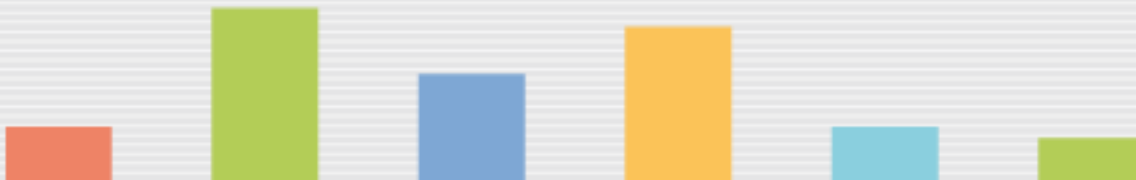




European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on patterns of drug use and harms, drug service provision in the EU



# Trendspotter Studies

2 Waves: April- May; May-June 2020



**Objectives:** Investigate the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic and the associated national response measures in the EU on:

- Drug service provision and help-seeking
- Patterns of drug use, risks and harms

**Methods** Trendspotter: NFP network survey; Online expert surveys, Websurvey with > 10 000 participants; 10+ virtual facilitated groups; > 60 European professionals

# Results: Drug services and help seeking

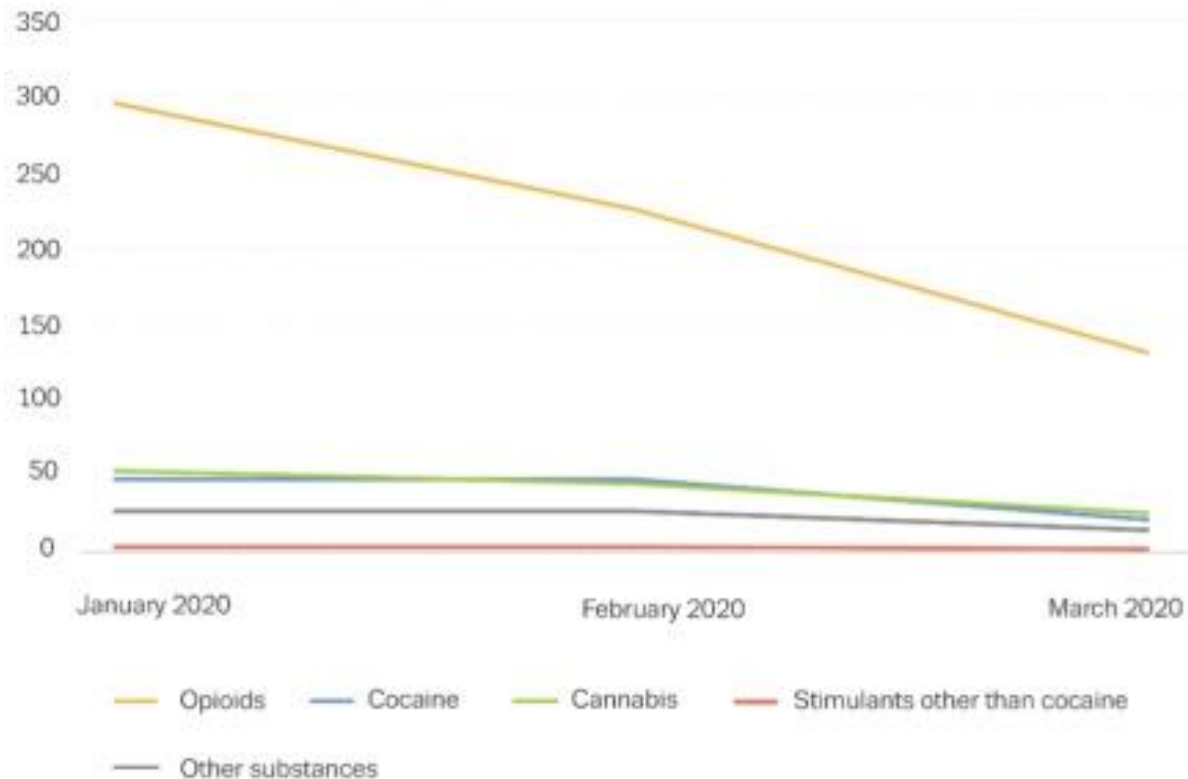
- During the first months of the pandemic - a decline in the availability of European treatment and harm reduction interventions
- Drug services impacted in similar ways to other frontline health services:
  - Some closures, capacity reduction, adaptations
  - All required to implement new hygiene and social distancing measures
  - Activities moving onto mobile or online platforms.
- Two thirds of countries developed guidelines 'COVID and drugs'



