

How Science-led Innovation and Regulation are Changing the Harm Reduction Landscape

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Outline

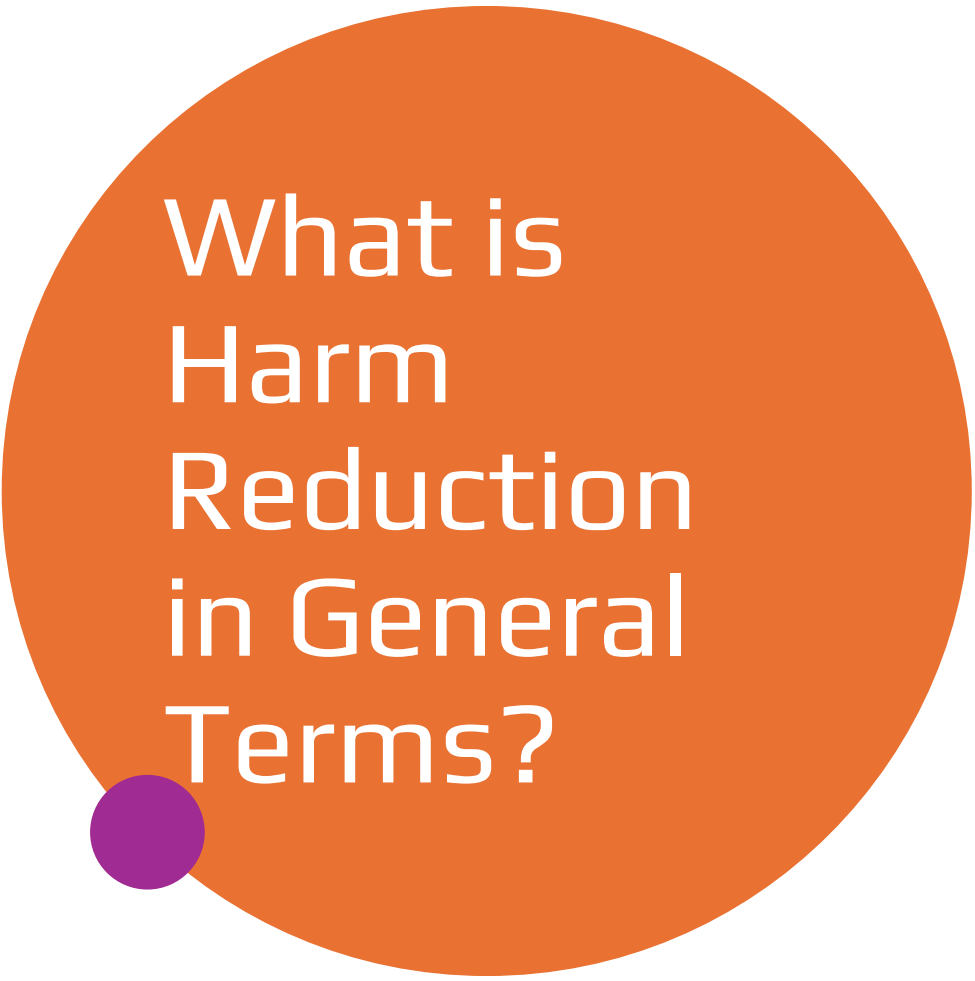
- Introduction
- Harm Reduction in every day life
- What is harm reduction?
- What influences public drug policies?
- Excerpts from Global Harm Reduction Report
- Scientific innovations
- Drug regulation
- Success Story




End before
the End



**KEEP
CALM
AND
FOLLOW
THE SCIENCE**



What is Harm Reduction in General Terms?

- 
- Harm reduction or harm minimization, refers to a range of intentional practices and public health policies designed to lessen the negative social and /or physical consequences associated with various human behaviours, both legal and illegal (Wikipedia).

Examples of harm reduction practices in everyday life.



