
NEWS / ISSUP

● INTRODUCING INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SUBSTANCE USE PROFESSIONALS (ISSUP)

The International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) is a non-profit, global membership organisation that was formally established in 2016. ISSUP currently has over 21,000 members from more than 190 nations and territories. ISSUP links and supports the individuals working in the field of drug demand reduction across the world.

The opportunity for ISSUP to build a partnership with Addictology to progress the strong relationship with Charles University in Prague offers great potential to provide a unique contribution to the field of drug demand reduction that will present real value to researcher, policy makers and practitioners. ISSUP welcomes this opportunity to work together to grow and develop an international journal devoted to publishing peer-reviewed interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scientific reports on psychoactive substance use. ISSUP seeks to become a significant stakeholder and an official strategic partner in the provision of the Addictology Journal.

Each edition of the Journal will have a section from ISSUP to keep readers informed about its events, scientific contributions, conferences, trainings, news, membership, and National Chapters. In this issue we present information on recent and forthcoming remarkable events and contributions by ISSUP:

- **ISSUP Virtual Conference on “Evidence-based Principles for Effective Drug Demand Reduction: Applying Theory to Practice” – Reflections and Discussions.**
- **Apply for ISSUP Abu Dhabi 2022 in-person Training Courses**
- **Learn with the UTC Online Curriculum**
- **Explore the ISSUP Professional Development Hub**
- **Start your ISSUP Membership**

ISSUP thanks those who have made it possible to collaborate on this important initiative of Addictology becoming one of the major journals for those working in the drug demand reduction field. We hope our readers will feel able to provide feedback on what we provide – or ought to provide – and of course that they find the material presented in the Journal relevant, accessible, and informative in progressing their professional contributions to this vital area of work.

For further information about ISSUP please visit www.issup.net

NEWS / ISSUP

● EVIDENCE-BASED PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION: APPLYING THEORY TO PRACTICE

Introduction

Between December 8 and 10, 2021, ISSUP's International (virtual) Conference took place to address the issues surrounding translating the theory and research with respect to an evidence-based approach to prevention, treatment and recovery support. The conference tackled its application to international practice of drug demand reduction.

The Conference was very well received, we had a total of 2372 attendees from 123 different countries across 4 sessions. ISSUP were also privileged to have leading international figures to provide the theoretical perspective including a thought-provoking overview to launch the event from Professor Harry Sumnall. This was followed by inputs on Treatment, Prevention and Recovery Support from Annette Dale-Perrera, Giovanna Campello and Dr. Hendree Jones. The inputs on practice and the challenges of implementing the evidence-base were provided from the experience and expertise of those working within or in collaboration with ISSUP's National Chapters. Examples of work were provided from practitioners from India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, and Ukraine. ISSUP's National Chapters in Chile, Indonesia, Nigeria and United Arab Emirates also provided the Session Moderators.

Discussion

Rather than try to summarise the inputs from the stimulating sessions which are all available on the ISSUP website, I offer my own comments on the discussed issues. I personally and professionally feel that these topics deserve further thought and further action in the future. I should add these are my own perspectives and cannot be seen as necessarily representing the views of ISSUP.

It is important when organising a conference that we avoid such events becoming merely "shop windows" for awareness raising without a follow up process for action. This should be a result of the very important issues that are often addressed. I am sure that this ISSUP Conference did offer a very interesting shop window of issues. Having seen what is "on offer" there will be those who want to ask more about what is presented. They also seek more detail of its value and potential application. I hope the "shop window" can become a starting point for development and action to address the shared objective of the Conference. This is mainly through identifying the evidence-base for drug demand reduction and how we can encourage, develop, and support the transfer of the theory into practice. The follow up on the ISSUP website listing the resources referenced by speakers and uploading presentations and recordings will assist in part [here](#).

Among the many items in the shop window following the Conference there are three topics that I would like to highlight. These require further attention and that I hope will result in further discussion, development and, most importantly, action:

Evidence

First of all, I do hope that how we define "evidence", raised by Professor Sumnall and endorsed by other speakers, is given further attention. This can impact how we can obtain important feedback and information from a variety of sources as to what constitutes the evidence-base. It can then be used to better inform and build the evidence-base. Professor Sumnall referred to the "gold star" evidence that can be obtained from the pure and rigorous scientific work of a randomized control trial. However, even with such a "pure" approach to finding evidence there is a need for caution. Transferring what

NEWS / ISSUP

can “work” in greenhouse conditions of a well-funded and implemented evaluation to the realities of being undertaken within the conditions that exist in communities where it might be applied, poses significant challenges. The main challenges are maintaining the quality and fidelity in provision of an evidence-based approach. There are other types of evidence, and ways of obtaining it, that need to be recognised and utilised. They can come from practice that need to be applied and taken seriously as we seek to build an evidence-base. Evidence, and its application, needs to be seen in the context of the different realities that the practitioners face in trying to implement an evidence-based approach. This points to the need for research identifying evidence to include those involved with practice as well as the pure scientist. The multi-disciplinary nature of how we go about tackling drug demand reduction in practice needs to be considered alongside how we accumulate the evidence-base. Perhaps too often the “us and them” between “scientist” and “practitioner” has contributed to the less than acceptable transfer from research to practice and then from practice to policy. Practitioners can contribute significantly and be regarded as scientists themselves. They have a significant contribution in identifying the evidence-base. The challenge now is how we tackle this issue, promote collaboration, and encourage understanding and sharing between the academic and practice communities.

