

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Acknowledgements

Prepared by: Dr Lela Sturua and Ms Darejan (Jana) Javakhishvili

Edited by: Ms Giovanna Campello, Dr Jaime Calderon, Ms Melissa Borlaza, Ms Manana Ghvineria, Ms Natia Saghinadze, Ms Ekaterine Slovinski and Ms Manana Varazashvili

Translated by: Ms Nino Sanikidze

Design and layout by: Mr Giorgi Bagrationi and Ms Valerie Hagger

Supervisors: Ms Ilyana Derilova and Ms Nino Shushania

This publication was made possible owing to the generous support of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), U.S. Embassy – Tbilisi.

Special gratitude goes to Ms Lia Gigauri, Ms Ketevan Grigolia, Ms Nino Tsandishvili, Ms Nino Ormotsadze, Ms Nana Tsulaia, Ms Manana Amonashvili, Ms Tamar Mamsikashvili, Ms Khatuna Mukeria and all students of eighth and ninth grades of the Tbilisi Secondary School no. 64 who were involved in the testing of this publication.

Publisher:

International Organization for Migration, Mission to Georgia
19 Tengviz Abuladze street; 0162 Tbilisi, Georgia

Tel.: +995.32.225 22 16

Fax.: +995.32.225 22 17

E-mail: iombilisi@iom.int

Internet: www.iom.int, www.iom.ge

© 2017 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

The “Life is Better” information, education and communication materials are intended for adolescents aged 13–14 years old and narrate the ill effects and risk factors of psychoactive substances’ abuse. “Life is Better” comprises information on risks resulting from abuse of such psychoactive substances as tobacco, alcohol, injecting drugs, inhalants, bio/ spices, sedatives, ecstasy and marijuana/ cannabis. “Life is Better” aims at raising awareness of adolescents on health-related and social consequences connected with substance abuse and provides them with an opportunity to make informed choices.

LIFE IS BETTER!

when you're not injecting drugs
when you're not high on ecstasy
when you're not inhaling cigarette smoke
when you're not sniffing chemicals
when you don't see it through a cloud of cannabis smoke
when you're not taking sedatives
when you don't see it through the bottom of a glass
when you're not under the influence of “Spice”



Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), U.S. Embassy – Tbilisi

Don't think we are trying to lecture you with this publication. Neither are we teaching you how to live. You have to have your own ideas and make your own choices. What your choices will be is entirely up to you.

BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!

We are just helping; we give you necessary information to make a choice. Nothing more, nothing personal.

MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE!

Without the necessary information, you will never know how a choice you are making today will affect your life in the future. Therefore:

Get information based on scientific evidence and experience.

And one more thing that is important for you to know: there is a drug industry out there that tries to sell narcotic drugs to people and get rich. The drug industry does not care at all that it puts the health and lives of people at serious risk.





Life is better when you're not inhaling cigarette smoke!

Many people around us smoke tobacco. It can be your family members or friends, people who are close to you. It's not good to imitate them thoughtlessly. First, get the information you need.

How many people do you think smoke cigarettes in Georgia?

Guess the percentage of smokers among adult population aged 18 to 64. Mark the right answer below:

100%?... 90%?... 80%?... 70%?... 60%?... 50%?... 40%?... 30%?... 20%?... 10%...

Compare the percentage you marked with objective information based on research:

Nowadays, 30.3 per cent – i.e. almost one third of the Georgian population aged 18 to 64 – consumes some kind of tobacco product (smoking or smokeless).

According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey data, 3.8 per cent of female and 9.9 per cent male Georgian students aged 13 to 15 smoke cigarettes.

How many did you think? More? Less?

Why did you answer more? Or did you answer less?

Now, let's see what the situation in other countries is, for example, in the United States of America.

Figures of tobacco consumption have significantly changed for the last decades in the United States:

In 1965, tobacco was consumed by 42.4 per cent of adult United States population.

By 2001, this indicator has dropped more than 50 per cent and amounted to 23.3 per cent.

By 2016, tobacco consumption among adult population was reduced even further and amounted to 15.1 per cent.

