

Perceptions of the social harms associated with khat use

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This report describes the findings from a study exploring the perceived social harms associated with the use of khat. The study comprised focus groups and interviews with: members of the Somali, Yemeni and Ethiopian communities; members of the wider community; and practitioners including those from health, education and enforcement fields. In addition, a short survey of Drug Action Teams (DATs) was conducted to gauge the availability of treatment service provision for khat users.

The study's key implications are as follows.

- **Khat use was widely found to be socially accepted** and its use was reported by practitioners and respondents from all three target communities to be widespread. However, frequent and heavy use was perceived to have negative consequences for the individual, his/her family and the community and was regarded as unacceptable.
- **There was widespread support for some level of Government intervention** from all groups of participants. Suggestions ranged from regulation of the import, distribution and sale of khat, to an outright ban. Some participants expressed an interest in seeing an increase in the availability of treatment services and support for heavy users of khat.
- **There were found to be few treatment or support services available for khat users.** Only a small handful of DATs had either dedicated services available for khat users or generic services that could be adapted to meet the needs of khat users.
- **There was some support for better quality information and data on khat.** A number of practitioners and community members felt that there was a need for good quality information on the extent of khat use and on the health and social effects of khat use.

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