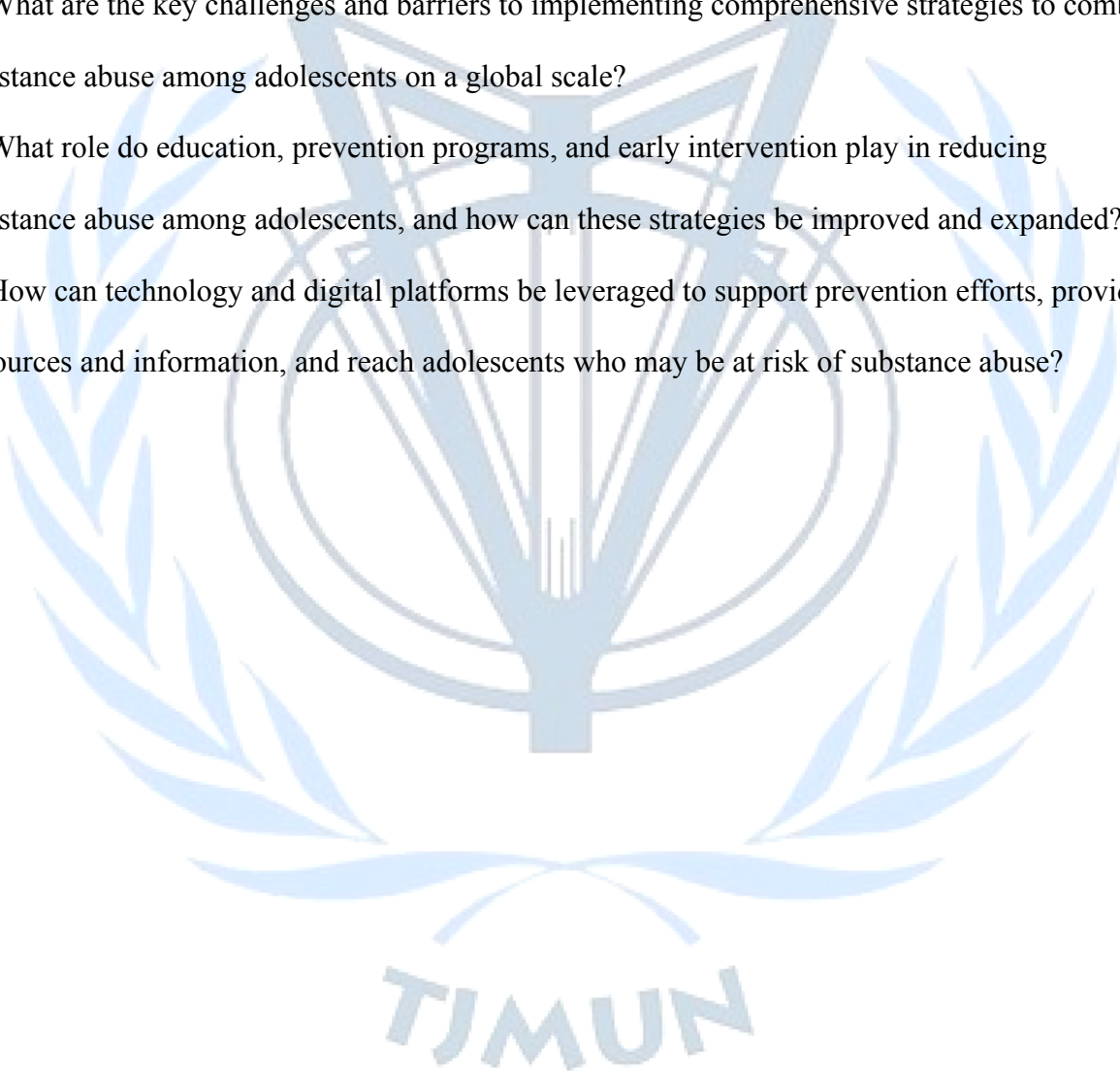
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41398-023-02590-4>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/biology-development-and-behavior/202310/understanding-adolescent-substance-use>

<https://healthsciences.arizona.edu/news/releases/family-support-vital-prevent-teen-substance-use-border-regions-study-says>

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the root causes of substance abuse among adolescents, and how do they vary across different regions and cultures?
2. How effective have previous initiatives been and how can they be utilized again or reworked?
3. What are the key challenges and barriers to implementing comprehensive strategies to combat substance abuse among adolescents on a global scale?
4. What role do education, prevention programs, and early intervention play in reducing substance abuse among adolescents, and how can these strategies be improved and expanded?
5. How can technology and digital platforms be leveraged to support prevention efforts, provide resources and information, and reach adolescents who may be at risk of substance abuse?



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[rug-use-p-19-24-1986-george](https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/social-history-teenage-drug-use-teen-d). Accessed 24 March 2024.

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