



# Design of studies to evaluate and validate scales and indicators of problematic drug use

Report on advances in Activity 1.4 COPOLAD

## General objective

- To produce necessary methodological designs for National Drugs Observatories (NDOs) of CELAC countries and other users to have available instruments to measure problematic drug use in their populations (general and school adolescents), that allow to generate valid information for decision-making.

## Specific objectives

- To have a document that exhaustively systematizes the experience of CELAC countries and EU participating countries in the use of scales, protocols and indicators to estimate problematic use and that summarises the methodological problems and good practices found in their application.
- To form a cooperative working network with institutional stakeholders and researchers according to CELAC or EU region working on the research on the application of scales and protocols.
- Make visible the conceptual and practical difference between use and problematic substance use in national, regional and local diagnoses.

## Distribution of working groups

### Nivel de coordinación

- **Task Force Coordinator: Graciela Ahumada**
- **Spanish-speaking working group:** Central America + Mexico + Dominican Republic and South America (Total 12 countries)
  - ✓ Leading country: Chile (María Elena Alvarado – Coordinator leading country and Esteban Pizarro– Advisor to the Chilean National Drugs Observatory.)
  - ✓ European referent country: Romania (Ruxanda Illiescu – Head of Department, National Anti-drug Agency.)
- **English speaking Working Group:** Caribbean + Surinam + Belize (11 countries in total)
  - ✓ Leading country: Jamaica (Novie Younger-Coleman – Coordinadora país líder)
  - ✓ European referent country: Cyprus (Ioanna Giasemi – Head of the Cyprus Monitoring Centre for drugs and Drug addiction, Cyprus Anti-Drugs Council.)

## First working meeting

11 and 12 October 2017

The first meeting of the Consultive and Decision-making Level for Activity 1.4

Se llevó a cabo la primera reunión del Nivel Consultivo y de Toma de decisiones de la Actividad 1.4 *Design of studies to evaluate and validate scales and indicators of problematic drug use*, took place during days 11 and 12 October 2017, in Santiago de Chile.

Advisory institutions

- OID-CICAD-OEA: Pernell Clarke – Research Specialist OID-CICAD
- EMCDDA: Thomas Seyler – Scientific Analyst on drug use and the drug problem
- PAHO/WHO: Luis Alfonso – Advisor on Substance Abuse, Department of non-Transitable Diseases and Mental Health  
Roberta Caixeta – Regional Advisor on Non communicable Diseases Surveillance, Prevention and Control NMH/ND Unit

Invited experts:

- Milica Georgescu, Francisco Cumsille, Héctor Suarez, Álvaro Castillo
- Professionals in the areas of prevention, treatment, social



## Specific objectives of the meeting

Los objetivos específicos de la reunión fueron:

- **Evaluate the report of the situation (synthesis document on the work done)**
- Discuss and consensuate the necessary definitions and methodological guideline for the design of evaluation studies
- Define which experts will take part of the Design Level Group
- Define the work timeline for the elaboration of the Designs of validation studies
- Identify the countries that could be interested in carrying out the studies, and that are able to finance the whole implementation
- Elaborate a document with the agreements reached and the guidelines for the design of validation studies, in Spanish and English versions.

## Synthesis of Report of the Situation (in progress)

### Methodology

- Design of an Ad hoc instrument for leading countries Jamaica and Chile
- The surveys were addressed to the officials of observatories who have shown interest in participating
- 3 e-mails were sent, the first requesting the instrument and the two following as reminders

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### Spanish

Argentina, Bolivia,  
Brasil, Chile, Colombia,  
El Salvador, Guatemala,  
México, Panamá, Perú,  
República Dominicana y  
Uruguay

### English

Antigua and Barbuda,  
Bahamas, Barbados,  
Dominica, Grenada,  
Guyana, Jamaica, Saint  
Kitts and Nevis,  
Suriname and Belize  
and Haiti

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## Synthesis of Report of the Situation (in progress)

### Instruments

#### Collected information:

- History of use and instruments
- Indicators created from instruments
- Target population
- Processes of adaptation and/or validation conducted for the use of these instruments

#### Efective questionnaires

**Spanish questionnaire: 7 out of 12 (58,3%)**

**English questionnaire: 6 de 11 (54,5%)**

- ICD 10 (WHO) - Diagnostic Criteria
- DSM IV (American Psychiatric Association) – Diagnostic Criteria
- AUDIT – Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. WHO
- ASSIST – Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Screening Test. WHO
- CUPIT – The Cannabis Use Problems Identification Test. (Jan Bashford, Ross Flett, Jan Copeland).
- CIDI – Composite International Diagnostic Interview. WHO
- CAST – Cannabis Abuse Screening Test. (Austin, Beck and Legleye)
- CRAFFT – Substance Abuse Screening Test among adolescent. (Knight JR, Shrier LA, Bravender TD, Farrell M, Vander Bilt J, Shaffer HJ)
- SDS – Severity of Dependence Scale (Ludwing Kraus)
- PUM – Problematic Use of Marijuana (Janusz Sieroslowski)

