



Promotive And Preventive Methods In Combating The Spread And Abuse Of Drugs In A Repressive And Human Manner

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Abstract

Background: Drug abuse remains a major public health issue affecting physical, psychological, social, economic, and security aspects of society. The increasing prevalence of illicit drug use, particularly among young adults and productive-age populations, requires comprehensive prevention and control strategies. Drug control should not rely solely on law enforcement but should also integrate health promotion, prevention, rehabilitation, and human-centered approaches. Objective: This review aims to analyze promotive and preventive strategies in combating drug abuse while examining the effectiveness of repressive and humane approaches based on current scientific evidence. Methods: A narrative literature review was conducted using publications retrieved from PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and Garuda. Articles published between 2020 and 2025 in Indonesian and English discussing health promotion, prevention, rehabilitation, harm reduction, and law enforcement related to drug abuse were included. Results: Health promotion through education, public awareness campaigns, community empowerment, and family resilience improves knowledge and regarding attitudes towards drug abuse. Preventive strategies including early detection, school-based interventions, environmental monitoring, and multisector collaboration effectively reduce risk factors. Repressive approaches remain essential for combating illicit drug trafficking, whereas rehabilitation and harm reduction provide significant benefits for individuals experiencing substance dependence. Conclusion: Effective drug control requires integrated promotive, preventive, repressive, and rehabilitative strategies. Public health and human rights-based approaches offer more sustainable outcomes in reducing drug abuse and improving the quality of life of affected individuals.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Health Promotion, Prevention, Rehabilitation, Harm Reduction

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1. Introduction

The abuse of narcotics, psychotropic substances, and other addictive substances (NAPZA) is a public health problem that remains a major challenge in various countries, including Indonesia (National Narcotics Agency, 2024; World Health Organization, 2023). The impact of drug abuse is felt not only by the individual user but also affects families, social environments, economic productivity, and the stability of community security. Continuous drug use can lead to dependence, physical and mental health disorders, decreased social functioning, an increased risk of infectious diseases, and even death from overdose (Degenhardt et al., 2023; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2024; Volkow & Blanco, 2023).

Illicit drug trafficking has evolved alongside technological advances, globalization, and increased social mobility. Drug trafficking networks utilize various media, including digital platforms and social media, thereby expanding access to illicit substances (European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2024; Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024). This situation has made drug eradication efforts increasingly complex and requires the involvement of various sectors, such as health, education, law enforcement, social institutions, religious leaders, families, and communities (National Narcotics Agency, 2024; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021).

For decades, drug control strategies in many countries have focused on a repressive approach through law enforcement. This approach plays a crucial role in suppressing the production, distribution, and illicit trafficking of drugs (Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024). However, numerous studies have shown that a repressive approach alone has not been able to sustainably reduce drug abuse rates (Room & Rehm, 2022). Drug users who become dependent often require health care and rehabilitation, not just criminal sanctions (McLellan et al., 2000; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

A public health approach positions drug abuse as a problem influenced by biological, psychological, social, economic, and environmental factors (Volkow & Blanco, 2023; World Health Organization, 2023). Therefore, promotive and preventive efforts are essential components in reducing risk factors before someone begins using drugs. Health education, increasing literacy about the dangers of drugs, strengthening family resilience, developing life skills, and community empowerment are proven strategies to increase protective factors against substance abuse (Single et al., 2021; Sloboda & Petras, 2020; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021; World Health Organization, 2022).

A humane approach through medical rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, psychosocial counseling, and social reintegration is increasingly gaining attention in drug prevention policies. This approach aims to help individuals experiencing addiction recover,





return to social functioning, and reduce the risk of relapse (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020; World Health Organization, 2023). The integration of promotive, preventive, repressive, and rehabilitative strategies is believed to be more effective than implementing any single approach in isolation (Hawk et al., 2022; Room & Rehm, 2022).

Based on this background, this article aims to examine various promotive and preventive methods in combating the spread and abuse of drugs, while analyzing the role of repressive and humane approaches in supporting comprehensive and sustainable drug control efforts..

2. Research Methods

This article employed a narrative literature review method, which aims to identify, collect, analyze, and synthesize relevant research findings concerning promotive, preventive, repressive, rehabilitative, and humane approaches to addressing drug abuse. The literature was obtained through searches of scientific databases, including PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and the Garuda Portal. The search strategy used keywords such as *drug abuse prevention*, *drug rehabilitation*, *harm reduction*, *health promotion*, *drug policy*, *substance use disorder*, *drugs*, and *drug prevention*. The keywords were combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR to identify relevant literature.