Language and culture

The second item in the “shop window” that took my attention was that of language and culture. How our “evidence-base” – often developed in higher-income countries and communicated in English – can be easily and readily applied to those cultures which are significantly different? Additionally, a serious challenge to consider is the communication and language barrier. The latter issue appears to be relatively straightforward to address: ensure accessible and good translations of the information with respect to the evidence-base. But is it as simple as this? If so, surely this would have been addressed? Somehow the solution to this remains a problem. Perhaps it is the vast number of languages that would need to be considered? Perhaps no one takes responsibility for this other than for the “official languages”? Even that does not always happen. The big challenge this epitomises is the need for developing more effective communication and sharing of our learning to allow for it to be understood and therefore, addressed by all. The development of our response to this challenge should be led by the countries who are being isolated by the English/high income imbalance.

The issue of culture also needs shared understanding of the similarities and differences within different cultures. It can often appear that what “works” in one culture can be anticipated to work elsewhere. An additional question might be to consider whether common principles for an evidence-based approach can be identified that are common across different cultures. As well as to identify those which might apply in one culture but not another?

The culture – and additionally the context – for implementing an evidence-based approach has to be considered in an adaptation process. Providing “the research” will not have any impact unless the context and cultural issues are considered and addressed. Appropriate practical plans need to be made as to how to help such a community and its leadership and stakeholders consider alternatives and to engage with the joint effort of moving towards an evidence-based approach.

Identify immediate actions

My third and final concern and challenge for further action on viewing the shop window of the ISSUP Conference is that with so many items or issues on view it is extremely difficult to prioritise those requiring immediate attention. I offer a perspective of how we might need to focus and address issues that came through most if not all the presentations made during the Conference. The all-encompassing question is how do we address the challenges of communicating and implementing evidence-based approaches to our drug demand reduction work in the “real world” with all its differences, complexities, and agendas? If we are to make a real difference from implementing an evidence-based approach at the practice level, we need to move to this being identified and im-

NEWS / ISSUP

plemented not only at the practice level but also at the policy level and for it to be given appropriate support politically and financially. There lies the major challenge.

Conclusion

Within our work in drug demand reduction, we have identified prevention, treatment and recovery support as the three key elements of work. Each of these areas has different needs, a different evidence-base and different considerations for transfer of evidence to practice. I refer you again to the Conference recording which identifies many of these issues which were presented in a most valuable, eloquent, and interesting way. And yet the three dimensions of drug demand reduction share the same objectives. They are united in the need to identify the evidence-base, apply it to practice, consider and respond to the challenges – some of which I have tried to identify above. In addition, it is important to aim for their efforts and recommendations to be addressed and implemented at the policy level if they are to have a much better chance for success.

I could add more and there are many reading this who have many more pertinent questions and experience of the issues shared in this reflection. What poses a challenge is how the scientific community, and the voice of those working in the field of drug demand reduction, can be better heard, understood, and valued by governments and policy makers. Only then will its advice be better supported and implemented.

I think we should remain positive about working towards this end. However, it will mean we now need to review what was shared at the Conference and identify our recommendations and action plan. If we can improve on the statement from Professor Sumnall that the impact of research takes 17 years for 14% of it to be acted upon we will know we are on the right track! It is a long-term effort but one we need to address together to ensure the shop window has a different look next time round!

Jeff Lee | Senior Consultant, ISSUP, London, United Kingdom

E-mail | jeff.lee@issup.net

Acknowledgements | We would also like to thank our speakers and moderators, listed below in order of appearance, who contributed and enriched this conference: Shamil Wanigaratne, Ph.D.; Joanna Travis Roberts; Brian Morales; Jeff Lee; Professor Harry Sumnall; Martin Agwogie, Ph.D.; Annette Dale-Perera; Ramiro Valez; Bilal Ahmad; Carlos Ibáñez, MD; Giovanna Campello; Fernando Salazar; Ph.D., Anthony Abi Zeid; Kristiana Siste, MD, Ph.D.; Hendrée E. Jones, Ph.D.; Olha Myshakivska, MD; Beatrice Kathungu, Ph.D.; Pamela Kaithuru, Ph.D.

NEWS / ISSUP

● APPLY FOR ISSUP ABU DHABI 2022 IN-PERSON TRAINING COURSES

The next ISSUP International Workshop and Conference, taking place in Abu Dhabi from 11th–16th of May 2022, provides an opportunity to participate in a range of in-person training courses provided by Colombo Plan and OAS-CICAD.

