



ADDICTION | SWITZERLAND

**WHAT IS ADDICTION
SWITZERLAND?
A PORTRAIT**

PREVENTION | HELP | RESEARCH

Summary

Showing solidarity with people and their families affected by problems linked to addiction is one of Addiction Switzerland's primary responsibilities. In the debate on addiction, the Addiction Switzerland foundation is committed to promoting credible policies based on scientific data and to always considering both individual and collective responsibility.

Addiction Switzerland is genuinely interested in getting behind the obvious facts, highlighting key issues and searching for explanations and solutions. We do not claim that the potential solutions described in the following pages are in any way exhaustive; however, together, they do provide a glimpse of Addiction Switzerland's different fields of activity by underlining the foundation's priorities, its quality requirements and its overarching values.

Preventing addictions and carrying out quality research increase everyone's chances of remaining in good health.

Addiction Switzerland is a national competency centre on addictions; it is active in the fields of prevention, research and knowledge sharing. As an independent foundation, recognised as being of public utility, its goal is to eliminate or reduce the problems linked to the use of psychoactive substances or behaviours which might lead to addiction. Addiction Switzerland supports many vulnerable population groups – from children and adolescents to people who are going through critical phases of their life. It supports all the people concerned by informing them, counselling them and giving them financial help.

Support and advice are not only destined for people with an addiction but also for their families.

Addiction Switzerland is committed to promoting environments which favour a healthy lifestyle and reinforce health literacy. To encourage this, it allies addiction prevention with health promotion.

RESEARCH

**Epidemiology, monitoring
evaluation
policy research
innovative projects**

PREVENTION

**Projects
counselling, training
support and advice
information materials**

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

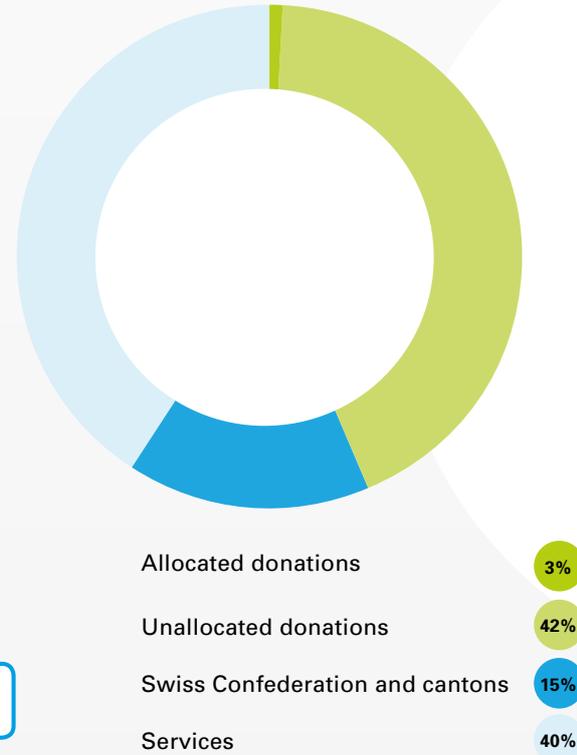
**Knowledge transfer
providing data for policy-making
communication**

Structure and organisation

Addiction Switzerland was created in 1902, and it has been registered as a private, politically independent, nondenominational foundation since 2003. Forty-five staff members share offices in Lausanne. Addiction Switzerland is certified by the Zewo Foundation – a standard-setting organisation for charities in Switzerland. More than 50% of its activities are financed with contributions from private donors and project partnerships with charitable foundations. The rest of the foundation's income comes from publicly funded research and prevention mandates, sales of educational materials and fees paid for services (consultancy fees, audits and training).



Revenues



Parents

Parents face extremely varied demands but cannot always count on the traditional type of support provided by extended families. During adolescence, parents play a central role in the prevention of addiction by acting as role models for their children.

Addiction Switzerland supports parents in all the educational issues related to addictions. Even in adolescence, fathers and mothers continue to play essential roles, and they must be aware of this. The level of interest which they show in their child's activities, their attitudes with regard to psychoactive substances or the rules that they put in place are all elements that significantly influence young people's behaviours.