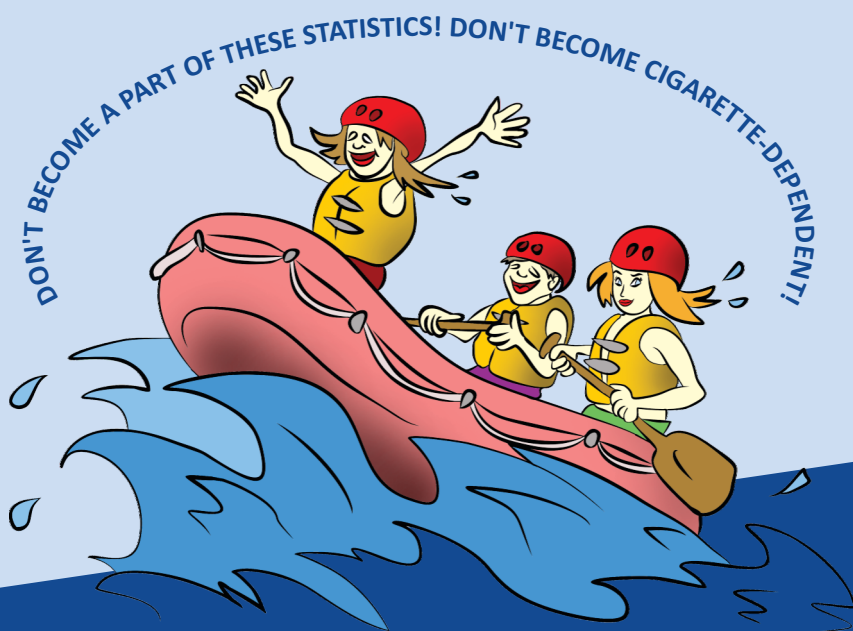
What has happened in the United States that resulted in reducing tobacco use by almost a third from 1965 to 2016?

What did Americans realize that made them reduce smoking in these numbers?

What did they learn that made smoking a very non-prestigious thing in the United States?

Here's what the American population realized:

According to the data of 1 December 2016, tobacco consumption is the leading cause of death in the United States resulting in the death of nearly 480,000 people a year. That means that tobacco use is a cause of one death out of every five. That's statistics!



And here's what is happening in the world:

Approximately 10–11 per cent of fatal outcomes in the world are linked to tobacco use.

Tobacco global epidemic kills almost 6 million people every year, including 1.5 million women; more than 600,000 people out of this number are affected by second-hand smoke. Every six seconds, one person dies in the world because of tobacco use.



International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

**DON'T CONTAMINATE YOUR BODY WITH THESE SUBSTANCES AND
DON'T MAKE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY RICH AT THE EXPENSE OF YOUR LIFE AND HEALTH.
BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!**

Georgian statistics are not any better:

About 49,000 people die each year in Georgia; 11,000 cases of death (20–22%) are caused by tobacco use. In Georgia, 3,000 people die annually due to passive smoking, among them 300 children. This means that one child dies almost every day in Georgia because of second-hand smoke.

**Remember, the tobacco industry
has no interest in your health!**

It is your right to know that:

- Tobacco use causes lung cancer.
- Tobacco use causes cancer in different organs.
- Tobacco use causes chronic obstructive lung diseases (these are chronic inflammatory lung diseases that result in obstruction of the lower respiratory airways).
- Tobacco use causes dysregulation of blood flow.
- Tobacco use causes narrowing of veins that provokes serious diseases of lower extremities.
- Tobacco use becomes the reason of skin porosity, contamination and colour changing.
- Tobacco negatively affects teeth and gums, causing inflammation of the oral mucosa.
- Tobacco use causes sexual dysfunction and impotence.
- Tobacco industry makes a lot of money at the expense of your life and health!

Tobacco contains a range of toxic substances:

- Arsenic (a toxic chemical element that can cause heavy poisoning)
- Acetone (used as a solvent and paint remover)
- Ammonia (an ingredient found in the floor cleaning chemicals)
- Phenol (paint)
- Butane (used as a fuel gas for lighters)
- Naphthalene (used for preventing damage from clothes moth)
- Formalin (used in bio laboratories for preserving tissues and bodies)
- Hydrogen cyanide (an extremely poisonous air)
- Cadmium (part of a car battery)
- Radioactive compounds (ingredients of the nuclear arms).

ALCOHOL

Life is better when you don't see it through the bottom of a glass!