# Reduction in treatment demand

FIGURE 7

**Preliminary data on all clients entering treatment by main drug between January and March 2020 in four EU countries**

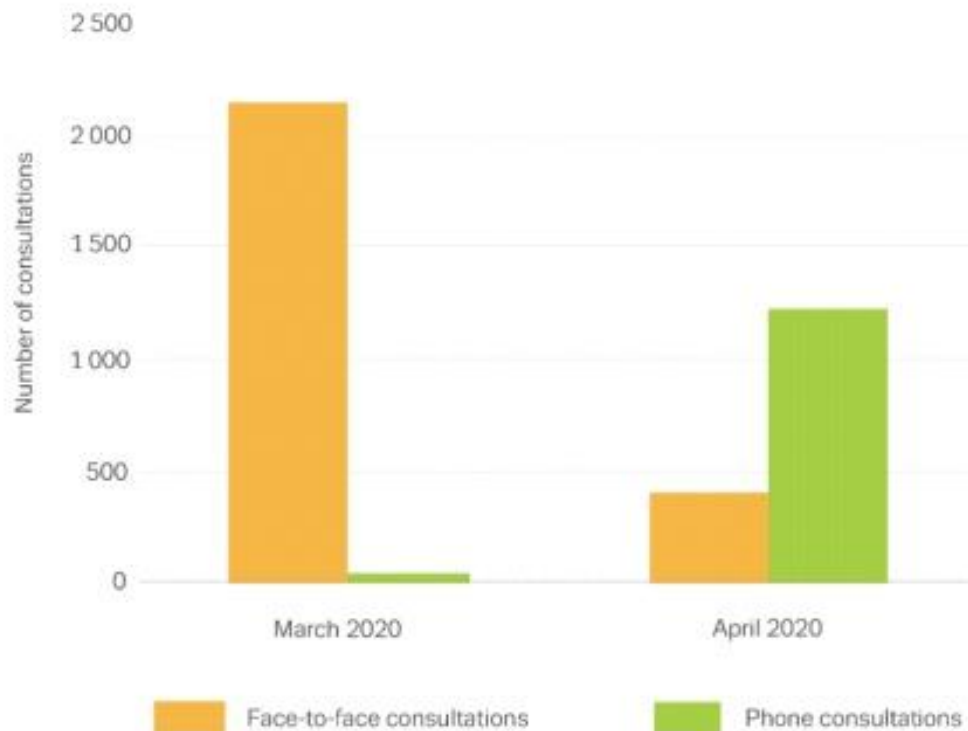


Source: Snapshot Treatment Demand Indicator (TDI), April 2020. Data from Bulgaria, Ireland (sentinel centres, only total number of all clients), Lithuania and Portugal.



# Tele-medicine

**FIGURE 9**  
**Numbers of face-to-face and phone consultations at the Riga Addiction Medicine Centre, Latvia, in March and April 2020**



Source: Inga Landsmane, Riga Addiction Medicine Centre.

# Innovation to ensure treatment continuity

- Extending take-home regulations for OST patients;
- Reduction of supervised intake, urine controls;
- Electronic prescriptions;
- Home delivery of medications;
- OST added to outreach programmes;
- Low threshold OST introduced;
- Novel treatment for stimulant users (methylphenidate, CZ).