## Synthesis of Report of the Situation (in progress)

### Results

- The most used instruments by countries are the ICD-10 and AUDIT diagnostic criteria. Instruments like CUPIT, CIDI, SDS and PUM are not used by any country.
- In general changes are not added to the instruments or are only added in the language. There are no changes on items or response options
- Three countries (questionnaire in Spanish) report having measured the quality of collected data in their studies:
  - Supervision in data collection
  - Analysis of database consistency
  - Validation in respect to gold standard (CIDI)

Category		Spanish	English
Institutional Goal	<i>Development of local policy</i>	57,1%	66,7%
Time functioning	<i>Shortest</i>	22 years (Peru)	3 years (Jamaica)
	<i>Longest</i>	31 years (Panamá)	34 years (Suriname)
Problematic use scales	<i>Use of surveys</i>	100%	16,6%

## Specific objectives of the meeting

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- Evaluate the report of the situation (synthesis document on the work done)
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- Define the work timeline for the elaboration of the Designs of validation studies
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# Agreements

## Agreements on the elaboration process of the design of evaluation studies

1. It is agreed to use scales of problematic use in national studies in school and general population.
2. A document to guide Observatories in the definition of problematic use (risky use, health disorder) and the scales in place in the region.
3. Validation must focus mainly in scales on alcohol and marijuana but all other drugs must also be considered.
4. The conditions in which the scales can be used must also be established (for example, sample sizes)
5. The incorporation of questionnaires on intensity of use must be suggested (frequency and patterns of use). Specifically, it is considered that the pattern of use can be a good way to approach or determine problematic use.

# Agreements

## Agreements on the elaboration process of the design of evaluation studies

6. The scales and diagnostic instruments of study are at least the ones being currently used (AUDIT, CAST, DSM-IV y DSM-V, *Binge drinking*, CIE-10). It must be differentiated between scales and diagnostic instruments (DSM IV – V and CIE 10 -11)
7. It is also important to deepen into other possible indicators of problematic drug use, such as treatment demand
8. It must be differentiated between types of populations (school and general).
9. Regarding the validation process, there are several strategies. In principle, it is proposed to use clinical interviews as Gold Standard, given the importance of understanding the cognitive response process. However, it is important to consider the use of scales as Gold Standard, **given that the cognitive interview process can be difficult to conduct in all countries.** (a possible Gold Standard might be CIDI)

## Agreements

Agreements in relation to the group of experts (4 professionals, plus one coordinator)

### Design Level / Experts

Coordinator: Francisco Cumsille.

- Expert Chile: Álvaro Castillo.
- Expert Rumania: Milica Georgescu.
- Expert Caribbean: (Por definir).
- Expert to designate according to the needs of the group coordinator.

# Agreements

## Agreements on the participation of advising institutions and other agreements

- The group of experts must define what kind of relationship it requires to have with the Observatories in the region. In case necessary, the leading countries collaborate in this relationship facilitating communication.
- PAHO/WHO collaborates as a member of COPOLAD's Advisory Committee.
- The OID of CICAD/OAS has the compromise of supporting the work by the group of experts as well as to support the validation process in many countries
- EMCDDA is very interested in maintaining the collaboration, but must confirm who will be the referent for authorities and the level of participation to which they can compromise.
- It is necessary to continue the search for Experts in these issues to form and consolidate the network of experts and best experiences in the region.

## Agreements

### Acuerdos en relación a los próximos pasos

Meeting report → 27 october 2017 (Chile responsible)

Report on state of initial situation → 15 november 2017

Next expert group meeting → March 2018

Products completed → preliminary version: second week of august 2018 / Final version: second week of october 2018.

Presentation of products at meeting of Observatories 2018 → November 2018.

## Timeline

Activities	2017			2018										
	O	N	D	J	F	Mch	Ap	My	Jn	Jl	Aug	S	O	N
Report of the meeting	<b>27</b>													
Report on the situation		<b>15</b>												
Design Level working group														
Elaboration of Design documents by Design Level														
Presentation preliminary version of final documents											<b>10</b>			
Comments by Advisory Level to preliminary documents														
Presentation definitive version of final documents													<b>12</b>	
Presentation definitive version of final documents to NDOs in 3rd meeting of Observatories														

**Thank you**

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