



Members of the
United Nations
Commission on Narcotic Drugs
58th Session
c/o UNODC
Secretariat of the Governing Bodies
by e-mail: <sgb@unodc.org>

March 9th, 2015

Scheduling Ketamine as a Narcotic Drug (Agenda Item 6, Friday March 13th, 2015)

Honourable Members of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Thank you for this opportunity to present the views of the World Medical Association.

We highly respect your significant work in reducing the impacts of illicit drugs and your efforts to save people from addiction. You will be aware that scheduling of drugs has shown to be a double-sided sword: very often this action results in the restricting of the medically necessary access of patients to their treatment. Scheduling should not have this effect, but in reality it does to the detriment of the patient.

Ketamine is a powerful, easy to use and relatively safe anaesthetic drug allowing its use especially in rural settings and in low-income nations. Scheduling Ketamine would effectively hinder many patients in under-developed countries from receiving necessary, often life-saving surgery. Ketamine has also proven as a highly useful psychiatric drug. Scheduling Ketamine would make it difficult for many patients around the world to receive effective treatment with it.

We are convinced that other measures, like better controlling of the production and distribution lines and foremost introducing (where not existent) and enforcing prescription regulations can do better to achieve the envisaged goal. The World Medical Association is prepared to assist governments to improve their systems of prescription and safeguarding medications.

We urge you not to schedule Ketamine at all. Scheduling, even in class IV will very like result in large numbers of unnecessary suffering. Doing so would increase suffering of patients who would benefit from using it.

Sincerely

Dr. Xavier Deau
President

Dr. Mukesh Haikerwal AO
Chairman of Council