We know that you had your first glass of wine at home. We also know that you think that once you've tasted alcohol, you have grown up and are a fully capable adult. It is not true since:

Taking alcohol before full age impedes the normal processes of growth and development of human body. Again, we are not trying to lecture you; please, get the information first and then decide what is best for you. It's your right to know the following:

On the question what problems they had for the last 12 months because of drinking alcohol, Georgian teenagers have found out that:

- 17 per cent (23% boys and 10% girls) have had their belongings damaged and/or lost.
- 14 per cent (23% boys and 3% girls) have been involved in fight.
- 15 per cent (24% boys and 4% girls) have had problems with police.
- 10 per cent (13% boys and 6% girls) have become a victim of theft.
- 10 per cent (18% boys and 1% girls) harmed themselves.
- 3 per cent (4% boys and 1% girls) had a sexual contact that they regretted afterwards.
- 4 per cent (4% boys and 3% girls) had an accident and/or trauma.

Don't become a part of these statistics!

You also have to know the following:

Alcohol is the most frequent cause of accidents in the world (the figure is even higher in Georgia):

20–48 per cent of death cases in car accidents in European countries are caused by excessive use of alcohol.

An experiment has been carried out in some European countries during which alcohol advertisement was banned; as a result, statistics of car accidents and the respective statistics of death cases have dropped sixteen-fold!

If two glasses of alcohol make you feel good, its excessive use makes you lose control of yourself and on the situation around.

You cannot assess risks adequately; you act impulsively and may do things you will regret afterwards.



BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!



When having more alcohol, a user may lose balance and coordination, his speech becomes unregulated and he starts vomiting.

When increasing the dose further, the human body gets over-frozen or overheated, or falls into deep sleep.

When taking more, a user falls into a coma that may end in death.

The second day after excessive use of alcohol, a person feels unwell that is manifested in headache, abdominal pain or weakness.

Regular and intensive use of alcohol causes strong physical and psychological dependence.

That means that now you will use alcohol not for entertainment or pleasure but to avoid physical or psychological sickness.

Alcohol use causes putting on weight: one glass of beer contains 100 kilocalories; carbonated beverages with low content of alcohol have 146 kilocalories.

Regular and intensive use of alcohol causes harm to liver and heart.

Taking alcohol together with sleeping pills or sedatives increases the risk of fainting, dysfunctional breathing, collapse (collapse is a temporary and unexpected weakening of the heart's function, which is accompanied by a sharp decline in arterial pressure and all functions of the human body), and may even cause death.

Alcohol-induced morbidity comprises up to 12 per cent of overall morbidity rate in European countries.

Cancer, liver cirrhosis and traumas comprise 90 per cent of alcohol-related morbidity.

It's an evidence-based fact that increase of daily use of "pure" alcohol from 10 to 90 grams results in increase of the absolute risk of death from alcohol-related disease by nearly 14 times, and the risk of death due to alcohol-induced traumas by 30 times.

Hence,

Life is better when you don't see it through the bottom of a glass!

Life is better when you don't see it through a cloud of cannabis smoke!

Smoking marijuana may be considered as a romantic thing among your friends.

This is just Public Relations. Or, even better, a marketing move – a smart trick...

This thing is that the narcotic drug industry has a very specific mechanism for marketing cannabis:

It chooses for advertising a healthy, notable young people having a rebellious image.


It chooses to get cannabis into fashionable modern youth festivals and make it an integral part of this subculture.

It tries to sell cannabis as an “environmentally friendly” product.

All those are but marketing tricks; learn to recognize them.

Don't become a victim of narcotic drug industry, have your own opinion about cannabis!



Well, the truth is that: There is nothing romantic in the psychoactive substances derived from cannabis (marijuana, hashish, etc.). It is just a kind of a dry weed, the use of which is linked to many risks: 

BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!

Cannabis contains a psychoactive substance *tetrahydrocannabinol*, which, upon long-term chronic consumption, damages that particular section of the human brain that is responsible for keeping new information and for certain automated body movements.

Therefore, the majority of chronic users of cannabis find it difficult to memorize new information, neither can they fully control their movements.

Cognitive functions of regular cannabis users (attention/concentration, memory, brain function) are diminished. Their reactions are slowed down; they are struggling to solve problems.

Effects generated from smoking cannabis are individual and sometimes may be very unpleasant.

Smoking cannabis may trigger a mental health problem.

Smoking cannabis causes loss of interest and motivation to the things that a person was interested in and motivated about before.

Using cannabis increases a risk of the lung disease (bronchitis, lung and trachea diseases).

When the cannabis is used in combination with cigarettes, a deep inhalation of one cannabis joint and longer containment of substance in lungs is equal to that caused by four to five cigarettes.

