

# Drug Trafficking - A Contemporary Reality

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**ABSTRACT:** Drug trafficking is a global phenomenon. For some, it is a lifestyle, while for law enforcement, it is a constant struggle. This article is another step towards awareness and a reflection of the reality that surrounds us daily. The author did not set out to criticize but set out to understand. Still, the magnitude of this phenomenon is constantly evolving, and understanding could be easier in tandem with the effects of awareness. Thus, the author will talk about some characteristics of drugs and methods of hiding and manufacturing drugs.

**KEYWORDS:** drugs, masking, concealment, manufacture, distribution

## Introduction

Since ancient times, plants, with all their attributes have been used to obtain a therapeutic effect and aphrodisiac effects proven in rituals. Due to changes in chemical structure, some plants tend to overcome the harmless barrier of the effects they produce, thus becoming very strong. The destination pursued by the chemical modification of these plants is found in what we call drugs today. The migration of "magical substances" occurred when the distance between the continents could be covered in a shorter time, and people who tasted these liqueurs were ecstatic about the conditions induced by them. This is how drug trafficking developed on a global scale, especially in the so-called civilized areas. Through the evolution of science and technology, the activity of drug trafficking has been perfected, becoming a planetary phenomenon, and the mafia has managed to anchor its structures in what we can call organized crime (Stancu 2008, 625-627) Although each state has implemented measures to detect, prevent and combat drug trafficking, the results have not been as expected. Thus, things deviated from normal and good functioning, creating serious problems for structures such as the police and other specialized bodies.

According to the antiquity of the attestations regarding narcotics, they are mentioned in the tablets of the Sumerians from Mesopotamia dating from about 7000 years ago. They targeted the poppy, from which opium and opium derivatives are obtained.

Narcotics have legal and pharmacological meaning. From a legal point of view, a narcotic is considered a drug when its capabilities in terms of abuse and addiction are highlighted. It is used in national and international drug control legislation. Unlike narcotics, the drug is a substance used in therapy, following medical indications, or substances included in the category of drugs, which misused, can induce a state of dependence - physical or mental - can cause irreversible disorders on the central nervous system, sensory perception and human behavior.

Withdrawal occurs 8-12 hours after the last dose of the drug and is manifested by tearing, rhinorrhea, yawning, agitation, sweating, insomnia, chicken skin, temperature, vomiting, abdominal pain, tachycardia, hypertension, intense localized pain muscular and skeletal system, which under certain conditions can lead to the death of the consumer.

## Methods of concealing narcotics for trafficking

- Industrial manufacturing of means of drug concealment - consists in replacing food products with narcotics by using cans, labels, etc.;
- Artisanal production of concealers - is achieved by purchasing basic materials such as boxes, lids, labels. These are meant to hide the drugs to be transported:
  - Replacement of the finished product in cans:
    - Normal opening of the box;

- Opening the box by making holes in its side walls, after removing the label;
- Cross-cutting the box and making a real lid;
- Soaking tissues with narcotics for the transport of cocaine by dissolving it in pure alcohol;
- Use of the postal system:
  - Hiding narcotics in letters (Stancu 2008, 636-638);
  - Hiding narcotics in packages (Buzatu 2012, 282);
- Use of couriers - they use different methods such as swallowing capsules, introduction into all anatomical cavities in both men and women, but also by using corpses.

### **Ways to hide drugs in traffic**

Choosing a place to hide drugs is a real challenge for both the authorities and smugglers. Depending on the amount of narcotics to be trafficked, the means of transport used as well as the requirement of controls on the route taken by the trafficker, smugglers can choose a unique place for drug transport.

#### ***Hiding places in means of transport***

- Means of transport: they are most commonly used because they can hide and transport up to 100 kg of drugs without attracting the attention of the authorities. Easily maneuverable places are most often used such as upholstery, wheel covers, glovebox, headlights, and other places specific to the inventiveness of each individual trafficker.
- Railway wagons: they are used due to the multiple possibilities of concealment, but also due to the superficial control performed by the customs bodies at the border crossing;
- In airplanes: the main mode is the transport of drugs in hand luggage but also in hold baggage;
- On ships: in wind turbines, propellers, empty fuel tanks, crates, cabinets, pipes, etc. (*Idem*)

#### ***Hiding places in clothing***

As mentioned above, traffickers can become very inventive when they get or do not benefit from the drug transport activity. They can also carry drugs due to their physical or moral constraints, but especially those of family members. Thus the drugs can be hidden in the lapel of the coat, inside the tie, pockets, lining, hats, fake heels, etc. (Buzatu 2012, 284). They can also be transported in corsets, bras, hairstyles, briefs, prostheses, in bags attached to the abdomen in the case of women simulating pregnancy but also in the anatomical cavities in both women and men (Romanian Journal of Forensic 2010, 532). In household and personal items: double-bottomed suitcases, picture frames, support sticks, umbrellas, pens, bags, glasses cases, dolls, wax or paraffin candles, sprays, lipsticks, perfume bottles, etc., in food, beverages, cigarettes;

