

Report on WHO Questionnaire for Review of Psychoactive Substances for the 37th ECDD: Evaluation of Phenazepam

A total of 73 out of 100 countries answered the questionnaire for Phenazepam. There were 67 countries which submitted the questionnaire answers through the online survey system. The remaining 6 countries submitted hardcopy answers to the Secretariat.

LEGITIMATE MEDICAL OR SCIENTIFIC USE

There are 11 countries with approved medical products containing phenazepam for human indications. There is 1 country with approved medical products containing phenazepam for veterinarian indications.

The human therapeutic indications approved for phenazepam include epilepsy (5 countries), anxiety (10 countries) and sleep disorders (7 countries).

There are four countries which include phenazepam on their National Essential Medicines List.

Marketed Name	Dosage form	Available strengths	Number of mentions
Fenazepam Olainfarm	tablet	0.5 mg, 1 mg	1
Phenazepam	tablet	0.5 mg, 1 mg, 500mg	3
Phenorelaxan	tablet	1mg	1
Fenazepam	tablet	0.5 mg, 1 mg, 2.5 mg, 5 mg	2
Phenadiazepin	tablet	1mg	1
Phenazepam	solution	1mg/kg	1
Arpazepam	tablet	1 mg	1

In two countries phenazepam is currently being used in either medical or scientific research.

LEGITIMATE NON-MEDICAL/NON-SCIENTIFIC USE

Phenazepam is currently used for industrial or other non-medical/non-scientific purposes in two countries, with one of the countries specifying its use as chemical reference standards. The source of phenazepam for legitimate non-medical/non-scientific use was reported as imported (4 countries), domestically manufactured (2 countries) or both (1 country).

CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS OR CEREMONIAL USE

Phenazepam was not reported to be used for any cultural, religious or ceremonial purposes in 54 countries.

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF NON-MEDICAL/NON-SCIENTIFIC USE – USE FOR PSYCHOACTIVE PURPOSES OR RECREATIONAL DRUG USE

Phenazepam was reported to be misused for its psychoactive properties (as a recreational drug) in 10 countries. Routes of administration for non-medical/non-scientific purposes

include oral (8 countries), injection (2 countries) and blotter paper (1 country). One country estimated that 100% of use was through oral administration.

Phenazepam is available in powder (4 countries), tablet (8 countries), liquid (1 country), injectable (1 country) and blotter paper (1 country) formulations.

Reported sources of phenazepam for non-medical/non-scientific use included illegal manufacturing (1 country) and smuggling (5 countries).

One country identified drug addicts as a specific subpopulation that is known to misuse phenazepam.

The perception of negative health-impact originating from non-medical consumption of phenazepam was reported as either negligible (2 countries), substantial (1 country) or serious (3 countries). Countries that rated the risk as either substantial or serious, detailed that this was due to the health impact such as restlessness, anxiety, insomnia, seizure, loss of coordination, dependence, hallucinations, coma and anterograde amnesia.

One country reported that they had one visit in 2010 to the emergency room/department related to the non-medical use of phenazepam alone. The same country also reported that there were also 2 visits associated with the misuse of phenazepam in combination with other drugs. One country provided information concerning the adverse effects of phenazepam and suggested that according to postings on relevant Internet platforms users report disturbance of equilibrium, acroataxia, muscular cramps, blackouts, strong hallucinations, anxiety state, panic attacks and confusions for days.

One country reported that there had been 5 deaths in 2014 associated with the misuse of phenazepam in combination with other drugs.

There were 2 countries which reported that phenazepam has proven to be dependence producing. However, the number of dependent people or the number of people in treatment for dependence was not provided.

STATUS OF NATIONAL CONTROL AND POTENTIAL IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

There were 28 countries which reported having phenazepam currently controlled under national legislation. The legislation of the current control is based upon the medicines act (11 countries), controlled substances act (16 countries), tobacco or alcohol control act (1 country), other consumer protection act (1 country), criminal law act (3 countries) and other specific legislation (2 countries). The scope of the control includes production (21 countries), manufacturing (22 countries), export (20 countries), import (23 countries), distribution (23 countries), usage (21 countries) and possession (17 countries). One country reported that the current control was a temporary measure.

Two countries indicated that national controls are a barrier to accessing phenazepam for medical or scientific use. Although 24 countries report that the national controls do not affect access.

Challenges to implementing controls for phenazepam were reported by two countries, with one specifying that it was due to a lack of international control and the other specifying legal challenges.

Illicit activities involving phenazepam include manufacture of the substance by chemical synthesis (1 country), production of consumer products (1 country), trafficking (6 countries), diversion (4 countries), domestic internet sales (2 countries), overseas internet sales (2 countries), internet sales of unknown origin (4 countries) and sales to people who use the substance (3 countries).

There were 6 countries which supplied information regarding the number of seizures between 2013 and 2015 (to date). The total number of combined seizures of phenazepam was 115 in 2013, 91 in 2014 and 43 in 2015 (to date). Data on the quantity which was seized was sporadic. One country seized 2,940 tablets in 2013, followed by 0.0473kg in 2014. Another country reported 10 tablets being seized in 2015. A different country seized 343 tablets in 2014. Seizures were also made in another country with 15.6g in 2013 and 1.51g in 2014. A further country seized 143 tablets in 2013, 972 tablets in 2014 and 586 tablets in 2015 (10 date).

There were 52 countries that reported that if phenazepam were to be placed under international control it would have the capacity to enforce the control at a national level. There were 45 countries reported that they would have 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.