ABC Strategy

A	Avoid exposure	A bstinence Mutual faithfulness
B	Reduce exposure	B e faithful (Partner reduction)
C	Block exposure effectively	C ondom use

50

Interactive Section



- Kindly log into Menti Meter and provide everyday examples of activities which depicts Harm Reduction.
- <https://www.menti.com/blvqws68qqks>

What is Harm Reduction?



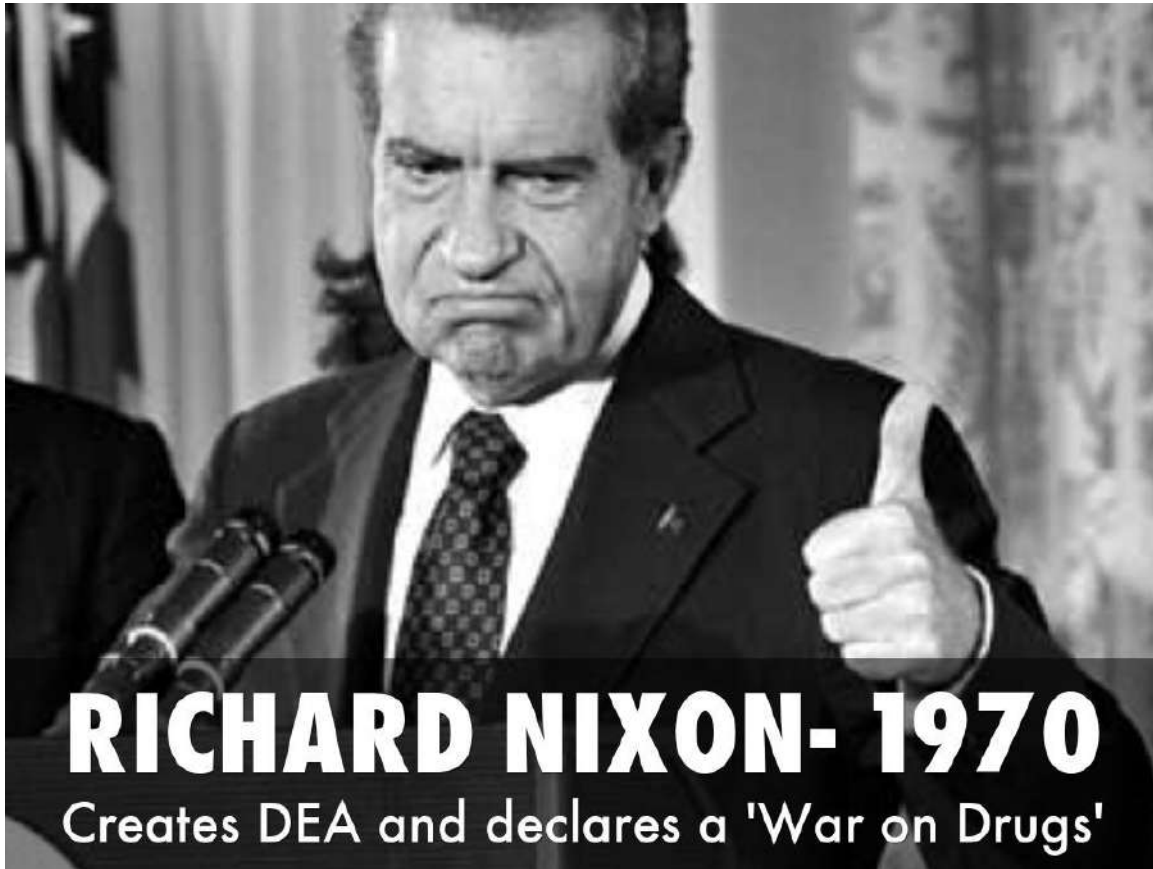
Influences of Drug Policies



- Do you think Drug Policies were informed by empirical evidence prior to the 19th Century?
- (Menti Meter)

<https://www.menti.com/blvqws68qqks>

Historical Perspective



RICHARD NIXON- 1970

Creates DEA and declares a 'War on Drugs'

Jezebel

**Nixon Policy
Advisor Admits He
Invented War On
Drugs to Suppress
'Anti-War Left and
Black People'**

People who use drugs still lacks Harm Reduction Services – Excerpts from 2024 HR Report



Overall, there has been a slight increase in the availability of harm reduction services since the Global State of Harm Reduction report in 2022.