Studies were selected based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria comprised research articles, literature reviews, or scientific guidelines published between 2020 and 2025, written in Indonesian or English, discussing promotive, preventive, repressive, rehabilitative, or *harm reduction strategies* related to drug abuse, and available in full-text form. The exclusion criteria included articles that had not undergone the *peer-review process*, publications that did not directly address drug abuse, and articles with incomplete or inaccessible data.

The retrieved literature was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. Each article was categorized according to the primary themes of promotive, preventive, repressive, rehabilitative, and human rights-based approaches. A narrative synthesis was subsequently conducted to identify similarities and differences among the findings and to examine their implications for drug abuse prevention and management efforts.

3. Results And Discussion

a. Result

1. Literature Review Results

A literature search using PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and the Garuda Portal yielded several relevant articles on drug abuse prevention strategies. After a selection process based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, eligible articles were analyzed thematically. The synthesis of these findings suggests that the most effective approach to suppressing drug abuse is a combination of promotive, preventive, repressive, rehabilitative, and community





empowerment strategies (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021; World Health Organization, 2023; Room & Rehm, 2022). Approaches that focus solely on law enforcement without public health interventions tend to produce less sustainable results (Room & Rehm, 2022; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

a) Promotive Strategies in Drug Abuse Prevention

Promotional strategies are efforts to increase the knowledge, awareness, and skills of individuals and communities to protect themselves from drug abuse. Health promotion aims to foster healthy behaviors through increased health literacy, strengthening protective factors, and empowering communities (World Health Organization, 2022; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021).

Various studies have shown that a lack of knowledge about the dangers of drugs is a factor that increases the risk of substance abuse. Individuals who don't understand the physical, psychological, social, and legal impacts of drug use tend to have a low risk perception, making them more susceptible to environmental influences (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2024; Single et al., 2021).

Health promotion can be conducted through various media, including outreach, seminars, public campaigns, social media, educational videos, podcasts, and digital apps. Delivering engaging, evidence-based information tailored to the target audience has been shown to increase understanding and change attitudes toward drug abuse (Pannyiwi & Ali, 2026; Mukriani et al., 2024; World Health Organization, 2022).

The promotive approach also focuses on developing life skills. Skills such as decision-making, stress management, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and the ability to resist drug use are important protective factors. Individuals with these skills are better able to cope with social pressures without resorting to addictive substances as an escape mechanism (Sloboda & Petras, 2020; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021).

b) The Role of the Family in Promotional Efforts

The family is the primary environment that shapes a person's behavior. Harmonious family relationships, open communication, and parental supervision play a major role in preventing drug abuse (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021; Sloboda & Petras, 2020).





Literature shows that adolescents who receive emotional support from their families are at lower risk of trying drugs than those who grow up in families with high conflict, lack of supervision, or poor communication. Therefore, family education programs are an effective promotional strategy (Single et al., 2021; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021).

Parents also need to be educated about the early signs of drug abuse, effective communication techniques with children, and how to build relationships that support psychosocial development. In this way, the family can serve as an early detection system and a primary source of support for at-risk family members (World Health Organization, 2023; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020)..

c) Preventive Strategies in Preventing Drug Abuse

Preventive efforts aim to prevent individuals from starting drug use or halt the progression from occasional use to dependence. This strategy involves identifying risk factors, strengthening protective factors, and early intervention (Sloboda & Petras, 2020; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021).

School-based prevention programs are one of the most widely researched forms of preventive intervention. Education about the dangers of drugs integrated into the curriculum, life skills training, peer counseling, and positive extracurricular activities have been shown to reduce the intention and behavior of trying drugs (Single et al., 2021; Pannyiwi & Ali, 2026; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021).

The community environment also plays a crucial role. The formation of youth groups, sports activities, religious organizations, and social activities provide productive alternatives, thereby reducing the likelihood of involvement in drug abuse (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021; World Health Organization, 2022).

Prevention also involves early screening of individuals with high-risk factors, such as a history of mental health disorders, domestic violence, school dropout, or a family history of substance abuse. Early intervention allows for counseling and psychosocial support before addiction develops (World Health Organization, 2023; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020; Volkow & Blanco, 2023)..

d) Repressive Approach in Controlling Drug Distribution

A repressive approach is a law enforcement effort against the production, distribution, trade, and illicit trafficking of narcotics. Law enforcement aims





to disrupt criminal networks, reduce drug availability, and deter perpetrators (National Narcotics Agency, 2024; Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024).

Literature reviews show that repressive measures are effective when focused on syndicates, producers, dealers, and distributors who profit from the illegal trade. Action against drug trafficking networks requires cross-sectoral collaboration, including law enforcement, customs, and correctional institutions, as well as international cooperation (European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2024; Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021).