Heavy use of cannabis products negatively affects stomach acidity, causes dysfunction of the digestive system, mouth dryness and diseases, such as lung cancer, atherosclerosis, hypertonia, gastritis and heart failure.



65
YEARS

International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

**Life is better
when you don't see it through
a cloud of cannabis smoke!**

Life is better when you're not high on ecstasy!

Do you like dance clubs? Some like them very much, some less so; I can understand both opinions. What about you? Do you like rapid changes of different colour lighting, loud music, noise, fast body movements that make you sweaty and tired, but still raving in a place so noisy that you have to shout to make others hear you? And continue dancing and raving... 😊 Why not? This is fun.

But when you are in the dance club, you'd better be careful of one thing.

The narcotic drug industry invented a special drug for disco parties; it has an innocent outside look and takes the form of different multicolour tablets. Or it can be offered as a powder or liquid. After having these tablets, you can continuously (without stopping, in fact) dance and rave all night, and never get tired.

You should remember that these tablets, or powder, or liquid – not harmful at first glance – are associated with a number of risks:

Nobody knows beforehand what composition these tablets have, what effects they will induce, and whether they place the user's life and health at risk, since their composition is possible to discover only upon a thorough laboratory chemical analysis.

Shortly after taking the tablets, a heavy feeling appears in the extremities, the mouth becomes dry, and heartbeat accelerates. A feeling of nausea, stretching jaws and gritting teeth is frequent that is caused by accelerated heartbeat and widening of blood vessels.



BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!

Later, the feeling of hunger and thirst disappears, along with tiredness, and sobriety comes back. However, the absence of feeling of tiredness and thirst may cause a sharp increase in body temperature and blood pressure.

Once the effect of the drug goes away, a person feels exhausted and low, and these feelings last for 24 hours.

Under the influence of ecstasy, a user experiences physical affection towards other people that may lead him/ her to undesirable, accidental sexual contact.

Ecstasy reinforces both positive and negative emotions; as a result, stronger positive emotions can provoke euphoria and excessive excitement, while enhanced negative emotions can trigger terrifying images.



As a result, these substances evoke strong mental dependence; adolescents believe that they cannot have real fun without them in the dance club.

Ecstasy damages the neuron sites in the brain that are responsible for natural generation of serotonin. Serotonin, in turn, stabilizes mood and emotions. A deficit of serotonin levels may lead to depression.

VOLATILE SOLVENTS / INHALANTS

Life is better when you're not sniffing chemicals!

Warning; it is deadly!

Sometimes, kids smell and inhale household chemicals that provoke alteration of their cognitive functions and can lead to irreparable results:

Smelling chemicals widens blood vessels that causes headache, vertigo, accelerated heartbeat, nausea and occasionally, vomiting.

There have been a number of death cases of adolescents in the world and in Georgia resulting from inhaling chemicals.

Controlling the quantity of inhaled substance is impossible; therefore, inhaling a large quantity of chemicals results in dysfunction of the blood flow that can damage or paralyse the brain.

Covering breathing area with wet cloth or plastic bag dipped in chemicals can cause suffocation.



BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!

Even if a user survives, inhaling chemicals is very dangerous for health since it causes serious brain damage.

Over time, inhaling will cause shrinkage of the cerebral cortex and damage of certain brain segments.

Brain fat tissue, which protects the brain and is responsible for normal neuronal relationship, is mostly damaged. As a result, when inhaling chemicals, a user slowly and gradually loses attention, concentration and cognitive functions, as well as the ability to memorize information and consequently, the ability to understand and digest the information.

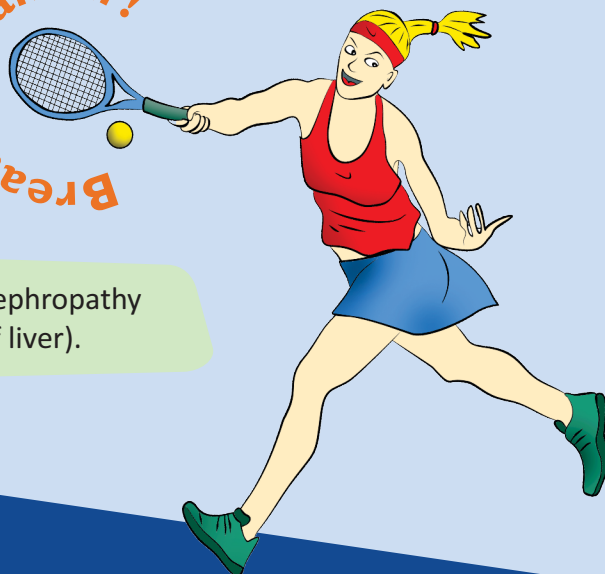
Inhaling chemicals damages nose, throat, mucous coat, gullet and trachea.