However, substantial regional differences still exist.

The stigmatisation and criminalisation of people who use drugs remain significant issues.

They impede access to existing harm reduction services and undermine the political and financial support needed to implement and expand these services

Global State of Harm Reduction – Excerpts from 2024 HR Report

108 countries include harm reduction in national policies.


However, criminalisation and punitive responses to drugs remain dominant in most places.

These approaches undermine harm reduction efforts, and they continue to fuel stigma and discrimination and deter people who use drugs from seeking vital, life-saving services.”

Excerpts from HR 2024 Global Report

- “The biggest funding boost for harm reduction in Eastern and Southern Africa would be for governments to stop funding punitive approaches to drugs and invest in harm reduction.”

West & Central Africa



- Investment in holistic harm reduction programmes with specific gender-sensitive services and interventions to meet the needs of women who use and inject drugs are needed.
- Such programmes must consider creating safe spaces where women feel secure and respected, free from judgement or discrimination.
- Involving female peers in the programmes can be an effective way to foster trust and encourage participation.

Scientific Innovations in Managing the Drug Issue



HARM REDUCTION IN ACTION

HIV and the needs of people who use drugs

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine Gum



Nicotine Patches



Microtabs



Lozenges



Inhalators



Nasal Sprays

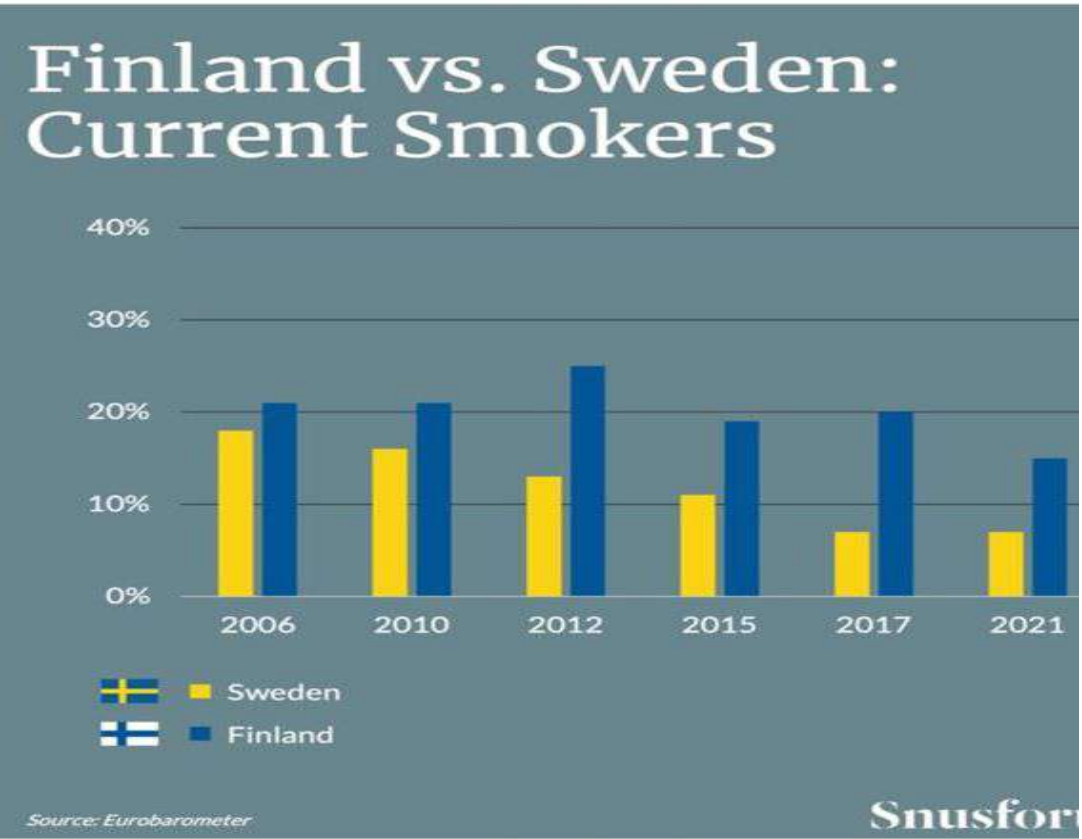


The Role of Science in Harm Reduction

Development of safer product.



Safer Alternatives



Biomedical innovations – Naloxone



 **naloxone**

 Naloxone is a drug that can reverse the effects of an **opioid overdose**. It can be injected or be delivered through a nasal spray.

 Increasing the availability of **naloxone** can **save lives**.

Naloxone has no effect on people