Via personalised advice and publications (letters to parents, information booklets, Facebook), Addiction Switzerland offers parents direction by informing them of the broad range of subjects related to addiction. This knowledge helps them to raise often very delicate topics with their adolescents.



Families touched by addiction

According to current estimates, some 100,000 children in Switzerland are growing up with an alcoholic parent. Those children face a six-fold greater risk of one day developing an addiction of their own or another psychological illness. This number is in addition to those children whose father or mother suffer from another addiction (illegal substances, gambling), and there are no statistics about this.

Addiction Switzerland supports parents who suffer from an addiction by helping them to fulfil their educational roles so that drug dependency is not transmitted from generation to generation. To do this, the foundation notably has developed courses for the families concerned. One dedicated internet site includes a discussion forum which is available to children affected by parental addiction



(papaboit.ch / mamanboit.ch), and another specific site provides information to addicted parents (parentsetaddiction.ch). Using information brochures and a telephone helpline, our specialist team explains to fathers and mothers how they can fulfil their parental roles despite their addiction. Another dedicated internet subsite (boby.addictionsuisse.ch) also gives suggestions to professionals on how to approach the theme of parental addiction with children.

When thinking about having a child or during pregnancy, it is a good idea to reflect on one's alcohol and tobacco consumption. Addiction Switzerland sensitises mothers-to-be and their close family on the possible consequences of substance abuse on the health of their unborn child.

Addiction Switzerland runs yet another internet site (consommationdalcool.ch), with pages aimed specifically at close family, which features videos and different downloadable brochures on alcohol consumption.

Young people and schools

Adolescence is a period of great upheaval and change during which young people try out new things and new experiences. It is precisely at this point in life that consumption habits and attitudes vis-à-vis psychoactive substances are formed and become established.

School is a major influence on childhood development as children and adolescents spend so much time there. It is thus a significant location in which to prevent addiction and spot any potential problems early on.



Addiction Switzerland is competency centre of **education + health Network Switzerland** on questions relating to alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. As a complement to the foundation's information and counselling services, it has also designed a series of different primary documents on the prevention of addiction and other educational materials aimed at schools. Notably, these consider issues particular to gender. A series of short films, accompanied by educational materials, is available for work in the classroom or in group activities with 13 to 16-year-olds; these highlight the differentiated consumption patterns and motivations of boys and girls.

Every four years, school children aged 11 to 15 years old participate in a survey by answering a questionnaire on their health and everyday life – the HBSC survey (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children). This regular study is one of Addiction Switzerland's major research projects, mandated by the Swiss Confederation; it draws a balanced picture of this young age group and provides a precious starting point for preventive actions. Because this survey has been carried out regularly since 1986, it provides very useful comparisons over time.

Young people and training

The early detection of the problems linked to drug consumption is also essential in the world of work as addiction can generate considerable costs for companies. Repeated absences from work, reduced performance and unreliability are among the common negative consequences, thus the particular necessity to protect young people during their apprenticeships or in training.

Addiction Switzerland puts information material at the disposition of apprentices, colleagues and line managers. The alcoholautravail.ch internet site proposes a wide range of documentation such as videos, information on in-company preventive programmes or interventions in cases involving unusual behaviour, and a manual for apprentice supervisors on cannabis consumption among apprentices. Several prevention projects will be carried out over the next few years to provide even more support to young people in professional training.

Another objective is supporting young people during semester-long trial traineeships. Adolescents who reach the end of their obligatory schooling and do not know what they want to do next are particularly at risk of addiction, as are those who drop out of their apprenticeship. Addiction Switzerland has set up a project (Prev@Work) to reinforce health literacy skills.



Health promotion

Health promotion aims to empower everybody to manage their personal health better and to fully develop the physical, mental and social skills which also play a significant role in the prevention of addictions.

Children can be confronted with disappointments and fears very early on in their lives. Learning how to cope with these is not always easy and may require considerable support from the people who care or are responsible for them. Addiction Switzerland intervenes at this level by proposing a diversity of programmes.



Using games and audio-book stories, the Clever Club programme aims to help children to assert themselves in a group or to understand other children better. It is particularly designed for people who supervise children aged between 7 and 12 years old: after-school childcare facilities, schools and other institutions.

