

# jeddah

*by* Drug Use In

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Drug and substance abuse response proposal

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**Definition**

According to research by the UN, drug and substance abuse is on an upward, worrying trend. As of 2019, over two hundred and seventy-one million people were using drugs and other illegal substances. According to the UN, 5.5% of the global youth population was estimated to have used drugs in the previous year. (UN 2019).

Closer home, while Saudi Arabia is predominantly a Muslim country and holds moral values at the highest standards, drug and substance abuse is still prevalent. Despite the stringent religious and legal restrictions on alcohol and drug use, an estimated 7 to 8% of Saudi Arabians use alcohol. Of all the Saudis using drugs and alcohol, a shocking 70% are young people aged between twelve and twenty-two years. (. (Alshmrani, 2017).

The town of Jeddah has not been left behind in this bloom of drug and substance abuse. The town's youth are sinking deep into addiction. The commonly abused drugs by the youth of Jeddah are Amphetamines, Cannabis sativa, cocaine, and opioids.

A study conducted at the Al-Amal Hospital highlighted the way drugs are putting the lives of teenagers in the town at risk. The study concluded that; youth who used either of the four highly abused drugs in Jeddah were most likely to develop psychotic symptoms. Psychotic traits were seen as teens continued with drug abuse and when they withdrew from drug abuse. (Alibrahim et al., 2012)

Despite the religious and legal laws, the youth of Jeddah manage to access drugs. Various stakeholders have raised questions about how these drugs find their way to teenagers. This study will look into the prevalence of drug use among the youth, the effects of drug use, and who sell these drugs to teenagers in Jeddah.

**Innovation**

This proposal will be presented in three distinctive parts: prevention of sale and use of drugs, mitigating the prevalence of drugs and substance sale and use, and finally, how the interior ministry can effectively respond to this critical problem.

**Prevention**

Desiderius Erasmus once said, “prevention is better than cure.” The ministry of interior has to devise effective ways of ensuring that teenagers do not start using drugs in the first place. This section of the proposal delineates the various multi-dimensional approaches that can be implemented to deter drug use and sale within Jeddah.

Globally, various methods of drug use prevention have been tried successfully. In the USA, the National Institute on Drug Abuse has pinpointed sixteen critical principles that can be used in prevention efforts, considering the risk and protective factors. (NIDA, 2011).

The first approach the ministry can use is to strengthen the value of the family intervention.

While the ministry can take other legal and religious approaches, the family’s significance in mitigating this social menace cannot be downplayed. Parents and older relatives should instill into their children that drug and substance abuse is dangerous to their health. Parents should also watch out for possible early warning signs of impending drug use. Symptoms of depression, withdrawal, and loss of appetite should not be ignored.

The ministry should also partner with the local government and youth groups to find alternative economic activities for the youth of Jeddah. Due to the prevailing unemployment rates, the youth might be lured into the lucrative business of selling drugs. The promise of easy cash and flash lifestyle that comes with the drug business has been cited to be a motivation for youth to engage

in drugs sale. The ministry should establish a youth business and innovation hub where the youth can spend their time productively involved in perfecting their talents and business ideas.

The interior ministry should also be proactively involved in raising awareness of the dangers of drug use and sale among Jeddah's youth. The ministry should partner with the local schools, Imams, youth organizations, and activism groups to sensitize the youth. Campaigns against the use and sale of drugs should be carried out, both online and physically. The ministry can also organize seminars and workshops where the youth can have an ample opportunity to air out their views of how this social concern affects them.

### **Mitigation**

This part of the proposal explains the various ways the ministry of the interior can reduce the adverse impacts of drug use and sale among Jeddah's youth.

Young people reported to be in the early stages of drug abuse should be promptly taken to rehabilitation centers and get counseling.

The ministry of the interior should collaborate with the guidance and counseling departments of schools within the city to curb drug use and sale. Counselors should evaluate students exhibiting signs of drug use and collaborate with the ministry to best help them.

The ministry should arrest and rehabilitate first-time offenders who are caught selling drugs within Jeddah. Instead of prosecuting these drug sellers, the ministry should enroll them in a mandatory rehabilitation program to be equipped with alternate means of earning a living.