The graphic is set against a dark green background. At the top, there is a white banner with a logo consisting of four teal diamonds and a purple cross, followed by the word 'naloxone' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below this, on the left, are icons of a nasal spray bottle and a syringe. To the right of these icons is a paragraph of text: 'Naloxone is a drug that can reverse the effects of an **opioid overdose**. It can be injected or be delivered through a nasal spray.' Below this is a heart icon with a white cross inside, followed by another paragraph: 'Increasing the availability of **naloxone** can **save lives**.' At the bottom, the text 'Naloxone has no effect on people' is written in a smaller, white font.

Biomedical Innovations – Vaccinations



Technology and Harm Reduction



Overdose Risk Information tool (ORION) is an innovative e-health tool implemented in clinical settings across Europe, which incorporates overdose risk assessments and provides individuals with information on future harm reduction practices and behaviours which aim at reducing overdose rates

The Scottish Government launched the Digital Lifelines Scotland (DLS) program to increase the provision of digital technology in harm reduction services and other support services.

Harm reduction services in mobile app

- The Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) is funding 'KLIK' – a pilot project in four cities – Medan, Bandung, Pontianak and Makassar – bringing all harm reduction services onto one platform that can be accessed by PWID using a mobile application.



Emerging Technologies and Trends

- **Digital Platforms:** Harm reduction apps and real-time counselling services.
- **Biotech:** Vaccines under development for nicotine or opioid addiction.
- **Future Innovations:** AI for predicting high-risk populations and targeted interventions.



Regulatory Frameworks Shaping Harm Reduction



Types of Regulations

1. Product approvals
2. Safety standards
3. Taxation
4. Marketing restrictions.

Regulatory Framework in Low and Middle Income Countries

- Challenges balancing innovation and accessibility.
- Balancing Innovation with Consumer Safety.
- Such innovations must be culturally appropriate.
- Contextualise policies and innovations
- Evidenced based interventions – Evidence generated in the African context.