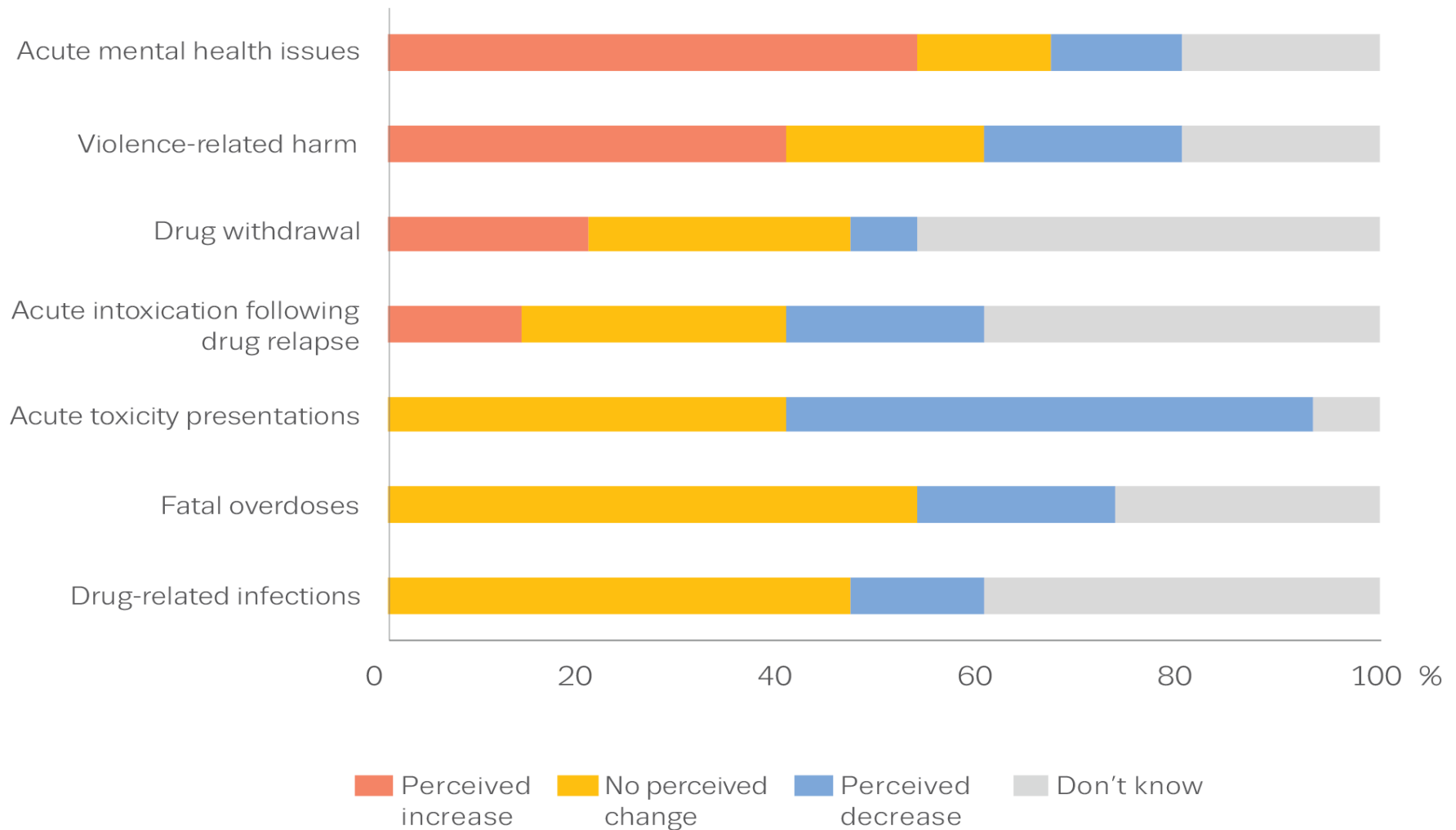
# Changes in drug use patterns

- Levels of drug use: 46% report reduction
- Most significant reductions: MDMA and cocaine
- Cannabis: mostly stable – but occasional users reduce, frequent users increase
- Increase in amphetamine use in some Nordic cities
- Switch to more available (legal) substances alcohol and benzodiazepines



