Identification and characterization of substance use and possession in Palestine (West Bank) in the years 2010-2014

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Abstract:
Background:
"Illicit drugs" is the term used to describe drugs which are under international control (and which may or may not have licit medical purposes) but which are produced, trafficked and/or consumed illicitly. The use of these drugs has seen an upswing during the last years in the West Bank especially in cities close to the Israeli borders. Political, social, economical, and demographic factors may play roles in the increasing use of illicit drugs in the West Bank. These factors and the ascending character of this problem have increased the priorities of all who are interested to combat this problem.

Objectives:
The purpose of this study is to characterize and to identify substance in use and determine current patterns of illicit substance use among Palestinians / West Bank. Specific Objectives include 1) To determine current patterns of illicit substance use among Palestinians/ West Bank, 2) To determine the demographic data of substance users, 3) To identify common substances used among Palestinians/ West Bank, 4) To identify geographical distribution of illicit substances used in Palestine / West Bank.

Methods:
In order to achieve the objectives of this study, non-experimental descriptive study had been conducted. All files of all drug users and those who were captured with seized substances in all police departments (anti narcotic departments) from 2010-2014 were analyzed.

Results:
In the years 2010-2014, the total number of all files in the anti narcotic department that were reviewed for this study for both suspected drug users and accused persons with captured material is 5619 (1945 and 3674; respectively) with the greatest number being in the North (67.0% and 43.0%; respectively) especially in Qalqilya followed by Tulkarm. Most of the suspected drug users and accused persons with captured materials were males (~ 99%) in the age group 18-