

Bulletin of the Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Unit



December 2007

Unit Team:

Dr. Jorge Rodriguez
Unit Chief
(Washington, D.C., USA)
rodrigo@paho.org

Dr. Maristela Monteiro
Regional Adviser on Alcohol and Substance Abuse
(Washington, D.C., USA)
monteirm@paho.org

Dr. Hugo Cohen
Sub-regional Adviser on Mental Health for South America (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
cohenh@arg.ops-oms.org

Dr. Victor Aparicio
Sub-regional Adviser on Mental Health for Mexico, Central America, and the Hispanic Caribbean (Panamá, Panamá)
aparicio@pan.ops-oms.org

Mrs. Devora Kestel
Subregional Adviser on Mental Health for the English Speaking Caribbean Countries (Barbados)
kestelde@cpc.paho.org

Dr. Armando Vásquez
Regional Adviser on Rehabilitation (Santiago, Chile)
vasquez@chi.ops-oms.org

Mr. Javier Vásquez
Human Rights Specialist
Legal Affairs Area / Technology and Health Services Delivery Area
(Washington, D.C., USA)
vasquezj@paho.org

Prof. M.Florencia Di Masi de Alconada -Consultant-
Mental Health, Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Unit
(Washington, DC, USA)
dimasima@paho.org

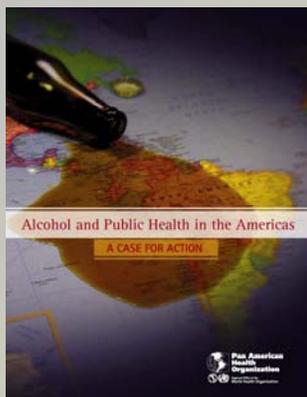
Secretariat:

Mrs. Judith Martínez
martinej@paho.org
Mrs. Martha Koev
koevmart@paho.org

The Bulletin of the Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Unit of the Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) is issued with the purpose of informing about important advances, news and publications in the areas of mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, rehabilitation and the protection of human rights within this context. In particular, the Bulletin focuses on those activities related to the technical assistance provided by PAHO/WHO to different actors in the Region. We hope it will become a useful tool for all those working in this important field of public health all over the Americas.

NEW PAHO/WHO PUBLICATIONS ON ALCOHOL

➤ [Alcohol and Public Health in the Americas>>](#)



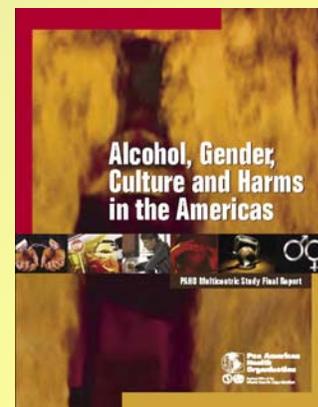
The purpose of this document is to provide an overview on alcohol consumption and related problems in the Americas, the policies which are effective to decrease harmful alcohol use and to raise awareness about the need for making alcohol a top public health priority in the Region and at a national level.

Current evidence-based information shows that alcohol consumption and drinking patterns in the Americas are at damaging levels, surpassing global averages for many alcohol related problems. Extensive research has demonstrated the effectiveness of numerous public health policies which have been evaluated in different countries and cultures and there is sufficient information available to help reduce the harms related to excessive alcohol use in our Region.

➤ [Alcohol, Gender, Culture and Harms in the Americas>>](#)

This Multicentric Study sponsored by PAHO compared data on alcohol consumption and related problems in men and women from general population surveys in 10 countries of the Americas: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and USA. There were differences between men and women in all countries but the size of the gender differences differ from country to country.

Overall, there were wide differences in volume of alcohol consumption and heavy episodic drinking between countries as well. The report highlights the importance of disaggregating data country by country and by gender and age group, in order to better understand differences in consumption and inform country-specific alcohol policies that can be effective to reduce alcohol related problems.