Available courses include:

- Women’s Intervention for Substance Exposure (WISE): Comprehensive Care for Substance Use Disorders
- Universal Training Curriculum Advanced: Enhancing Motivational Interviewing Skills
- Universal Recovery Curriculum (URC): The Allies Link and Lend Inventive Engaging Support (ALLIES) Model
- Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC) Family (For Manager & Supervisors)
- Treating Adolescents with Substance Use Disorders
- Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC) 1: Introduction to the Science of Addiction
- DAP Examination Refresher Course and ICAP Exam
- ICAP-II, III and IV Treatment Exams
- ICAP-Prevention Exam
- ICAP Recovery Support Exam

There are 25 places per course. Full details of course content and duration are available [here](#).

Information for applicants

To be considered as a participant, please complete an application form by **15th January 2022**. Your application will be shared with the organising partner (Colombo Plan DAP or OAS-CICAD). They will then inform you whether you have been assigned a place.

The following will be considered for training:

- Professionals and specialists with 2 years’ work experience in addiction
- Professionals with ICAP credentials
- Bachelor’s degree in Psychology, Counselling, Social work, Public Health, Nursing or other related subject
- Individuals with equivalent, relevant professional qualifications/certificates

PLEASE NOTE: You need your passport, CV/resumé and qualification certificates to complete the application process.

Those wishing to apply to participate in a training course should do so through the ISSUP website [here](#).

Participation in the training initiatives is fully sponsored and supported by funding from the US State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

NEWS / ISSUP

● LEARN WITH THE UTC ONLINE CURRICULUM

We are excited to have Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC) Courses available online in a self-led format. Developed by our partners at The Global Centre for Credentialing and Certification (GCCC), the courses are ideal for anyone who cannot attend face-to-face trainings due to location or time constraints.

UTC self-led courses prepare counsellors for professional certification at the entry level by providing the latest information about substance use disorders (SUDs) and their treatment through activities designed to develop skills, confidence, and competence.

The trainings provide a comprehensive overview of the nature of change and the process and elements of treatment for SUDs.

Every participant has a choice regarding certification. If you wish to apply for CE credits, there will be a series of assessment questions at the end of each module. You must score at least 80% to receive the certificate. It is also possible to complete the course without certification or CE credits.

At the time of publication, the ISSUP Professional Development Hub offers enrolment in the following UTC self-led courses:

- UTC 1: Physiology and Pharmacology for Addiction Professionals
- UTC 2: Continuum of Care for Addiction Professionals
- UTC 6: Case Management for Addiction Professionals
- UTC 7: Crisis Intervention for Addiction Professionals
- UTC 8: Ethics for Addiction Professionals

Self-led *UTC Course 4: Basic Counselling Skills for Addiction Professionals* should be ready by April 2022.

Learn more about the courses and enrol [here](#).

Explore the ISSUP Professional Development Hub

ISSUP provides a wide range of training, resources, and professional development opportunities for the drug demand reduction workforce.

Our Professional Development Hub offers access to self-led or instructor-led online courses developed by industry experts through fully supported and feature-rich e-Learning environments.

Discover the Universal Curricula and the series of trainings available on prevention, treatment, and recovery. ISSUP members can download Universal Curricula materials that reflect the latest scientific evidence base for delivering services to individuals and their families. You can also apply to become a Universal Curricula Training Provider or review the Training Providers in your country.

See the range of upcoming and past ISSUP Webinars, view the latest opportunities on the ISSUP Job Board, and more.

Browse our professional development and training resources [here](#).

NEWS / ISSUP

● START YOUR ISSUP MEMBERSHIP

ISSUP provides access to a wide range of benefits to help develop your knowledge and career. Membership is free and we have grades that suit everyone from experienced prevention, treatment, and recovery support professionals and researchers to students, volunteers, or anyone with an active interest in this field.

Why join ISSUP?

Join an international network of substance use prevention, treatment and recovery professionals undertaking and promoting high-quality, evidence based, and ethical practice. We are always refining features and adding to the benefits available to our members. ISSUP membership enables you to:

- Take courses (face-to-face and online) developed by our partners and gain qualifications through the ISSUP Professional Development Hub.
- Create your own member profile and share your work, projects, and events via our website.
- Join regional and topic focused discussion groups.
- Receive our twice monthly Newsletter and get regular event notifications.
- Find national and international networking opportunities.
- Attend annual ISSUP workshops with benefits for members.
- Contact other members using the ISSUP Member Directory.
- Sign up to a code of ethics.
- Get information and resources for students and early career professionals.

Individual Membership Categories

We offer a choice of four categories of membership:

Drug Demand Reduction Professional Membership

for those who have specific qualifications, expertise and experience directly linked to the drug demand reduction field.

Professional Membership

for those that are undertaking a role that contributes to the drug demand reduction field, even if not necessarily a specialist.

Regular Membership

for interested, non-professional applicants (can include volunteers, family members or non-accredited community members).

Student Membership

for those attending an educational institution or attending training (in any field) containing a drug demand reduction component.

Apply Online

For more information and to submit an online application please see our [membership guide](#).