

According to a new report by the World Health Organization (WHO), over 3 million people die annually due to alcohol and drug use, with men disproportionately affected. This highlights the serious public health threat posed by substance abuse worldwide.

Over 2.6 million deaths are linked to alcohol consumption, accounting for nearly 5% of global deaths.

An additional 0.6 million deaths are attributed to psychoactive drug use.

Men are more likely to fall victim to substance abuse, with 2 million alcohol-related deaths and 0.4 million drug-related deaths among males.

Substance use has severe health consequences. The report indicates a link between alcohol consumption and chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease, along with injuries and infectious diseases like HIV and tuberculosis. Young people aged 20-39 are especially vulnerable.

While global alcohol consumption has dipped slightly in recent years, the European and American regions still have the highest consumption rates. Binge drinking is a significant problem, with nearly 40% of drinkers consuming excessive amounts of alcohol at least once a month. Underage drinking is also a concern, with over 23% of 15-19 year olds reported as current drinkers.

The report exposes a critical gap in treatment access for substance abuse. Despite effective treatment options being available, coverage remains extremely low, ranging from less than 1% to 35%. Stigma and lack of resources are major contributors to this gap.

The WHO urges governments and partner organizations to take action to combat this issue. Key areas for improvement include raising public awareness, strengthening prevention and treatment programs, training healthcare professionals, implementing global action plans to reduce alcohol abuse, and increasing funding for treatment initiatives.