**Response**

This part suggests actions that the ministry might take if the efforts to prevent and mitigate drugs' sale and use might prove inadequate.

The ministry can enforce stringent laws to deal with anyone found using or selling drugs within Jeddah; details of heavy fines and long jail terms should be published all over the media outlets to ensure that the youth are aware of the possible consequences.

The ministry can also partner with the schools in the city to carry out random drug tests on the schools' youth. Any youth found using drugs should be dealt with strictly per the law.

The ministry can also collaborate with the local authorities to conduct random searches within drug sale hotspot areas. Any person found in possession of drugs should be dealt with according to the law.

**Application**

As the ministry implements this proposal, some concerns need to be addressed. The following section of this plan will consider the ethical and legal considerations for the security officers and various stakeholders involved.

**Prevention**

As earlier stated, the family unit has a critical role in preventing the sale and use of drugs among the youth. Many parents incline to protect their children; in doing so, they might be hesitant to out their children to the security personnel. The ethical need to shield children might be an issue in implementing this plan.

The plan suggests that counselors in schools should report possible drug use cases and sales to the ministry. Ethical issues might be raised here; to what extent of confidentiality are counselors legally bound to treat the information divulged by their patients? Can the legality of the collaboration between the ministry and counselors be challenged?

The plan proposes the establishment of youth business and innovation incubation centers. These centers will be given finances to help the youth incubate business and innovation ideas. What criteria will be used to award these grants? Will the officers involved display desirable ethical traits to enhance transparency and accountability? Finally, will the ministry be within its legal confines when following up the utilization of these funds?

### **Mitigation**

There seems to be a cultural permissiveness for drug use in Jeddah. It is a commonplace to see young people smoking shisha alongside their older relatives. The proposal of identifying cases of early addiction might be faced with a cultural barrier.

Again, this part of the plan proposes that counselors in schools divulge their clients' reports to the ministry; raising legal and ethical concerns on these counseling sessions' privacy.

The plan proposes that the ministry rehabilitates first-time drug sellers instead of taking them to court; this raises legal concerns on these rehabilitation centers' legality. Who will finance them, manage them, and what criteria will the ministry use to determine whether offenders are fully rehabilitated?

**Response**

This plan proposes the formulation of stringent laws and policies to deal with drug users and sellers. These laws do not take into account the driving force behind the use and sale of drugs.

Has adequate research been done to comprehend why youth resort to drugs in the first place?

The plan proposes the administration of random drug tests to learners in schools. The legality of these tests might be questioned. Random drug tests do not offer a way of distinguishing between people using illegal drugs and those using prescribed medication.

The raids and searches proposed will be carried out in collaboration with the officers of the law. Legal concerns might be raised on the possible infringement of citizens' privacy by these officers and possible property destruction.

**Justification**

The following section of the plan discusses the contingency plan for any shortcomings that may come up during the program's implementation.

**Prevention**

Parents might shy away from reporting their children who use drugs for fear of victimization.

The ministry can easily overcome this challenge by sensitizing the public on the importance of seeking help for their loved ones early before they sink into addiction.

A proper audit of resource allocation and utilization in youth centers should ensure transparency and accountability.

**Mitigation**

The ministry should encourage society's members to limit the youth's access to recreational drugs like shisha. Proper planning and management should be employed in the process of designing rehabilitation centers. The culture and social norms of Jeddah's residents should be taken into consideration.

**Response**

Police raids should be conducted humanely. The citizen's right to privacy should be respected. The drug tests proposed should be administered with the utmost respect, taking into account the culture of separating males and females in society.

**Evidence criterion**

Globally, there have been proposals of approaches similar to this one. Evidence shows that a community-based plan stands better chances of success. In the USA, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education, DARE, has been effectively used to address drug sales and youth use. The program collaborates with counselors, parents, government officers, and youth leaders to educate the youth on the dangers of substance abuse. (Ennet S et al. 1994)

**Conclusion**

While this plan might prove inadequate as a sole tool in the war against the use and sale of drugs in Jeddah, it effectively stirs up the conversation on the role of the ministry of interior in leading the fight against drugs. The plan has a detailed action plan for the ministry, the various challenges that might arise, and how to deal with them effectively.

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