

International Women's Day 2019 – Why gender matters in drug addiction

Around 37 million women in Europe have used an illicit drug at least once in their lifetime. Some 100 000 enter drug treatment every year and nearly 2 000 die from drug overdose. Meanwhile, over the last decade, the gender gap has been narrowing among young school students who use drugs. Today, to commemorate [International Women's Day](#), the EMCDDA releases a new [motion graphic](#) exploring 'Why gender matters in drug addiction'.

Women represent only a fifth of clients in specialised drug treatment, but their problems are often more complex than for men. They tend to progress faster towards addiction, a phenomenon known as 'telescoping'. They also go through more severe withdrawal symptoms and report higher levels of depression and anxiety. Services for women with drug use problems need to address these unique concerns and be welcoming, non-judgemental, supportive and physically and emotionally safe.

A wide variety of resources on women and drug use in Europe is available today on an EMCDDA topics page: '[Women and gender issues related to drugs](#)'. This includes: publications, data, news and events, as well as reports from the agency's [Document Library](#). Also showcased are tools and resources from the [Best Practice Portal](#) and photos, infographics and videos from the [Media Library](#).

The theme for International Women's Day 2019 is 'Think equal, build smart, innovate for change'. The initiative focuses on innovative ways to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.