

## Health Ministry puts emphasis on substance use disorders

30 July 2020 | News

### Aims to tackle substance abuse and behavioral addiction in the country



Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has released the e-book titled “Standard Treatment Guidelines for the Management of Substance Use Disorders and Behavioural Addictions” that aims to tackle substance abuse and behavioral addiction in the country.

Speaking on Substance Use Disorder as a growing public health problem, especially among youth and adolescents, Ashwini K. Choubey, MoS (HFW) said, “such problems will become more rampant as society adopts modern lifestyle. The Behavioural change also manifests in increased rate of suicides which we have seen during the COVID pandemic.” He commended the Drug Deaddiction Program (DDAP) under the Health Ministry and other stakeholders for implementing such initiatives across throughout the country.

On the importance of addressing challenges to addiction in the times of COVID-19, Dr Harsh Vardhan cautioned that the World Drug Report 2020 “suggests that COVID-19 can have other fallouts just like earlier economic crises have caused – users seeking out cheaper synthetic substances; a shift to more injecting; economic downturn causing the poor and disadvantaged to turn to drug use and suffer its consequences.”

He also elaborated on the “emerging evidence that smoking increases risk for COVID-19 as well as worsens the outcome in people who get infected with the virus. Alcohol intoxication can also increase the risk and the other effects including a reduction of immunity can increase the risk.” Similar effects can be anticipated with other drugs as well, he added.