Introduction

ERANID: Analysis of recent European research publications on illicit drugs

**ERANID**
- ERANID, the European Research Area Network on Illicit Drugs, can be considered as a first fundamental step towards long-term European co-operation in the field of scientific research on illicit drugs.
- It is important to develop shared priorities for research on illicit drugs and the funding of joint research projects in this field that are the main objectives of this project. The project operates mainly in the field of socio-economic sciences and humanities and aims to strengthen and widen the network of research programmes and participants.
- The participating countries are Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands (coordinators of the project), Portugal and the United Kingdom. The project, which will last for four years, will also collaborate closely with two important organisations: the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe.
- This literature review is the initial phase of the ERANID project to determine the scope and themes of the call for proposals in this stage. Cannabinoids were omitted for a later dedicated analysis.

Global objectives
- Look at previous results from national and European research programs and related funding within Social Sciences (2006-2013) in the field of illicit drugs.

Specific objectives
- Using scientific publications, map national research activities within Social Sciences in the six EU member states (2006-2013) in the field of illicit drugs.
- Providing a synthesis of the results with a description of strengths and weaknesses of research in Social Sciences on illicit drugs in Europe.

Methods

Main analysis: PubMed inquiry excluding cannabis
- Listing all the publications in medical and social sciences.
  - Search on PubMed (country name) AND (drug OR substance OR product) AND (heroin OR cocaine OR amphetamine OR ecstasy OR methadone OR buprenorphine OR boticlor OR illegal OR hallucinogen OR LSD OR opiates OR epidemic) AND (treatment OR prevention OR control OR supply OR dealer OR crime OR clinical OR intervention OR harm reduction) NOT (nicotine OR rats) AND “(2006”-Date - Publication) “2013(Date - Publication).
  - Search on social sciences electronic libraries (PsycLink, ... all the publications regarding drug use research using key words in appropriate language.

Research programme, publications, research team, funding source(s), research fields and areas of expertise.
- Research fields:
  1. Prevalence, incidence and patterns of drug use.
  2. Responses to the drug use (prevention, treatment, drug policy, ... classification.
  3. Determinants of drug use.
  4. Consequences of drug use.
  5. Mechanisms of drug use and effects.
  7. Methodology issues.

- Count of all the publications per country and per research field:
  - Total of publications for each research field within the 6 EU member states.
  - For each country, all the papers by research field with a specific category for review/meta-analyses and European projects were classified.

Complementary search: focus on SSH literature
- Methodology search for Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) literature.
  - Literature search was conducted through indexed journals.
  - For France, SSH searches were carried out through following data base/search engines: Cairn, Francis, Sociological Abstracts. We added publications from main French SSH research teams.
  - For other countries, literature searches were carried out through Sociological Abstracts with a focus on several specialized journals on substance use: Addiction, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, Substance Use and Misuse, International Journal of Drug Policy, Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy.
  - As a first step, the following key words were used: Substance Use and Abuse, Drug Use, Illicit Drugs, and then on a product category class search was conducted.

- Limits of SSH research
  - French publications are probably over-represented due to our better knowledge of research teams involved in the topic.
  - Disciplines such as economics are under-represented in the literature synthesis: research on cannabis is dominant within the theme of drug markets and supplies.
  - Exclusion of books and grey literature has limited identification of research SSH teams.

Preliminary results of PubMed inquiry

Research fields covered by publications in the 6 European countries involved in ERANID from 2006 to 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Portugal</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence, incidence and patterns of drug use</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms of drug use and effects</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply and markets</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology issues</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

Total: 132 papers

Conclusions

1. Through the PubMed searching, the main research fields are:
- Responses to drug use: Prevention, treatment, drug policy
- Consequences of drug use: Infectious diseases, psychiatric comorbidities, social issues, impact on environment/relatives
- Prevalence, incidence and patterns of drug use

    Epidemiological data and public health interventions

2. Some fields are less covered:
- Determinants of drug use: Understanding early predictors and current determinants of drug use (severity of drug use but also abstinence process)

    Other areas of expertise less published in PubMed (anthropology, qualitative studies, ...)

3. Forgotten areas in research on illicit drugs:
- Supply and markets:

    More related to economics that were not found in Social Sciences research.

Methodology issues:
- Some areas in the field of drug testing but fewer in preventive and operational research or interventions.

4. Current classification too large:
- This classification is not able to evidence the lack of studies for specific populations (ex: prisoners, family of drug users) or better detail the possible lack of research in specific subissues of treatment for drug dependence.

For the next “call for proposal" it would be beneficial to specify some targeted specific issues or subpopulations.

Contact

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Preliminary results of SSH focus

Social Sciences focus on Research fields covered by publications in the 6 European countries involved in ERANID from 2006 to 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Portugal</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 63 papers

Figure 3. Research fields covered by publications in each ERANID country.