

Synthetic Drugs



Strategies and Policies

Presented by
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About Saint Lucia



- ❧ Saint Lucia is commonly referred to as The Helen of the West Indies.
- ❧ The country changed hands between the French and the British and is said to have been seven times British seven times French, with the French being the first settlers.
- ❧ It is located North East of St. Vincent, North West of Barbados and South of Martinique. Saint is 238 square miles with a population of approximately 174000.
- ❧ Tourism is considered the main stay of the economy presently, with Agriculture still holding its own by way of the main crop being Bananas. As late as the 90's when Bananas was Green Gold, the economy was led by Agriculture currently Tourism.

About Saint Lucia



- ❧ St Lucia, like most countries in the Caribbean region and by extension the world has a drug problem which has a negative impact on the level of crime and other social complications on the island. In recent times, the island has been referred to as one of the leading transshipment points for controlled drugs destined to the United States, Europe and other countries.
- ❧ The two most widely abused drugs in St Lucia are cocaine and cannabis. Cocaine, originates from Columbia, Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago to a lesser extent.
- ❧ Cannabis on the other hand, originates mainly from neighboring St Vincent, Jamaica and a rise in quantities from Columbia.
- ❧ These drugs are transported into the island mainly by canoes and boats which utilize the many secluded beaches around the island as their ports of entry.

Situational Analysis



- ❧ There isn't a widespread experience of the use of synthetic drugs which is formally noted.
- ❧ There was an instance where there was an attempt to a shipment of Ephedrine; however the compound was not allowed to come through as suspicions were raised by the then CMO who is the island's Pathologist, Dr Stephen King.
- ❧ One instance of a positive test for Phencyclidine (PCP) or angel dust was detected; not aware of the follow up.

- ❧ Due to the inability to conduct proper and thorough drug test at some of our Centres some of the admissions may very well be as a result of use of synthetics.
- ❧ While there isn't a loud cry of the use and existence, we are aware of persons who will attempt to use household items to furnish their drug habits.
- ❧ A pocket of students at the Community College reported having seen ecstasy but not its usage.

Strategies at the National Level

- ❧ Monitoring of precursors through customs and excise Department and Police. Eg huge quantities of bath salts ect
- ❧ Immediate seizure upon discovery/disclosure.
- ❧ Increased awareness and sensitization through ongoing public education.
- ❧ Public education on the use/abuse/misuse of prescribed and non prescribed drugs. This can result in the eradication/reduction of domestic drug use/abuse/misuse.

- ❧ Implementation of drug acts/legislations in full measure by focusing on law enforcement.
- ❧ Make treatment available, affordable and accessible.
- ❧ Invest in drug free/awareness programmes (for youth and across the nation)

Impact on public health



- ❧ Drug induced Mental Illness-resulting in disruptive families, high hospitalization bills, stresses at Micro, Mezzo and Macro levels.
- ❧ There is a likely hood that synthetic drugs may erode the public confidence in health care systems, health care professionals, the suppliers and sellers of genuine drugs .
- ❧ Strain on existing inadequate services currently available.

Corporation with other countries



- ❧ Considering the current situation in Saint Lucia, this meeting is the first of its kind to bring a formal awareness about synthetic drugs.
- ❧ The cooperation will most likely come from neighbouring islands with established collaboration where other drugs are concerned eg. Marijuana, crack, cocaine.

Challenges they present



- ❧ Curiosity-to create and try new drug
- ❧ Increased admissions at the Psychiatric Hospitals and Drug Rehabilitation Centre
- ❧ Job loss
- ❧ Increased mental illness which can result in suicide

Recommendations



- ❧ Testing for synthetic drugs at the Necessary institutions.
- ❧ Continuous public education on synthetic drugs at the Micro, Mezzo and Macro levels (stigma, discrimination, abuse ect.
- ❧ Provide forum to respond to questions and concerns from youth and public
- ❧ Become more aware and more engaged in global discussions/strategies and practices.

Thank you

