



International Federation of  
Library Associations and Institutions

# Public Access to Health Information





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# Alcohol and other drugs as health problems





# Information and addiction or abuse

- Because alcohol and other drug problems all have major psychological elements, they are mainly countered through information.
- Although there some drug therapies, treatments for addiction are mainly at detoxification centres and clinics.
- These treatments seem to have little effect if sufferers are not psychologically prepared to deal with the problem themselves
- Help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous all attack the problem at the psychological level.
- Therefore there is a need for good information for addicts and their families.



# The problem of addiction

- For individuals
  - Damage to personal and family relationships
  - Reduced capacity to work and earn money
  - Likelihood of involvement in crime to pay for a habit
  - Vulnerability to disease
  - Progressive damage to bodily organs
  - Premature death
- For families and communities
  - Breakdown of family and community life.



# Sources of addiction

- Initial reasons for drink and drug abuse
  - Curiosity
  - Social pressures
  - Improving self-image
  - Avoiding making decisions
  - Escaping from frustration and pain
- Why this can become addiction
  - Strong connections with addiction in previous generations
  - Family violence and sexual abuse



# Other routes to addiction

- Abuse of prescription drugs (such as painkillers, anti-depressants and sleeping tablets)
- Use of anabolic steroids by sports persons.
- These can be addictive in their own right, and can lead to involvement with other substance abuse.



## How to avoid addiction and abuse

- Good diet and exercise
- Avoiding tobacco and alcohol (even though they are legal)
- Correct use of prescription drugs



# The role of information

- With awareness of
  - The causes of alcohol and other substance abuse
  - How addiction develops
  - The consequences of abuse and addiction
- Families and communities can fight to prevent addiction and organise treatment.







# What the library can do

- Collecting pamphlets and other publications on addiction and abuse of alcohol and other substances
- Displaying posters and other publicity material
- Organising events such as inviting guest speakers or showing relevant films and videos.
- Liaison with clinics, support groups and campaigning NGOs to disseminate information
- Use of library premises for family and support groups.

