WHA23.42 Drug Dependence

The Twenty-third World Health Assembly,

Noting with great concern the extensive and serious public health problems resulting from the self administration of dependence producing drugs, in particular among the younger age group;

Recalling resolutions WHA18.47, WHA20.42, WHA20.43 and WHA21.42 concerning certain dependence producing drugs not under international control;

Noting that the Economic and Social Council has decided to convene in 1971 a plenipotentiary conference to adopt a Protocol on Psychotropic Substances;

Considering that a decision on the control of a substance liable to abuse to the extent of constituting a public health problem must be based primarily on medical judgement as to both its dependence producing properties and therapeutic usefulness; and

Convinced that there is an urgent need at local, national and international levels to implement improved preventive, treatment and rehabilitation measures,

1. RECOMMENDS that the World Health Organization should encourage and assist the development of improved preventive, treatment and rehabilitation programmes and the pursuit of needed knowledge in the field of drug dependence;

2. URGES Member States to promote preventive, therapeutic, rehabilitative and research programmes in this field; and

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

   (i) to develop means for the international collection and exchange of data on the prevalence and incidence of drug dependence, and on the human and environmental factors associated therewith;

   (ii) to ensure that the constitutional responsibilities of the World Health Organization are effectively discharged in international programmes for the control of the abuse of dependence producing drugs;

   (iii) to seek, without excluding the possibility of establishing a standing committee, the most effective procedures for examining the various factors involved of a medical, scientific and social nature and for enabling the Organization to receive all useful advice concerning the need to restrict the availability of any drug on the grounds of its liability to misuse; and

   (iv) to report to the Executive Board and to the Twenty fourth World Health Assembly on developments in this matter.

Handb. Res., 10th ed., 1.10.2; 8.1.2 Fifteenth plenary meeting, 21 May 1970
(Committee B, sixth report)