

Biographies

Mariya Prilutskaya, PhD, is a postdoc at the SOLID Project (Kazakhstan) and an associate professor at Semey Medical University (Pavlodar, Kazakhstan). She graduated from Astana Medical University in 2008 and has worked as a psychiatrist for fifteen years. The sphere of her professional interests is drug addiction. In the last seven years, she has focused on the problems of novel psychoactive substances in the clinical practice of Kazakhstani doctors. Mariya Prilutskaya studies the epidemiological and clinical aspects of drug addictions caused by synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones in Kazakhstan. She is a member of International Society for the Study of Emergent Drugs and International Society of Substance Use Professionals. She participated in the development of national clinical standards for the management of addictions caused by novel psychoactive substances. Her research activities have been supported by the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Almas Kussainov is a Candidate of Medical Sciences and an associate professor of the Department of Psychiatry and Narcology at Astana Medical University, Astana, Kazakhstan. He graduated from the Semipalatinsk State Medical Academy in 2004. After graduation from the academy, he worked for ten years at the Republican Scientific and Practical Center for Medical and Social Problems of Drug Addiction in various positions, including the position of Deputy Director for Research. He then worked for Project Assistance/ICAP at Columbia University for five years as a national HIV prevention specialist. Currently, he works at the Department of Psychiatry and Narcology of the NJSC Astana Medical University, where he trains resident doctors and is also engaged in a medical clinical practice that involves treating psychiatric and drug treatment patients with various types of addictions. He's also a member of the International Society of Substance Use Professionals.

Gulzhan Altybayeva MD, Master of Medicine, is a researcher at Semey Medical University (Semey, Kazakhstan). She graduated from Semipalatinsk State University in 1996 and worked as a psychiatrist for 28 years. Her sphere of professional interests includes suicidology and drug addiction.

Elena Molchanova is a full professor of the Psychology Department at American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. She is an MD, earned a postgraduate degree in Psychiatry and has undergone extensive training in clinical psychology and psychotherapy, including at the Aaron Beck Institute (USA), led by Judith Beck. Elena is the author of more than 60 articles in highly rated academic journals, as well as the co-author of monographs and clinical manuals.

Sergei Bessonov is the project coordinator at the Attika Harm Reduction NGO, whose mission is advancing harm reduction programmes and policies, engaging in the national policymaking processes, and developing the strategy on prevention of drug misuse, overdose, HIV, TB, HCV, and other socially significant diseases in vulnerable groups, as well as providing access to testing and self-testing. Sergei's educational background is in economics and sociology, and he coordinates country-wide projects. Sergei's research focuses on community engagement and fair access of vulnerable populations to medical, social, and legal services. It was with Sergei's immediate involvement that the project on advancing the Take Home Naloxone effort, supported by World Health Organization (WHO) and UNODC, was successfully implemented, providing support to people under risk of opioid overdose.

Zhyldyz Bakirova is deputy director of the Republican Center of Psychiatry and Narcology in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and a PhD student at the International University of Kyrgyzstan. She is trained as a psychiatrist and has participated in a number of international research projects, including the CADAP annual report and the study 'Needs and gaps in treatment and rehabilitation for people who use drugs in selected countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia'. Zhyldyz is an expert of the National Group of developers and pilots of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) quality assurance tools and has published articles on opioid overdoses and the drug rehabilitation process in the Kyrgyz Republic. Her research interests include social work in the treatment continuum, drug treatment, and psychoactive substances.

Tatiana Galako, MD, PhD, is the co-chair for the Kyrgyz Psychiatry Association and chair and associate professor of the Department of Medical Psychology, Psychiatry and Narcology at Kyrgyz State Medical Academy. Dr Galako has taught psychiatry courses to undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate medical students and mentors their research projects and

dissertations. With a top-rank medical degree, she partakes in advancing access to mental health services for people in the Kyrgyz Republic, initiates efforts to enhance psychiatric services, and works as a consultant and expert on various projects. Dr Galako's research focuses on increasing the effectiveness of psychiatric and narcological education and the integration of psychiatric services as a part of the primary medical care and health services. Her research has also included focusing on the impact of Covid-19 on the general population's health, suicidology, and substance misuse and addiction. Dr Galako is a lead author and implementer of more than ten national clinical guidelines. Dr Galako is the author and co-author of more than 90 articles and a lead author and implementer of about ten national clinical guidelines.

