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Definition of drugs

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drugs



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INTRODUCTION

A **“drug”** is usually understood as a psychoactive substance which alters (change) the way that the mind or body works, and can be extracted from nature, synthesised in laboratories or produced within the human body. However, what counts as a **“drug”** varies between historical and cultural contexts and the term can be seen as politically and morally value-laden in terms of which substances are legally and medically sanctioned or socially disapproved of, rather than related to the intrinsic qualities of the substance it self and its effects on the user.



DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

According to **Cambridge Dictionary**:

01- drug (noun) (MEDICINE):

- ✓ any natural or artificially made chemical that is used as a medicine:
- anti-cancer/fertility/pain-killing drugs.
- a prescription drug.
- drug therapy.

02- drug (noun) (ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE):

- ✓ any natural or artificially made chemical that is taken for pleasure, to improve someone's performance of an activity, or because a person cannot stop using it:
- illegal drugs.
- a drug addict.
- drug addiction/abuse.



DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

Définitions proposées par : [Oxford Languages](#)

noun

plural noun: **drugs**

a medicine or other substance which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body.

"a new drug aimed at sufferers from Parkinson's disease"

Synonymes :

medicine

medical drug

medication

medicament

remedy

cure

antidote

cure-all

panacea

nostrum

potion

elixir

magic bullet

physic



verb

3rd person present: **drugs**

administer a drug to (someone) in order to induce stupor or insensibility.

"they were drugged to keep them quiet"

Synonymes :

anaesthetize

give an anaesthetic to

narcotize

give drugs to



DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

First, What is the origin of the word drug?

The word **Drug**, taken from French word Drogue which means **“Dry Herb”**, strongly suggests that earliest drugs were taken out from plant sources. Earliest people used to treat diseases by some unconventional methods, using plants, animal products and minerals, of them plants were given priority.



DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

Second, There are two main ways to define drugs.

First, a distinction may be drawn between medicines, which are medically sanctioned psychoactive substances used for clinical purposes, and drugs, which are controlled substances whose use is not sanctioned either by law or by medical practitioners.

Second, drugs can be classified according to their pharmacological make up and attributed psychoactive effects. However, the definition of what is a drug, and the distinctions between drugs, substances and medicines are disputed.

01- MEDICO-LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

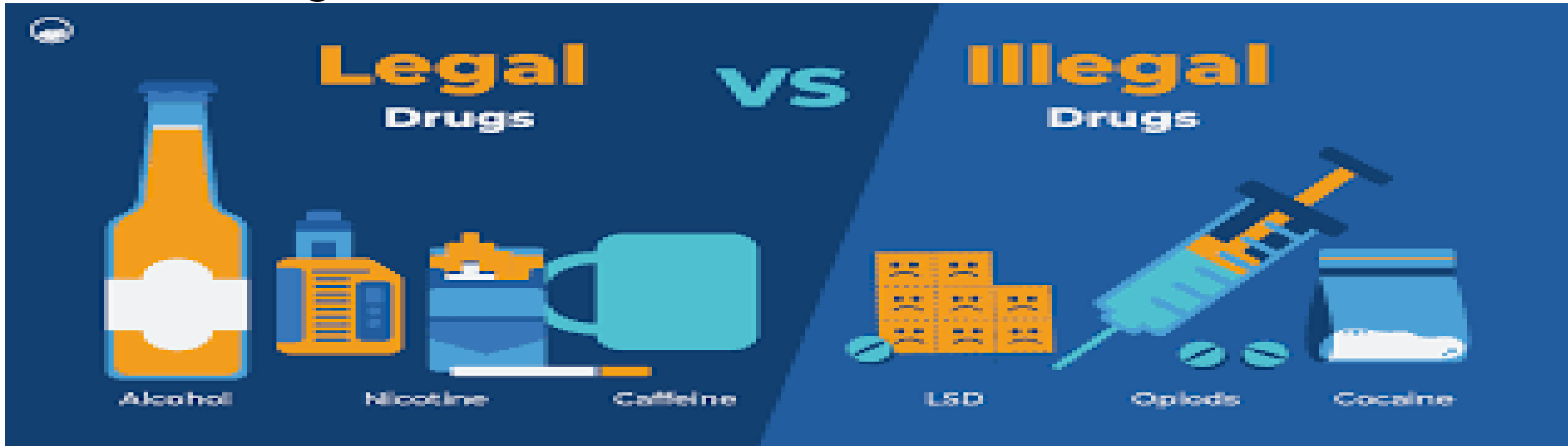
First, in terms of the medico-legal definition, drugs can refer to psychoactive substances with a range of different legal statuses, including legal, illegal and quasilegal drugs:



01- MEDICO-LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

01-Legal drugs: Are those that can be legally sold, possessed and used, albeit often with certain restrictions. They include tobacco, alcohol, caffeine, volatile substances, and over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

02-Illegal or controlled drugs: are those whose sale, possession or use constitutes an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Illegal use of controlled drugs is defined as the “non-medical usage of the drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act”.