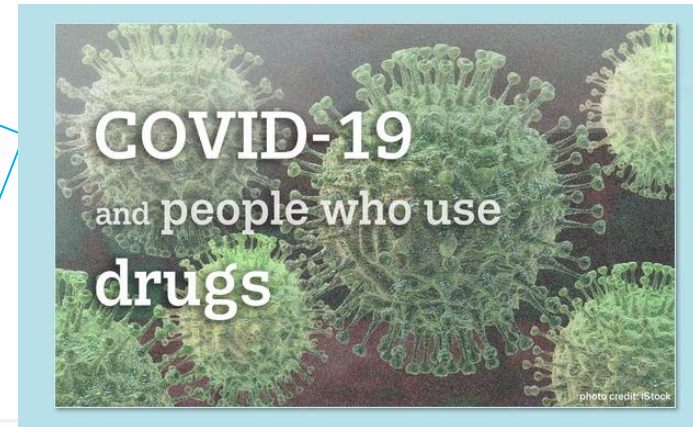
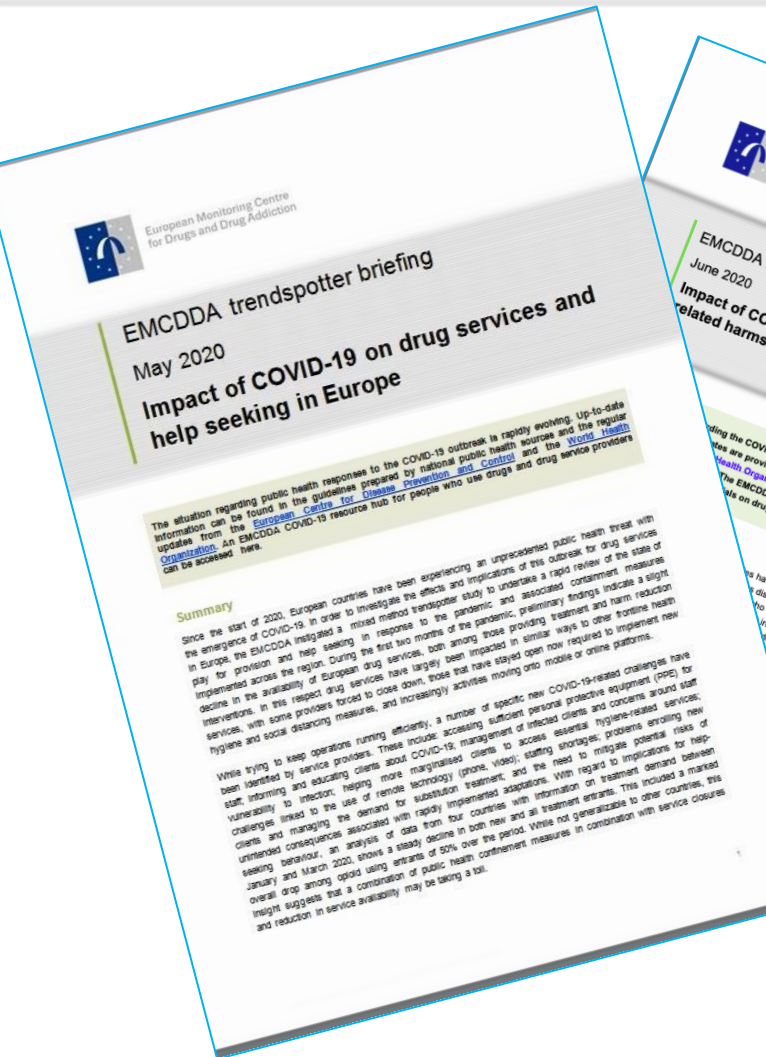
# Perceived impact on drug-related harms

(clinical experts in 15 EURO-DEN hospital emergency sentinel sites)





# More information:



### COVID-19 resources page for people who use drugs (PWUD) and drug service providers

On this page, the EMCDDA has compiled examples of advice being issued to people who use drugs and service providers by some national bodies and different associations, networks and NGOs. This page is being continuously updated. If you discover any out-of-date links or if you know of other links that could be included, please let us know at this address: [COVID19\\_PWUD@emcdda.europa.eu](mailto:COVID19_PWUD@emcdda.europa.eu)

Last updated: 24 April 2020

- Resources for drug service providers
- Resources for PWUD
- Resources for prison services
- Other useful resources
- More information
- Caveat

References: [https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/covid-19\\_en](https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/covid-19_en)