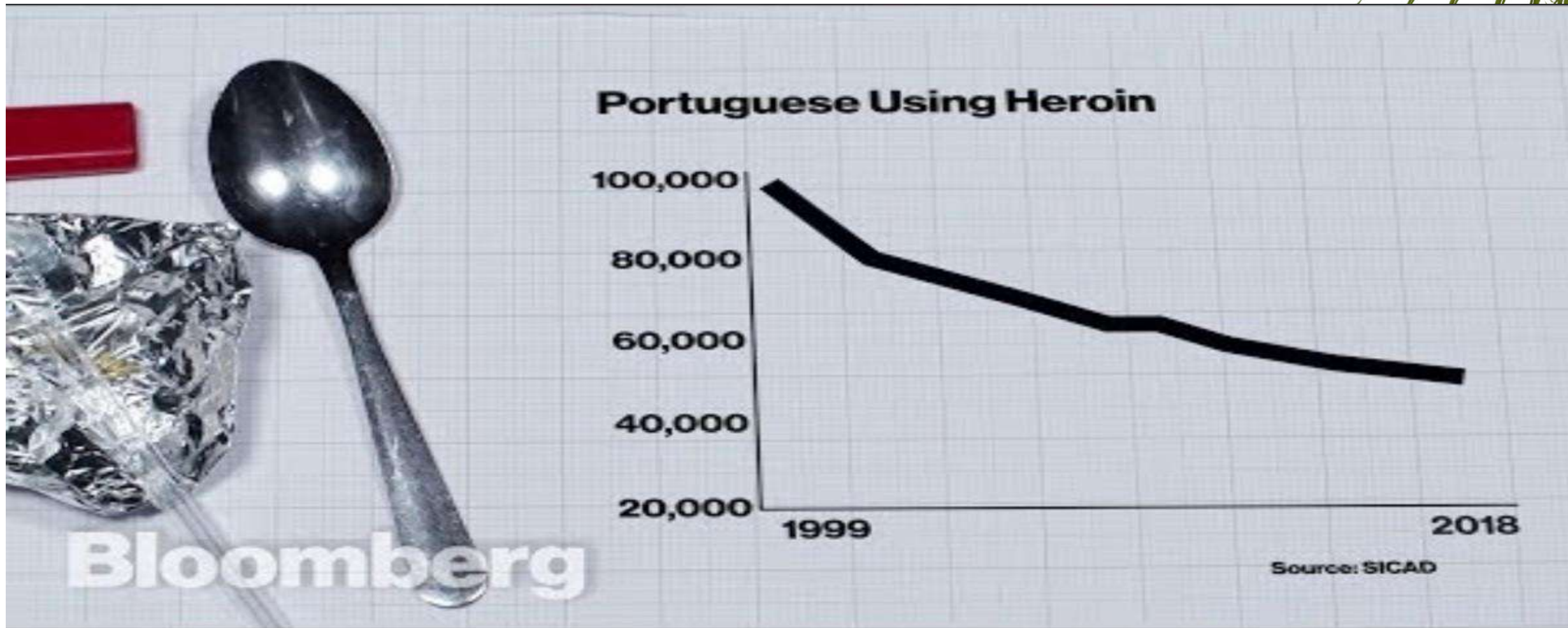
“Accessibility is a barrier to innovation.”

Behavioural Innovations

- Meeting People where they are without coercion or judgment.
- Nothing for us without us
- Putting people at the centre of drug policies
- Keeping people alive



Portugal success story



Challenges and Opportunities



Challenges:

- Stigma
- funding gaps
- Regulatory hurdles
- Public misconceptions.

Opportunities:

- International collaboration
- Public-private partnerships
- Community-based innovations.

Call to Action – Reflection

How can we work together to overcome these barriers?



Evaluating Impact

- Reduction in mortality/morbidity rates
- Cost-effectiveness of interventions
- Behavioural changes in targeted populations.
- Broader socio-economic benefits.

Harm Reduction



Normalize talking to patients about substance use in a nonjudgmental way



Don't assume their goal is abstinence.



Use person first, non-stigmatizing language.



Ask about their goals and how substances impact their life.



Drug-Set-Setting: A model to discuss substance use.



Conclusion

Recapping:

- Science-led innovation is revolutionizing harm reduction
- Regulation ensures safety and effectiveness



A word cloud centered around the phrase "HARM REDUCTION" in large, bold, red letters. The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the center. Other prominent words include "LOVE" in red, "INCLUSION", "PEERS", "EDUCATION", "DIGNITY", "KIND", "WELCOMING", "OPENNESS", "LIFE SAVING", "NON-JUDGEMENTAL", "EVIDENCE-BASED", "RESPECTFUL", "JUSTICE", "SELF CARE", "FEELING HEARD", "EMPOWERMENT", "FEELING VALUED", "RESPECTING EXPERTISE", "COMPASSION", "COMMUNITY", and "PRAGMATISM".

Call to Action

- Support evidence-based harm reduction initiatives.
- Promote global cooperation for shared success.



Take Away

“When science and policy align, the results save lives.”



References

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Thank You!

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