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# Where do we go from here? A constitution for drug control

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# 1. The object of drug control is public health

- The minimization of harm caused by pathological drug use
- The optimization of benefits of therapeutic drug use
- Drug use that does not cause harm is of no consequence
- Abstinence is an instrument but not a goal of drug control policy

## 2. The harms caused by drug control regulation must be considered in assessing the harm caused by drugs

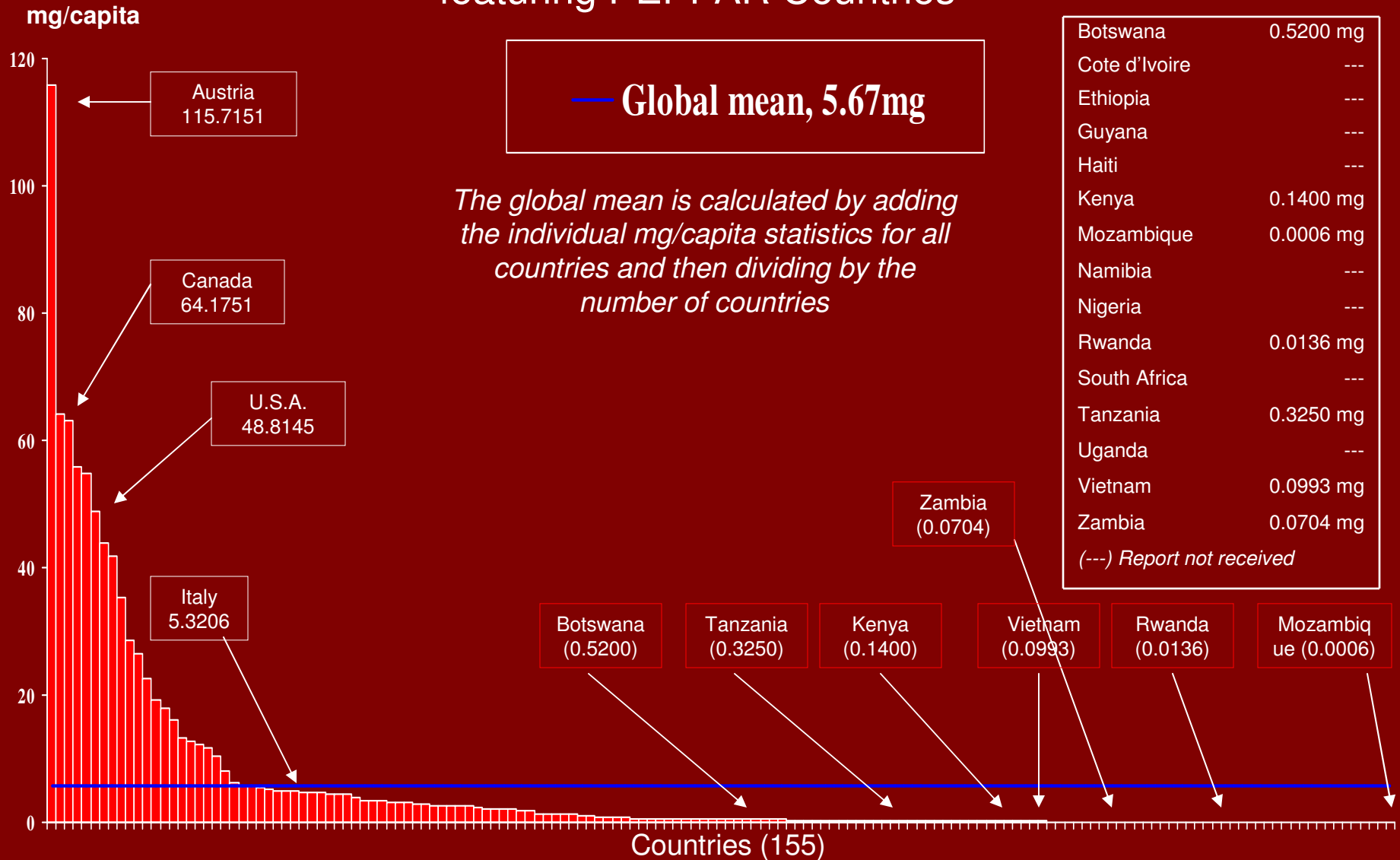
- Drug control policies can and do cause significant harm
- It is the net harm – drug harm + regulatory harm – that measures the efficacy of a drug control strategy

### 3. Regulation of illicit use must be balanced with access to beneficial drugs

- A basic goal of control should be to assure safe access.
- A system that controls drug availability but affords insufficient access is failing

# Morphine Global Consumption, 2004

featuring PEPFAR Countries



Source: International Narcotics Control Board; United Nations Demographic Yearbook

By: Pain & Policy Studies Group, University of Wisconsin/WHO Collaborating Center, 2007

4. Drug control policy must learn from the evidence

## 5. Drug control has only a limited capacity to address problems of which drug use is merely a symptom

- The greater the prevalence of pathological drug use in a population, the greater the likelihood that drug use is itself a symptom of deeper social pathologies and deficits
- Drug control regulation must be integrated into comprehensive responses to social determinants of mental and physical illness.