

A drug is any chemical substance that when consumed causes a change in an organism's physiology, including its psychology, if applicable. Drugs are typically distinguished from food and other substances that provide nutritional support. Consumption of drugs can be via inhalation, injection, smoking, ingestion, absorption via a patch on the skin, suppository, or dissolution under the tongue.

In pharmacology, a drug is a chemical substance, typically of known structure, which, when administered to a living organism, produces a biological effect. A pharmaceutical drug, also called a medication or medicine, is a chemical substance used to treat, cure, prevent, or diagnose a disease or to promote well-being. Traditionally drugs were obtained through extraction from medicinal plants, but more recently also by organic synthesis. Pharmaceutical drugs may be used for a limited duration, or on a regular basis for chronic disorders.

Pharmaceutical drugs are often classified into drug classes groups of related drugs that have similar chemical structures, the same mechanism of action (binding to the same biological target), a related mode of action, and that are used to treat the same disease. The Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical Classification System (ATC), the most widely used drug classification system, assigns drugs a unique ATC code, which is an alphanumeric code that assigns it to specific drug classes within the ATC system. Another major classification system is the Biopharmaceutics Classification System. This classifies drugs according to their solubility and permeability or absorption properties.

Psychoactive drugs are substances that affect the function of the central nervous system, altering perception, mood or consciousness. These drugs are divided into different groups like: stimulants, depressants, antidepressants, anxiolytics, antipsychotics, and hallucinogens. These psychoactive drugs have been proven useful in treating wide range of medical conditions including mental disorders around the world. The most widely used drugs in the world include caffeine, nicotine and alcohol, which are also considered recreational drugs, since they are used for pleasure rather than medicinal purposes. All drugs can have potential side effects.[11] Abuse of several psychoactive drugs can cause addiction and/or physical dependence. Excessive use of stimulants can promote stimulant psychosis. Many recreational drugs are illicit and international treaties

such as the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs exist for the purpose of their prohibition.