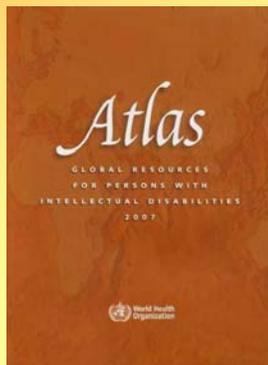
Bulletin of the Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Unit

2nd International Conference on Intellectual Disabilities/Mental Retardation Bangkok, Thailand, November 6-8 2007

Launching of the WHO Atlas on Country Resources in Intellectual Disabilities

Organized just one year after the new “Human Rights Convention to Protect Persons with Disabilities” was adopted by acclamation by the UN General Assembly, this Conference was also the occasion for the launching of the first WHO “Atlas on Country Resources in Intellectual Disabilities”, -[Atlas-ID](#)>>-.

The event in Bangkok was the continuation of the PAHO/WHO Conference on Intellectual Disability held in Montreal, Canada, in 2004, where a highly technical and political Declaration was issued.



PAHO/WHO supported and participated in the development of the Atlas-ID, which implied a long process of fluent exchange of information, data processing and edition. The PAHO/WHO Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Unit has acknowledged the efforts made by the Montreal PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health, where the Atlas was successfully developed by a qualified team.

For PAHO/WHO, Bangkok's Conference must not represent the end but an important step towards the beginning of a new phase. Currently available information is fairly complete and important, a baseline which should be used as a tool to design and implement concrete actions. Intellectual disability related problems should be given an efficient response, from both health and social perspectives. We can only achieve this goal through a joint effort between governments, NGOs, families and users' associations and all those interested in collaborating with this subject.

Caucus of Ministers of Health from the Caribbean September 2007

The Mental Health (MH) Policy Framework for the Caribbean was presented during the last Caucus of Ministers of Health of the Region. The document summarizes the current MH situation in the Caribbean and it emphasizes the need for action. Its presentation was made by Dr Wendel Abel, Chief of the Department of Community Health & Psychiatry, University of West Indies, Jamaica. After a short debate the document was finally endorsed by the Representatives.

The following is a summary of the recommendations the Framework provides: to appoint a national MH coordinator; to develop a comprehensive MH policy; to develop MH promotion programs; to identify risks, to reduce stigma and discrimination, violence and suicide; to establish a comprehensive range of community services; to train all health personnel; to establish an adequate MH information system; to develop an alcohol and substance abuse policy; to facilitate regional collaboration among institutions to transfer knowledge and disseminate information.

[Belmopan Mental Health Consumer Association](#)>>

The Belmopan Consumer Association -BCA- was created on April 5, 2004. The elected Board was given the mandate to advance the interests of Consumer Members from the Belmopan Region in Belize.



Mental Health in the Americas

[A Change of Mentality](#)>>
(Only in Spanish)

Mental Health Information on
PAHO/WHO Webpage

Coming EVENTS

- WPA International Congress, “Working Together for Mental Health: Partnerships for Policy and Practice”, Melbourne, Australia, 28 November- 2 December, 2007. <http://www.wpa2007melbourne.com>
- 5th National Congress, National Institute of Social Security & II Regional WPA Zone 3 Conference. Mexico City, Mexico, February 1-5, 2008.
- II International Conference on Medicine & Women's Mental Health: Assimilating a Different Approach. Medellin, Colombia, February 14-16, 2008. www.ces.edu.co
- Panamerican Conference on Infant Juvenile Mental Health. WPA & Cuban Society of Psychiatry. Havana, Cuba, March 24-28, 2008. <http://www.cpalco.com>
- Argentine Mental Health Association: Modernity, Technology and Contemporary Symptoms. Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 27-29, 2008. www.aasaludmental.org
- WPA Thematic Conference on Depression and Relevant Psychiatric Condition in Primary Care, Granada, Spain, June 19-21, 2008. www.wpa2008granada.org