Due to chemical damage of the lung tissue, breathing becomes heavy and noisy, accompanied with frequent coughing that can transform into acute pneumonia (pneumonia is caused by bacterial infection and is characterized as the inflammation of the tissue of one or both lungs that affects bronchi, alveolus and tissues surrounding these).

Problems appear with gastrointestinal tract: nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, excessive salivation.

Complications can transform into toxic nephropathy (kidney disease) and hepatitis (disease of liver).

Breathe clean air!



INJECTION DRUGS

Life is better when you're not injecting drugs!

I am sure you won't tell us that you like needles and medical interventions. Who does?

It's your right to know. Injecting drugs into your body is associated with many risks because of the following:

You might not know that the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Georgia was spread due to injecting drugs; the major cause of transmitting HIV/AIDS in our country in the 1990s was injection of drugs.

The same goes for hepatitis C; every second person injecting drugs in Georgia is infected with hepatitis C.

In Georgia, heroin is the most widespread of narcotic drugs; however, its consumption rate in the overall population is not high and amounts to only 0.7 per cent.

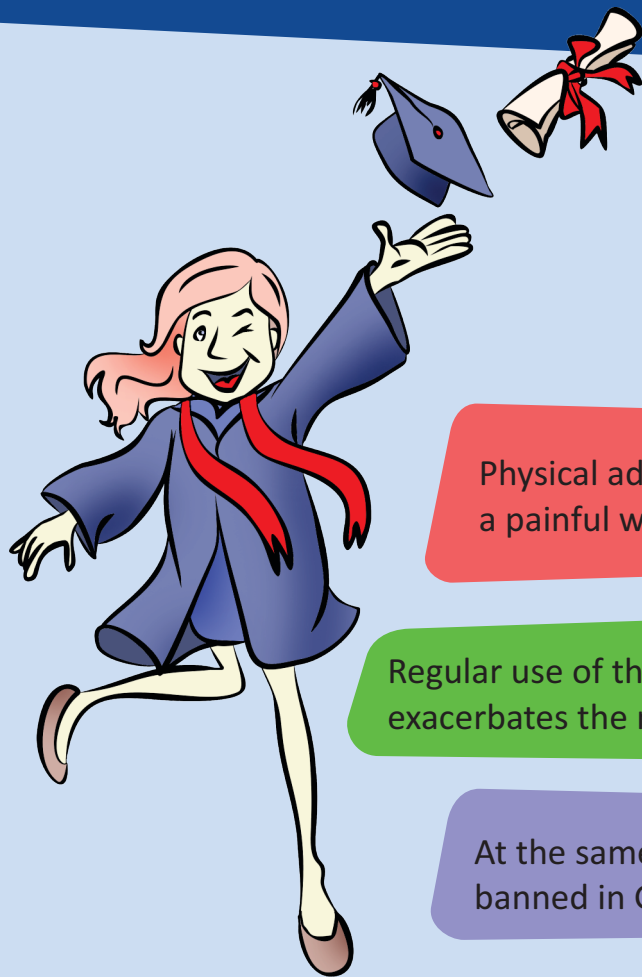
Using heroin is associated with many risks:

Heroin causes the user's mental and psychical reactions to slow down, weakens the ability to understand and critically assess the situation, which in turn increases the risk of an accident.

Heroin causes slow breathing. In case of various lung conditions, this can lead to death.



BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!



Injecting heroin is linked to a high risk of developing drug addiction. This disease manifests in psychological and physical addiction to heroin.

Psychological addiction means that the user develops a compulsive urge for drug use.

Physical addiction means that in case of having to quit drugs, a painful withdrawal syndrome develops (so called “cravings”).

Regular use of the heroin as well as any other narcotic substance exacerbates the need to permanently increase the dosage of the drug.

At the same time, heroin is illegal. Its purchase and use is banned in Georgia, and therefore results in legal problems.

The quality of heroin imported and sold at the street market is unknown, and so it can be dangerous.

Injecting heroin increases risk of death from overdose.

