



The role of the EMCDDA in defining concepts of addiction in relation to drugs, alcohol and tobacco since its establishment in 1995

addiction
concepts
EMCDDA
poly-drug use

We explored the role of a European agency, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in defining concepts and terminology around ‘addiction’, in relation to drugs, alcohol and tobacco. The period from the establishment of the EMCDDA in 1995 to 2014 was examined. Drawing on the examination of annual reports, reports on activities, and their glossary, we found an expanding and evolving institution facing an increasingly complex situation. We noted the sheer variety of terms employed and the evolution of new terminology to cope with an increasingly complex substance use culture. Recognition of poly-drug use and the difficulty of maintaining the distinction between licit and illicit substances led to the emergence of new terms including ‘addictive behaviours’ designed to apply across the different substances. Finally, variations in focus and terminology with other international agencies, including the WHO, are revealed reflecting the continuing uncertainty over terminology around addiction.



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Berridge, V., Edman, J., Mold, A., & Taylor, S.: *Addiction through the ages*. Addiction and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe: Reframing Addictions Project (ALICE RAP): [Deliverable 1.1](#)