

ILLICIT DRUG DEPENDENCE

Mental Disorders and Illicit Drug Use Expert Group
Global Burden of Disease

OFFICIAL CASE DEFINITIONS

Table of Contents

Overview: Substance dependence	2
Overview: Case definition	2
1. Amphetamine-type stimulant dependence	3
Case definition	3
2. Cannabis dependence	4
Case definition	4
3. Cocaine dependence	5
Case definition	5
4. Heroin and other opioid dependence	6
Case definition	6

Overview: Substance dependence

A condition that develops after repeated use of a substance, characterised by the presence of at least three of the following criteria at some time during the previous year:

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Discontinuation of important social activities and other pleasurable events and/or failure to meet occupational obligations
- Increased dosage and/or duration of use
- Significant amount of time spent obtaining, using or recovering from the substance
- Persistent use despite significant associated problems
- Compulsion to take the substance*
- Desire to cut down use, or unsuccessful attempts to cut down**

*DSM-IV only

**ICD-10 only

The above criteria based are on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV) and the International Classification of Diseases, tenth revision (ICD-10).

Overview: Case definition

A person finds it difficult to control his or her substance use and will need increasing amounts of the drug over a period of weeks or months to achieve the same high. Unpleasant withdrawal symptoms may be experienced when the effect of the substance wears off. A dependent person will typically spend a large amount time obtaining, taking and recovering from using the substance. Obligations of daily life will be neglected; relationships with family and friends may break down and work performance may suffer; he or she may get in trouble with the law and physical and emotional well being may also deteriorate. There is a persistent desire to use the substance despite these adverse effects even when the person may wish to reduce his or her substance use. The person may be able to stop using for periods of time but a return to substance use is common.

Dependence is experienced with slight differences across drug types; therefore, **case definitions of specific types of substance dependence to be included in the *Global Burden of Disease* study are presented below.**

1. Amphetamine-type stimulant dependence

Case definition

Cases meet DSM-IV (304.40) or ICD-10 (F15.2) criteria for amphetamine dependence, excluding cases in remission.

Substance dependence

Presence of at least three of the following criteria at some time during the previous year:

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Discontinuation of important social activities and other pleasurable events and/or failure to meet occupational obligations
- Increased dosage and/or duration of use
- Significant amount of time spent obtaining, using or recovering from the substance
- Persistent use despite significant associated problems
- Compulsion to take the substance*
- Desire to cut down use, or unsuccessful attempts to cut down**

*ICD-10 only
**DSM-IV only

Amphetamine-type stimulant dependence (specifically)

- Amphetamine psychosis may occur.
- Use is typically cyclical with periods of heavy use (binges) alternating with periods of no use (crash period).
- Irritability and depression may be experienced when use is discontinued.
- Periods of abstinence may occur, but are usually followed by relapse.

2. Cannabis dependence

Case definition

Cases meet DSM-IV (304.30) or ICD-10 (F12.2) criteria for cannabis dependence, excluding cases in remission.

Substance dependence

Presence of at least three of the following criteria at some time during the previous year:

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Discontinuation of important social activities and other pleasurable events and/or failure to meet occupational obligations
- Increased dosage and/or duration of use
- Significant amount of time spent obtaining, using or recovering from the substance
- Persistent use despite significant associated problems
- Compulsion to take the substance*
- Desire to cut down use, or unsuccessful attempts to cut down**

*ICD-10 only

**DSM-IV only

Cannabis dependence (specifically)

- Use patterns develop to continued use throughout the day
- Withdrawal from cannabis, when experienced, can include anxiety, irritability, restlessness, weight change and insomnia.

3. Cocaine dependence

Case definition

Cases meet DSM-IV (304.20) or ICD-10 (F14.2) criteria for cocaine dependence, excluding cases in remission.

Substance dependence

Presence of at least three of the following criteria at some time during the previous year:

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Discontinuation of important social activities and other pleasurable events and/or failure to meet occupational obligations
- Increased dosage and/or duration of use
- Significant amount of time spent obtaining, using or recovering from the substance
- Persistent use despite significant associated problems
- Compulsion to take the substance*
- Desire to cut down use, or unsuccessful attempts to cut down**

*ICD-10 only
**DSM-IV only

Cocaine dependence (specifically)

- Periods of abstinence may occur, but are commonly followed by relapse.
- Aggressive behaviour, anxiety, paranoid ideation, depression and weight loss may occur.
- Binges take place, followed by a withdrawal syndrome. First comes “the crash”, when people are exhausted, depressed, sleepy, and experience minimal craving. This is followed by a second phase, lasting from days to weeks, characterised by fluctuating mood and energy levels, craving, disturbed sleep, and poor concentration. It is a time when there is a high risk of relapse. The third phase is extinction, or chronic withdrawal, characterised by cravings, fluctuating mood and energy levels, and sleep disturbance.

4. Heroin and other opioid dependence

Case definition

Cases meet DSM-IV (304.00) or ICD-10 (F11.2) criteria for opioid dependence, excluding cases in remission.

Substance dependence

Presence of at least three of the following criteria at some time during the previous year:

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Discontinuation of important social activities and other pleasurable events and/or failure to meet occupational obligations
- Increased dosage and/or duration of use
- Significant amount of time spent obtaining, using or recovering from the substance
- Persistent use despite significant associated problems
- Compulsion to take the substance*
- Desire to cut down use, or unsuccessful attempts to cut down**

*ICD-10 only

**DSM-IV only

Opioid dependence (specifically)

- Craving, and drug seeking and drug use become central preoccupations.
- Regular daily patterns of opioid use.
- High tolerance with rapid withdrawal.
- Withdrawal experienced as feeling sick, tired, agitated, experience cramps and nausea, and the desire to take more opioids can be perceived as overwhelming.