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All drugs should be legal.

It's not a very popular statement in America, but to reduce crime, government spending, disease, and drug-induced deaths, decriminalizing drugs is a necessity.
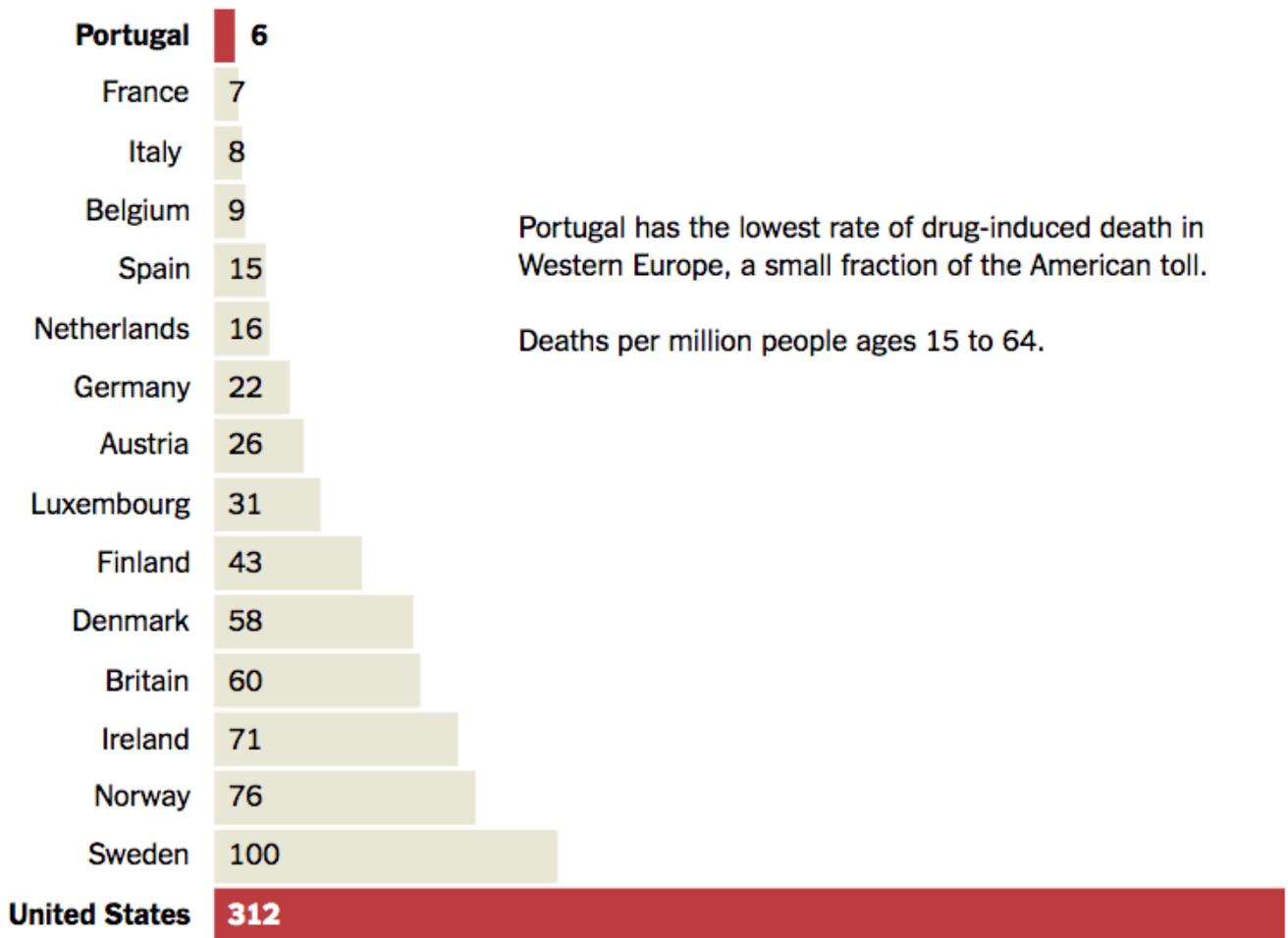
Drugs Do Not Disappear Due to Laws

First off, drugs do not disappear due to laws; they go to the black market. In the black market, there is violence, corruption, and no quality control over the drugs. By making drugs illegal, the government has given up-regulation.

When alcohol became prohibited in the early 20th century, it led to the rise of gangsters like Al Capone, who grew rich off the bootlegging business, and used violence to kill and intimidate competitors. When alcohol prohibition was lifted, the underground businesses disappeared.

The war on drugs has caused a similar play-out in terms of fueling large drug traffickers. Since drugs are always in demand, when one drug trafficking organization is caught, it leads to the rise of another organization.

A Stark Difference: Drug-Related Deaths

Country	Deaths per million
Portugal	6
France	7
Italy	8
Belgium	9
Spain	15
Netherlands	16
Germany	22
Austria	26
Luxembourg	31
Finland	43
Denmark	58
Britain	60
Ireland	71
Norway	76
Sweden	100
United States	**312**

Portugal has the lowest rate of drug-induced death in Western Europe, a small fraction of the American toll.

Deaths per million people ages 15 to 64.

2015 data except: U.S. (2016); Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Spain (2014); France (2013)

By The New York Times | Source: European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction

The Guardian reported that in 2000, there were 104.2 cases per million of people with HIV; by 2015 that number dropped to 4.2 cases per million. This was in part due to the government providing easy access to clean needles and equipment for addicts.Over time, smaller drug traffickers are weeded out, leading to the rise of massive drug cartels, such as the Sinaloa Cartel,

formerly lead by Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

If drugs were legalized, it would put the violent underground cartels out of business, not to mention, it would allow the government to tax and regulate drugs.

The director of undergraduate studies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University, Jeffrey Miron, has estimated that "[…] legalizing drugs would save roughly $41.3 billion per year in government expenditure […]" He also states, "[…] drug legalization would yield tax revenue of $46.7 billion annually […]"

The spread of disease is also a significant risk surrounding illegal drug use. This is due to using dirty needles or equipment.

In 2001, Portugal decriminalized the possession and consumption of illegal drugs as an attempt to confront their massive drug problem.

104.2 Cases per Million of People With HIV to 4.2 Cases per Million

Legalizing all drugs sounds like a risky enterprise, but experience and statistics show that it could

help American society. However, before any changes are made, a shift in the public's mindset must occur. The current view is that drug use is a crime, but the issue can be handled better when viewed as a public health problem.The Guardian reported that in 2000, there were 104.2 cases per million of people with HIV; by 2015 that number dropped to 4.2 cases per million. This was in part due to the government providing easy access to clean needles and equipment for addicts.

Portugal also saw a decrease in the number of deaths related to drug use. A report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) showed that the drug-induced mortality rate is 5.8 deaths per million, contrasting the European average of 20.3 deaths per million.

The U.S. isn't even close to numbers like that. A graph published by The New York Times shows that the U.S. has a mortality rate of 312 deaths per million.

Legalizing all drugs sounds like a risky enterprise, but experience and statistics show that it could help American society. However, before any changes are made, a shift in the public's mindset must occur. The current view is that drug use is a crime, but the issue can be handled better when viewed as a public health problem.

It would be beneficial to provide help for addicts, and that starts by not locking them up.

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