#### ***Masking odors specific to narcotics***

In order to hinder the activity of tracking dogs specialized in drug detection, traffickers adopt various methods, among which:

- Packing in special cartons or tin canisters, in which dried fish with a pungent odor and balls against moths were introduced (Buzatu 2013, 170);
- Introducing garlic or onion essences in packages (Buzatu 2012, 283);
- Packaging the drugs in airtight containers that do not allow the odor to be released unless these boxes have been handled by persons carrying the drug packaged on their hands.

### **Illicit manufacture, transport and distribution of drugs**

The main purpose of the manufacture of certain categories of drugs is the medical use (codeine, diazepam). Although the trajectory of these substances is clearly established, abuse and illicit trafficking can often occur. Both synthetic and synthetic drugs with the exception of marijuana

require certain precursors in their manufacture. The manufacture of these substances takes place mainly clandestinely, in various isolated and unused spaces, with the use of cheap and improvised equipment. In order not to be detected by the police, the traffickers change the location of the laboratories quite often. A main cause would be the strong smell of acetone or other chemicals used in the manufacture of morphine or heroin, which betrays the existence of the laboratory. The distribution of drugs differs depending on the area. In some countries the goods are displayed on the side of the street or in taverns. In South America, bags of coca leaves are taken to the streets, and in Southeast Asia, opium is sold openly ([www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com), 29.05.2021).

From these considerations, it appears that the distribution of drugs is not exactly secret. The opium is packed in cloth bags in the form of a cake and a recognition mark is applied. The operating systems used by drug traffickers represent an increasing degree of inventiveness. Thus, the places of hiding in traffic but also in clothing vary from one network to another. Those who transport drugs, also called carriers, endanger their lives by transporting these substances through the anatomical cavities where they are introduced. Fatality can occur both at the time of manufacture because this process takes place in makeshift halls, with cheap and poor-quality equipment, and during or after administration. Overdose is often the cause of immediate death, and infections with various pathogens lead to a delay in death, which will certainly set in (Romanian Journal of Forensic 2010, 532).

Globally, drug trafficking offenses are not limited to consumers. First of all, there must be someone to transport the “goods” and here we meet the carriers. Which either voluntarily, or under the rule of threat or blackmail, they end up risking their own lives to transport these substances. Then someone is needed to take over the “goods” and start distributing them to the population. As can be seen, these types of crimes are not only committed by an active subject. Distributors can choose to become consumers, or treat this business as a simple job. Terribleness, on the other hand, wreaks havoc in schools, with young people more often opting for a “rave party” than going out to the movies.

Numerous indicators of the most commonly used substances suggest that drug availability remains high. Along with developments in the field of production, the proliferation of interceptions of large quantities of cocaine, cannabis resin and more and more heroin transported by sea, often in intermodal containers, raises concerns about the infiltration of organized crime groups into supply chains, on transport routes and in large ports. Cannabis currently plays an important role in drug admissions, but the relationship between cannabis issues and drug market developments is not yet sufficiently understood. We are at a time when the cannabis market is changing, with products containing high THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and a growing availability of new forms of cannabis and commercial products based on cannabis plant extracts. In addition, the resin and the cannabis plant now contain on average about twice as much THC as a decade ago. Together, all this suggests an urgent need for increased surveillance in this area (European Drugs Report 2020, 10, 16).

## Conclusions

Time seems out of place, but the daily hustle and bustle with various activities meant to bring money, we are restricted from spending time with loved ones. Disadvantaged environments, broken families, too much power or too much money, all complete a puzzle of destruction. But what can be done socially to prevent and stop this phenomenon?

We keep hearing about involvement. Indeed, it plays an important role in this process. Implementing programs for this subject in schools, informing students about the consequences, both legal and health, are things that can be better developed and synchronized in relation to the incidence of cases in a particular area. These programs should be compulsory and may be covered by a subject such as legal education. It would be a small step, but with a big impact. The emphasis should be more on the changes that society is witnessing, without being considered a taboo

subject. Promoting various campaigns in the media with the harmful effects of these substances would have a healthier effect than promoting various foods containing thousands of carcinogens.

Narcotics are and will continue to be a global issue. Although the authorities do their best to stop and destroy traffickers' networks, work must be done at the level of information, prevention and rehabilitation, in relation to the case law of each community.

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