A repressive approach to drug users experiencing dependence requires consideration of health aspects. Dependence is a medical condition that requires comprehensive treatment. Therefore, many countries have begun implementing policies that prioritize rehabilitation for users over solely criminal punishment, especially for users not involved in drug trafficking networks (McLellan et al., 2000; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020; World Health Organization, 2023)..

e) Humane Approach through Rehabilitation

A humane approach positions drug abuse as a health problem requiring medical, psychological, and social intervention. Rehabilitation aims to help individuals stop drug use, restore physical and mental function, and restore their ability to function in society (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020; World Health Organization, 2023).

Medical rehabilitation includes assessment, detoxification if necessary, pharmacological therapy as indicated, and management of co-existing health problems. Once the patient's medical condition is stable, social rehabilitation is provided through individual counseling, group therapy, family therapy, job skills training, education, and social support (McLellan et al., 2000; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

Rehabilitative approaches also aim to reduce the risk of relapse . Post-rehabilitation programs, family support, peer groups, and access to employment and education are important factors in maintaining long-term recovery (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020; World Health Organization, 2023)..

f) Harm Reduction as a Public Health Approach

The harm reduction approach aims to reduce the negative impacts of drug use without neglecting the ultimate goal of cessation. This strategy is





widely applied to groups of users who are unable to quit completely and are at risk of developing health complications (Hawk et al., 2022; World Health Organization, 2023).

Harm reduction programs can include education on infectious disease prevention, counseling, accessible health services, opioid substitution therapy as indicated, and referrals to rehabilitation services. This approach has been shown to help reduce HIV transmission, viral hepatitis, overdoses, and deaths in certain user populations (Hawk et al., 2022; World Health Organization, 2022).

The implementation of harm reduction needs to be adjusted to national policies and carried out in an integrated manner with rehabilitation and primary prevention programs so that public health goals can be achieved (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021; World Health Organization, 2023).

g) Cross-Sector Collaboration

Combating drug abuse requires collaboration between the government, health workers, educational institutions, law enforcement officers, community organizations, religious leaders, the mass media, and the community (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021; World Health Organization, 2023).

The health sector plays a role in health promotion, early detection, rehabilitation, and monitoring the health status of users. Educational institutions are responsible for creating learning environments that support healthy, drug-free behaviors. Law enforcement officials focus on eradicating illicit drug trafficking networks, while community organizations support community empowerment and social reintegration (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020, 2021; World Health Organization, 2022, 2023).

Integrated collaboration enables more efficient use of resources, increases the coverage of prevention programs, and strengthens the sustainability of interventions (Single et al., 2021; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021)..

h) Synthesis of Discussion

The study's findings indicate that no single approach can effectively address the problem of drug abuse. Promotive approaches increase public knowledge and awareness, preventive approaches reduce risk factors, repressive approaches suppress illicit drug trafficking, and humane approaches through rehabilitation support the recovery of individuals experiencing dependence.





The integration of these four approaches results in a more comprehensive and sustainable strategy. Drug prevention efforts should not focus solely on punishment, but also on health protection, rehabilitation, and individual empowerment so they can return to optimal social functioning. This way, the goals of public health development and improving quality of life can be achieved more effectively.

b. Conclusion

The abuse of narcotics, psychotropic drugs, and other addictive substances (NAPZA) is a multidimensional problem that impacts health, social life, the economy, security, and human resource development. The complexity of this problem demonstrates that addressing it cannot be achieved through a single approach but requires a comprehensive, sustainable strategy involving various stakeholders.

The literature review shows that promotional strategies play a crucial role in increasing public knowledge, awareness, and literacy regarding the dangers of drug abuse. Health education, public campaigns, community empowerment, strengthening family resilience, and developing life skills *have* been shown to increase protective factors, enabling individuals to resist drug abuse.

Preventive strategies are crucial in preventing someone from starting to use drugs. School-based prevention programs, early detection of at-risk groups, fostering healthy environments, counseling, and family and community involvement have been proven to reduce the risk factors for drug abuse. Continuous primary prevention is considered more effective than treatment after dependence has developed.

repressive approach still plays a strategic role in breaking the chain of drug production, distribution, and illicit trafficking. Strict law enforcement against dealers, producers, and distribution networks is a crucial step in reducing drug availability in the community. However, implementing a repressive approach for drug users experiencing dependence requires consideration of health and rehabilitation aspects to avoid hindering the recovery process.

Humane approach through medical rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, psychological counseling, *harm reduction* , and social reintegration provides drug users with a greater opportunity to recover and return to optimal social functioning. This approach focuses not only on stopping drug use but also on improving quality of life, preventing relapse, and restoring individual relationships with family and community.

Based on the overall results of the study, it can be concluded that the integration of promotive, preventive, repressive, and humane strategies is the most effective approach in combating the spread and abuse of drugs . Synergy between the government, health





workers, educational institutions, law enforcement officials, community organizations, families, and the wider community is key to success in creating a healthy, safe, and drug-free environment.

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