If at the beginning the user consumes heroin to achieve a relaxing effect, once a drug addiction develops, the user rushes to have heroin only to prevent him or herself from feeling unwell.

USE OF NON-PRESCRIBED SLEEPING PILLS AND SEDATIVE MEDICAMENTS

Life is better when you're not taking sedatives!

How can you get prescription pills without going to a doctor? From your grandmother's drawer? Or from a friend who has them and gave you some? Be careful; it is dangerous! And that is because:

Whether you need pills to reduce anxiety before an exam or just to feel better, taking those pills without a doctor's prescription can lead to devastating results. It is your right to know this.

Danger, first of all, lies in the fact that you are not properly diagnosed by a doctor who would address your specific concerns and needs, and prescribe the exact quantity of medication you need. The drug that helps your grandmother, mother, father or friend can have a very bad effect on you, since each individual person reacts to substances differently.



International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

BE INDEPENDENT AND HEALTHY – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!

Even those who need treatment by sleeping pills and tranquilizers are given a warning by the doctor about the risks associated with their usage, namely:

Sleeping pills and tranquilizers change the state of consciousness, slow down reaction, weaken objective and critical assessment of situation, and also can lead to accidents.

These medications are characterized by a high potential of developing addiction, which means that you will need more and more, and will be increasing the dosage of medication. This ultimately will cause your attention, memory and concentration to decline, and you will find it difficult to understand the materials you study or read or even hear. This means that you are becoming tolerant towards the use of these medications, and in result you are developing a disease called *substance addiction*.

In case of substance addiction, sudden quitting of sedative pills and tranquilizers use can lead to abstinence (so called “cravings”) that can have dangerous, life-threatening consequences.

Excessive use of tranquilizers and sleeping pills can cause cramps.

Combining tranquilizers with alcohol is very dangerous. For instance, combining benzodiazepine group medication with alcohol can result in death.



**Don't resort to self-treatment;
if you feel bad, refer to the doctor.**

Life is better when you're not under the influence of “Spice”!

Especially when their consumption is accompanied with a risk to life, because:

Spice is a name of a specific brand of aromatic resin and a smoking product trademarked in Great Britain. Later, though, it was discovered that it was yet another marketing trick of the narcotic drug industry.

Spices – or *Bio* as they are called in Georgia – appeared in Georgia a couple of years ago. It could be purchased online and was believed to be a legal, herbal alternative of marijuana.

However, the chemical composition of the spices revealed that the majority of herbal ingredients indicated on the label of the package are practically not found on the actual product!



BE INDEPENDENT – IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU!

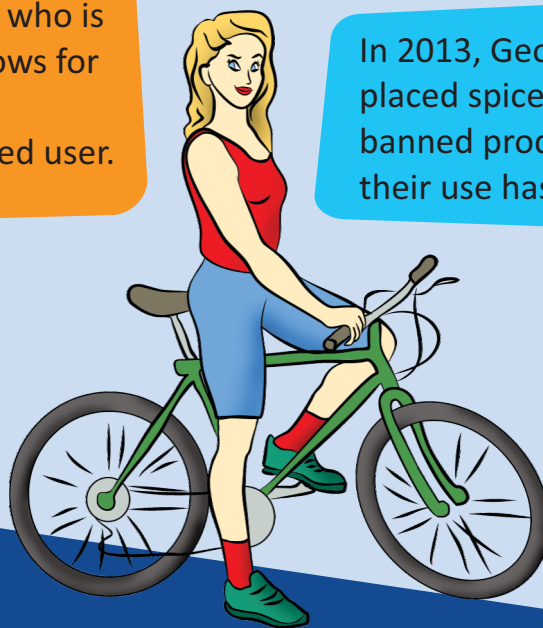
Instead, spices contain a synthetic narcotic substance having a much stronger effect than that of the natural product, which can cause a fatal outcome for the user.

This marketing trick of the drug industry (selling spices as herbal products) has claimed the lives of more than one youngster both globally and in Georgia.

This is because nobody knows which and what quantity of narcotic drugs is present in the composition of some random package of spices! Neither the seller, nor consumer, not even a doctor – who is the last resort to call for help – knows for sure what is in the product and so sometimes fails to help the poisoned user.

There are various types of spices that are sold as aroma tea or bath salt; the only difference is in its packaging. The chemical composition is almost the same.

In 2013, Georgian legislation placed spices onto the list of the banned products, and since then, their use has been illegal.



International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

Don't become the victim of the narcotic drug industry's trick!