

Harm reduction in Poland – challenges and opportunities

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Harm reduction

- The first OST program was created in Poland in 1992
- Currently there are 25 substitution treatment programs (24 implemented in public and non-public health care institutions and 1 implemented in penitentiary units)
- Harm reduction – where are we?



Country	Explicit supportive reference to harm reduction in national policy documents	At least one needle and syringe programme operational	At least one opioid agonist therapy programme operational	At least one drug consumption room operational	Take home naloxone available	At least one naloxone peer distribution programme operational	At least one safer smoking kit distribution programme	Stimulant prescription available	NSP in at least one prison	OAT in at least one prison
Poland				x	x	x	x	x	x	
Czechia				x		x			x	
Germany								x		
Ukraine				x		x	x	x	x	
Uzbekistan			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kazakhstan				x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kyrgyzstan				x			x	x		



Source: Harm Reduction International (2022) THE GLOBAL STATE OF HARM REDUCTION 2022 derived from https://hri.global/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/HRI_GSHR-2022_Full-Report_Final-1.pdf

Psychoactive substance use in Poland

	Opioids (per 1000) life time adults	Cocaine	Amphetamines	MDMA	Cannabis
Poland	0.4–0.7	0.7	2.4	1.0	12.1
EU		5.0	3.1	3.7	27.3

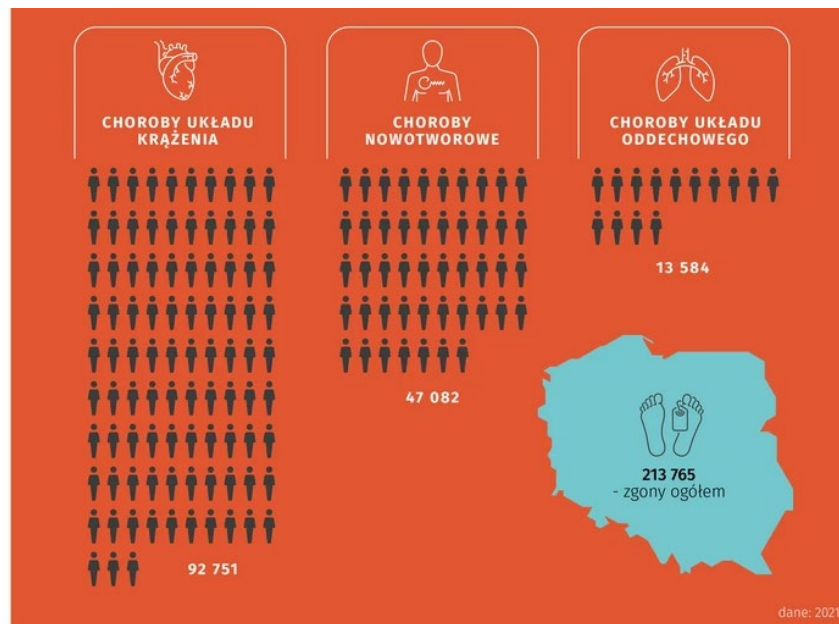
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No of poisoning	562	217	279	1079	2513	7357	4369	4324	4258	2148	806

Table 2: Number of poisonings with NPS. Source: Chief Sanitary Inspector (GIS) and Supreme Audit Office (NIK)



The Main Causes of Deaths in Poland

- Cardiovascular diseases
- Cancer diseases
- Respiratory diseases



źródło: who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death;
pzh.gov.pl/raport-umieralnosc-ludnosci-polski-wg-przyczyny-zgonu-w-pierwszej-polowie-2021-r/;
healthline.com/health/top-10-deadliest-diseases#cad

opracowanie: Polska Grupa Infograficzna (infograficy.pl)



Psychoactive substance use in Poland

Country	Overall smoking prevalence	Deaths from tobacco smoking (yearly)	Alcohol consumption (liters per person in 2018)
Poland	26% (30.3% of men smoke and 21,6% of women)	71,705	11,71
Germany	26,7% (29,9% of men 26% of women)	5,146	12,91
Georgia	27,1% (48,3% of men smoke and 8,7% of women)	7,238	8,25
Ukraine	25,5% (41% of men smoke and 9,9% of women)	96,488	8,31
Kazakhstan	24,4% (42,2% of men smoke and 6,6% of women)	22,503	4,76
Kyrgyzstan	26,6% (49,7% of men smoke and 3,4% of women)	4,570	6,26



Mental health in Poland

8 mln of Polish people have experienced at least one of the mental health disorders in life (more than 25% of adults) 2016-2020 (EZOP II)

- Neurotic disorders - 5 mln
- Mood disorders - 1,5 mn
- Substance use disorders - 2,5 mln (alcohol - 2,2 mln, drugs - 0,5)
- Impulsive disorders (1,5 mln)



Access to treatment

- Dominance of the abstinence approach
- Stigma (healthcare providers and society)
- Uneven distribution of services (lack of mental health and drug treatment services)
- Organization of services
 - Two voivodeships do not have any OST programs (Podlaskie i Podkarpackie)



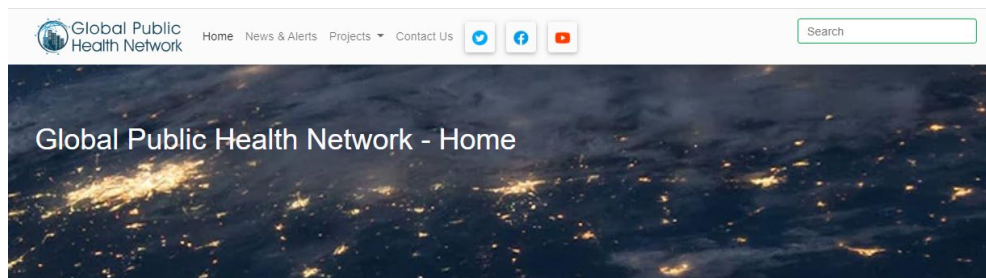
Challenges & Opportunities

- 30 years of harm reduction
- Political climate
- Knowledge on harm reduction
- Missed benefits of using harm reduction approach in tackling public health issues
- Mental health care system reform



Thank you

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GPHN is a network of individuals and organisations working together to help improve the health of communities around the world, by focussing on evidence-based approaches to reducing harm. GPHN aims to share research and experience across all relevant sectors, and has a particular interest in the roles that partnership approaches, the use of community assets, and creativity can play in effectively tackling complex problems.

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