The Tina and Toni prevention programme is aimed at children aged between 4 and 6 years old. Using stories and fun activities, this programme intends to reinforce children's psychosocial skills for use in the institutions which host them.

To be effective in the long term, health promotion should be aimed at all age groups and via many different contexts, such as family, school and the world of work. Addiction Switzerland proposes projects that fit into all these frameworks of life.

Supporting people affected by addiction

Together, psychoactive substances and gambling lead to over 11,000 deaths and social costs estimated at more than CHF 14 billion a year. The pain and suffering experienced by the people affected and their loved ones are immense. Addiction Switzerland helps the people most concerned and directs them towards help and treatment.

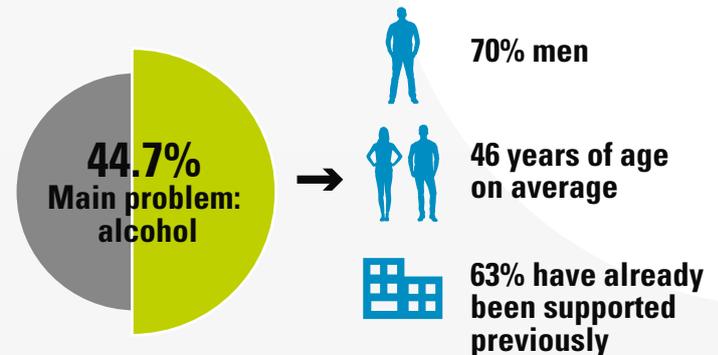
A fully-trained telephone helpline team is ready to answer questions and point the way towards possible solutions (in German and French). A call to 0800 105 105 is often the first step on the path to longer-term support via a regional specialised addiction services unit or within a self-help group.

Addiction Switzerland also supports people and their families touched by addiction in cases involving financial difficulties. For example, it finances support courses for children, shares in the costs of certain therapies or finances the costs of training programmes. The foundation's help and advice are only made possible thanks to the generosity of its donors.

A monitoring network

Regular monitoring of cases of addiction provides precious information on how often offers of help and assistance are taken up. Switzerland's national monitoring network, act-info, covers offers of residential or ambulatory treatment aimed at people presenting with problematic legal and illegal substance use or who suffer from another form of non-substance addiction. Addiction Switzerland carries out all this monitoring work under a mandate from the Swiss Confederation.

Admissions to specialist institutions for treatment (2017)



Note: Only institutions which participated in act-info. Source: act-info (Maffli et al., 2019)

Putting human beings first

Respect and human dignity are at the heart of Addiction Switzerland's concerns and they guide its actions. The framework of the foundation's actions considers both the individual and social motives which lead to problematic consumption, whether that involves alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or other illegal substances, medication, gambling or online activities.

In order to make sure that the problems linked to addiction are more fully taken into account in the debates on healthcare policy, Addiction Switzerland works in partnership with numerous institutions. Addiction Switzerland is working towards policies on addiction that are guided by the sheer scale of the damage caused to individuals and society. To do this effectively, the foundation studies the rise of addictions and problematic consumption, how they spread and how to diminish them. Addiction Switzerland analyses the impact of policy measures (e.g. mystery shopping) or marketing strategies (e.g. on-line sales), and it dissects markets (for drugs) and new trends in substance use. All Swiss Addiction's results are made freely available to addiction professionals, political leaders and the general public.

Exchanges between research and the field

When it comes to the development and implementation of addiction prevention measures, Addiction Switzerland not only considers the latest scientific knowledge but also the know-how or expertise of professionals in the field and the life experiences of the different people affected by addiction.

The foundation has designed materials (such as guidelines, internet sites, brochures or educational materials) for specialists in the prevention of addictions or counselling, teachers, parents, young people, and all those affected by addiction and their families. See shop.addictionsuisse.ch

Psychoactive medication usage among 15-year-olds (2018)



Source: HBSC (Delgrande Jordan et al., 2019)

Thank you for supporting our work!



Addiction Switzerland
Av. Louis-Ruchonnet 14
PO Box 870
CH-1001 Lausanne

Phone 021 321 29 11
info@suchtschweiz.ch
PC 10-261-7
www.suchtschweiz.ch