01- MEDICO-LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

03-Illicit or quasi-legal drugs: Is a less clearly defined term, which includes the 'grey area' between legal and illegal drugs such as those drugs that are not legally controlled but may face certain formal or informal restrictions on their preparation, sale or use. For example, psilocin or "magic mushrooms", (gamma-butyrolactone), Benzylpiperazine (BZP or "party pills").



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BZP (Benzylpiperazine)



02- PHYSICAL/PSYCHOACTIVE DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

Second, in terms of defining drugs by their attributed physical or psychoactive effects, there are four broad pharmacological categories of drugs:



02- PHYSICAL/PSYCHOACTIVE DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

01- Stimulants ('uppers'): Are drugs that speed up the central nervous system, make the user feel more alert and energetic, causing people to stay awake for long periods of time, decrease appetite and make the user feel euphoric. For example, cocaine, amphetamines, nicotine, caffeine.



02- PHYSICAL/PSYCHOACTIVE DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

02- Depressants ('downers'): Are drugs that slow down the functions of the central nervous system and make the user less aware of the events around them. For example, alcohol, opiates (painkillers, for example, opium, morphine, heroin, codeine, methadone, Demerol, Percodan), sedatives/hypnotics (for example, barbiturates, such as Seconal, sleeping medications, tranquilisers such as Valium, Librium and diazepam).



02- PHYSICAL/PSYCHOACTIVE DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

03- Hallucinogens (psychedelics): Are drugs that distort the senses and one's awareness or perception of people and events, possibly resulting in hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that do not exist). For example, LSD, PCP (angel dust), mescaline (buttons), psilocin (contained in 'magic' mushrooms).



02- PHYSICAL/PSYCHOACTIVE DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS:

04- Deliriant: Is a fourth category, sometimes submerged into depressants, which includes drugs that result in a dissociative effect between the mind and body, or 'out-of-body' experience. This has led some drugs in this category to be used as anaesthetics with humans and animals, for example, with children and on the battlefield, when traditional general anaesthetics may be considered to be either impractical or too risky for the patient. For example, solvents, ketamine.



It should be noted:

It should be noted, however, that the those categories based on psychoactive effect can be modified by overlapping effects as some drugs fall (تدرج) into more than one category depending on the dosage, the individual user and other variables. So for example, cannabis, ketamine and alcohol are all perceived to have some stimulant properties at lower doses, but become predominantly sedative (مهدئات) at higher doses.

Other typologies of drugs include a distinction between **“hard” drugs** and **“soft” drugs**.

- **“Hard” drugs** usually include those drugs which are seen as more likely to result in ‘addiction’, daily or problem use of drugs such as heroin and crack cocaine.
- **“soft” drug** primarily relates to cannabis but may also include other drugs such as those which are used occasionally and/or ‘recreationally’ (ترفيهيا) and may also include hallucinogens and MDMA.

03- The debate between 'drug' and 'medicine':

For many researchers and commentators, particularly in Western societies, the distinction between a **drug** and a **medicine** is the difference in its **formal** or **informal acceptability**. As Mary Douglas (1978) expressed it, 'a **drug** is a chemical which is in the wrong place at the wrong time'. It has been argued that the distinction between '**drugs**' and '**medicines**' relates less to their relative physical or social harm and more to issues of regulation and social control (Ruggiero, 1999; Blackman, 2004). As Derrida famously noted, '**there are no drugs in "nature"** ... the concept of **drugs** is **not a scientific concept**, but is rather instituted on the basis of moral or political evaluations' (1993, in Fraser and Moore, 2011: 10). Thus the concept of **drugs**, like the concept of **addiction**, can be considered to be socially constructed and based on historical and cultural context, value judgements and norms.

04- The debate between 'drug' and 'substance':

There is also a debate between the terms '**drug**' and '**substance**'. The WHO (1992) expert committee included both **legal and illegal psychoactive substances** within its definition of the word **drug** – including alcohol and tobacco. By contrast the **World Drug Report** (1997) made a distinction between **substances** (which includes alcohol and tobacco) and 'the unauthorised or non-medical use of drugs which, because of their potential for causing dependence, have been brought under international control' (UNDCP, 1997: 10).

**Thanks for your
attention**

