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GLOBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY OF CANNABIS USE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

V. Poznyak

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organization, Switzerland

Cannabis is the most commonly used psychoactive substance regulated by international drug control treaties with estimated 178 million people aged 15–64 had used cannabis at least once in 2012 (UNODC, 2014). The levels and patterns of cannabis use vary significantly around the world with the

highest prevalence rates in Africa, North America and Western Pacific region. There is an increasing availability of cannabis for medical use, and several jurisdictions made legal production, distribution and use of cannabis for other than medical or scientific purposes. At the same time the data on impact of cannabis use and cannabis use disorders on health of the populations and health services is limited, particularly in less resourced countries. The synthetic cannabinoids are becoming increasingly common on drug scenes in different parts of the world, but the data on their impact on health is largely absent. Several domains of health consequences of cannabis use will be discussed, also in the context of estimates of cannabis-attributable burden of disease, in different age groups and in comparison with disease burden attributable to other psychoactive substances.