Danil Nikitin has been representing the Global Health Research Center of Central Asia since 2007 and heading the Global Research Institute (GLORI Foundation) since 2011. He earned his master's degree in Social Work from Columbia in 2006. Internships with the UJA-Federation, Open Society Institute, and Social Intervention Group at Columbia University contributed a lot to his professional development. Prior to his graduate studies, he worked with Osh Regional Narcological Center as a programme administrator. After graduating from Columbia, Danil returned to Kyrgyzstan and as a director, principal investigator (PI), and co-investigator, he leads monitoring and evaluation projects and intervention and prevention research in drug-using communities. The GLORI Foundation that Danil runs hosts the first and only non-government Committee on Bioethics, which provides high-quality expertise to researchers who focus their studies on Kyrgyzstan.

Guzalkhon Zakhidova is a psychotherapist with over 20 years of experience. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and a freelance researcher at the Bukhara Medical Institute. She actively participates in scientific conferences and symposiums, where she presents her scientific work or other relevant topics. Zakhidova serves as a psychotherapist at the 2nd City Psychoneurological Dispensary in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Her research focuses on the medical and social aspects of the use of new psychoactive substances among young people in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, through qualitative analysis.

Jakhongir Ravshanov is a PhD student at Tashkent Medical Academy, specialising in psychiatry and narcology, focusing on suicidal behaviour

in patients abusing synthetic cathinones. He is a skilled addiction specialist with experience in the research and analysis of new psychoactive substances. Since 2021, he has been working as a psychotherapist at the Republican Specialized Scientific-Practical Medical Center of Mental Health in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Gulnoza Abdulkakharova is a PhD student at Tashkent Medical Academy, specialising in psychotherapy and narcology, focusing on clinical and prognostic characteristics in patients abusing new psychoactive substances. She is a skilled addiction specialist with experience in the research and analysis of new psychoactive substances. Since 2015, she has been working as a narcologist at the Republican Specialized Scientific-Practical Medical Center of Mental Health in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Naimdzhon Malikov is a psychiatrist. He graduated from Avicenna Tajik State Medical University in 2006 and has worked as a psychiatrist for eight years. He then worked in the field of harm reduction programmes (medication-assisted treatment) and HIV prevention. Malikov Naimdzhon is a member of the Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC) national team (International Certified Addiction Professionals) and a member of a team of expert appraisers on piloting quality assurance tools for services provided in Tajikistan. He participated in the development of guidelines and clinical standards for medication-assisted treatment with methadone and buprenorphine. In addition, he participated in reassessing the sustainability of the opioid agonist therapy programme within the context of transition from donor support to domestic funding (the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association) and in the mapping of institutions treating substance use disorders in the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (UNODC Regional Office for Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan).

Vladimir Magkoev is a psychiatrist and works at the City Center for Narcology in Dushanbe. In 1998, he completed his clinical residency in psychiatry at the Avicenna Tajik State Medical University. In the following years, he worked on various programmes related to the use of psychoactive substances, including harm reduction and drug demand reduction initiatives. While working at the Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan from 2000 to 2004, he participated in reforming the country's drug control legislation, focusing on its mitigation.

Yifan Xu is a social worker currently working as a research assistant in the Addiction Medicine Research Group at the Shanghai Mental Health Center. With a multidisciplinary background in Psychology and Anthropology from Colorado State University, she has contributed to addiction research through assessments, evaluations, and data collection. Her work has extended to shaping addiction outpatient MDT services and designing training programs, highlighting her commitment to advancing addiction medicine. Her research interests focus on both substance and behavioral addictions, as well as the stigma associated with these conditions.

Haifeng Jiang is the Deputy Chief Physician, Medical Doctor, and Master's Supervisor at the Shanghai Mental Health Center. His academic background includes a bachelor's degree from Shanghai Second Medical University (09.1999–06.2004), a master's degree from Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine (09.2008–06.2011), and a doctoral degree (09.2011–06.2014). Dr Jiang Haifeng's professional field focuses on clinical, teaching, and research work related to drug dependence. He has participated in multiple research projects, including the National 12th Five-Year Plan for Science and Technology Support, the Shanghai Municipal Science and Technology Commission, the National Institutes of Health's project in the United States, and the Shanghai Anti-Drug Fund project. His research focuses on the neurophysiological mechanisms of psychological craving in the abuse of amphetamine type stimulants, and he has received funding from the National Natural Science Foundation of China Youth Science Fund and the Shanghai Health Bureau Youth Research Project. He has published multiple papers and participated in the writing of three monographs. Dr Jiang Haifeng has also served as a youth member of the Drug Dependence Professional Committee of the Chinese Society of Toxicology and a member of the Addiction Medicine Working Committee of the Psychiatry Branch of the Chinese Medical Association, demonstrating his professional abilities and contributions in the prevention and treatment of addiction-related issues.

Zhandos Aktayev, Master of Law, is Chairman of the 'Esbol Qory' