

# **Harm Reduction strategy in Addiction treatment**

## **Concepts and Practice**

A review

Submitted for partial fulfillment of the master degree in

Neuropsychiatry

By

***Ahmed Mahmoud Sultan***

M.B.B.CH Ain Shams University

Under Supervision of

***Prof. Dr. Mohammed Hamed Ghanem***

Professor of Neuropsychiatry

Faculty of Medicine

Ain Shams University

***Prof. Dr. Nahla El-Sayed Nagi***

Ass. Prof. of Neuropsychiatry

Faculty of Medicine

Ain Shams University

***Dr. Abeer Mahmoud Ahmed***

Lecturer of Neuropsychiatry

Faculty of Medicine

Ain Shams University

Ain Shams University

2006

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ever since I started this work I felt I was surrounded by a non-exhaustible source of caring, understanding & supporting guidance. It was a great pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to all those who make this work possible and I hope this would be considered as a personal “Thank you” to each individually

I wish to express my thanks and profound gratitude to Professor ***Mohammed Ghanem*** professor of Psychiatry at Ain Shams University, to whom I am deeply indebted for all the inspiring guidance, valuable supervision and help. And for his for through and objective directions ever since I started to choose the topic and plan for it, thanks are also due to him for providing me with the most up to date references related to my topic. Also I am very grateful for him for his teaching me the assets of precision, clarity and simplicity.

I am eternally grateful to ***Prof. Dr. Nahla El-Sayed Nagi*** Ass. Prof. of Neuropsychiatry at Ain Shams University for her scrutiny, valuable comments &

suggestions. And her deep interest in the work. She has generously provided me with continuous assistance and advice all through the work. Her cooperation and meticulous revision were tremendous.

My sincere appreciation to ***Dr. Abeer Mahmoud***  
Lecturer in Neuropsychiatry at Faculty of Medicine Ain Shams University for her kind help, encouragement, great support and valuable time she devoted generously throughout the whole work.

I wish to express particular gratitude to my wife and colleague Dr Azza Shoheib who has provided me great support & helpful assistance.

Lastly, I would like to extend my thanks to all my colleagues & family members especially my dear mother.

## **Table of contents:**

Introduction	7
Aim of the work	11
Chapter I: Definition of Harm Reduction	13
Chapter II: Strategies of Harm Reduction	41
Chapter III: Applications in other countries	96
Chapter IV: Drug Abuse and applicability of harm reduction in Egypt	125
Discussion	159
Summary	170
Recommendations	186
References	190

## **List of tables & figures:**

Fig. 1: Pillars of Harm-reduction strategies	43
Tab. 1: Public Health Services Offered By Some SEPs	47
Fig. 2: Compare dangers of popular drugs	89
Fig. 3: Triangular clinics	105
Tab. 2: Comparing Important Drug and Violence Indicators between USA & Netherlands	119
Fig. 4 prevalence of smoking in Egypt	130
Fig. 5: drug abuse profile	137
Fig.6: ever used drugs	138
Tab.3: route of intake	139
Tab.4: clinical variant of abuse	140
Tab.5: mental health team	142
Tab.6: Statistics of services provided by surveyed facilities	144
Tab. 7: Centers for management of substance abuse (MOHP)	145

# INTRODUCTION



All over the world as well as in Egypt, alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse place an enormous burden on the health care systems. The problem of addiction represents a contemporary worldwide challenging problem. With different etiology and motives all countries do suffer from the problem regardless of their state of development. (*El-Rakhawy et al., 1996*)

Among treatment strategies in addiction, harm reduction has emerged in the last two decades. A primary catalyst for this surge of interest in harm reduction has been the emergence of AIDS, hepatitis C, hepatitis B and drug resistant tuberculosis linked to drug use through sharing of injection equipment. Many countries now take the perspective that the dangers of the spread of AIDS among drug users and from drug users into the general population pose a greater threat to health than the dangers of drug use itself. (*Garfein et al., 1996*)

Harm Reduction is a very broad term. Virtually all drug policies and programs including criminalization of users and abstinence oriented programs have a goal of harm reduction but harm reduction as a specific strategy has a clear definition: "Harm Reduction can be illustrated as an attempt to reduce the adverse health, social, and economic

consequences of drug use without necessarily reducing the drug use.” (*Ryder, et al., 2001*)

Also it can be defined as: "A set of practical strategies that reduce the negative consequences of drug use incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use to abstinence. Harm reduction strategies meet drug users "where they are at," addressing conditions of use along with the use itself". (*Single et al., 1996*)

There are many examples of harm reduction programs and strategies which include syringe exchange and availability, methadone programs, drug education, sex education, outreach programs, law enforcement policies, and establishment of tolerance areas and even prescribing of drugs. These strategies place first priority on reducing the negative consequences of drug use for the individual, the community and society.

Though harm reduction focuses on reducing the adverse consequences among persons who cannot be expected to cease their use of drugs at the present time, but it can be compatible with an eventual goal of abstention. (*Single et al., 1996*) (*Zickler, 2002*)

This approach has been the focus of both heightened interest and considerable controversy over recent years. While more conventional approaches increasingly have appeared ineffective, expensive and counterproductive over the last decade, harm reduction has become a subject of growing discussion and debate within the addictions community and, increasingly, by the media and the general public (*Nadelmann, 1989*)( *Relely, 1996*).

**Aim of the work**

This study aims to present in a critical appraisal the literature concerning harm reduction in addiction treatment

This literature will be discussed in an attempt to make:

- 1- Definition of harm reduction concept.
- 2- Applications of harm reduction in different societies.
- 3- Strategies of harm reduction.
- 4- Comparing results of harm reduction with other programs in treatment of addiction.
- 5- Debate around the issue.
- 6- Application of harm reduction strategies in Egypt regarding religious and cultural conflicts.

# CHAPTER 11

## Definition of Harm Reduction

*Total drug abstinence is not possible, it is even doubtful that it is desirable. Any national policy which has as its goal the abolition of drug use is doomed to failure even before it has begun ... If drug abstinence is not an option, then the national task is to determine the conditions under which drugs are used, and to devise realistic policies relating to their supply, to the extent of the demand for them, and towards reducing their adverse effects. (Brown et al. 1996)*