

## **Report on WHO Questionnaire for Review of Psychoactive Substances for the 37th ECDD: Evaluation of para-Methoxymethylamphetamine (PMMA)**

A total of 60 out of 100 countries answered the questionnaire for para-Methoxymethylamphetamine (PMMA). There were 57 countries which submitted the questionnaire answers through the online survey system. The remaining 3 countries submitted hardcopy answers to the Secretariat.

Of these countries, 17 countries had information on this substance.

### **LEGITIMATE USE**

There are no approved medical products containing PMMA for human or veterinarian indications in any of the 16 responding countries.

Approved uses of PMMA were reported in scientific research and as analytical standards (2 countries). The source of PMMA was reported by one country as both manufactured domestically and imported with an annual use of 0.1kg.

PMMA was not reported to be used for any cultural, religious or ceremonial purposes in 17 countries.

### **EPIDEMIOLOGY OF NON-MEDICAL/NON-SCIENTIFIC USE: USE FOR PSYCHOACTIVE PURPOSES OR RECREATIONAL DRUG USE**

There were 12 countries which reported that PMMA is misused for its psychoactive properties (as a recreational drug). Routes of administration of PMMA for non-medical/non-scientific purposes include oral (10 countries) and sniffing (2 countries). PMMA is available as powder (8 countries) and tablets (8 countries).

Sources of PMMA for non-medical/non-scientific use include legal manufacturing (1 country), legal trade (1 country), illegal manufacturing (1 country), smuggling (8 countries) and over the internet through the parcel network (2 countries).

The party population was specified as a subpopulation known to misuse PMMA by one country. Another country indicated that PMMA is often taken unwittingly by people who believe that they are taking ecstasy/MDMA.

The perception of negative health-impact originating from non-medical consumption was reported as either negligible (1 country), substantial (1 country) or serious (5 countries). Countries which rated the risk as either substantial or serious, detailed that this was due to its association with serious intoxications, deaths and possible stimulant-like adverse effects which can be unpredictable.

One country provided information regarding emergency room/department visits related to the non-medical use of PMMA. In 2015, they reported that there was 17 visits to emergency departments although it was unknown if other substances were involved. The adverse effects observed included tachycardia, body temperature increase, mydriasis, liver- and kidney failure as well as seizures.

One country reported two deaths (in 2014) where PMMA was the only substance involved. A total of 14 deaths associated with misuse of PMMA in combination with other substances was also reported (5 countries, 2012-2015).

There were two countries which reported that PMMA has proven to be dependence producing, although the number of dependent people and the number of people in treatment for being dependent, is unknown.

### **STATUS OF NATIONAL CONTROL AND POTENTIAL IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL CONTROL**

There were 16 countries that reported having PMMA currently controlled under national legislation. The legislation on which the current control is based includes the medicines act (1 country), controlled substances act (15 countries), criminal law act (1 country) or other specific legislation (2 countries). The scope of the control includes production (14 countries), manufacturing (12 countries), export (13 countries), import (14 countries), distribution (14 countries), use (7 countries) and possession (14 countries). Only one country reported that the current control is a temporary provision. Challenges to implementing controls of PMMA were identified by 3 countries. One country specified that it was due to a lack of international control, another cited legal challenges.

Illicit activities involving PMMA include trafficking (6 countries), domestic internet sales (2 countries), overseas internet sales (2 countries), and sales to people who buy PMMA (3 countries). There were 7 to 10 countries that provided seizure data for the period of 2013 to 2015. The total combined number of seizures was 11 in 2013, 37 in 2014 and 31 in 2015 (to date). Total combined amount seized was 0.1kg in 2013, 77 kg in 2014 and 0.015kg in 2015 (to date). Tablets were also seized: 193 in 2013, 18 in 2014 and 1,489 in 2015.

There were 17 countries that reported that if PMMA were to be placed under international control it would have the capacity to enforce the control at a national level and the forensic laboratory capacity to analyse the substance.

#### ***Note on Questionnaire Analysis and Reports***

*An initial analysis of questionnaire answers (from 80 countries) was conducted on the 9th of November, to allow the preliminary reports to be prepared for the Expert Committee's consideration. These preliminary reports were made available on the website on the 12th of November. However, countries were provided the opportunity to continue to submit their answers until the 15th of December 2015. Following which, a final analysis of all submissions (from 100 countries) took place. This report summarises the final analysis of the questionnaires.*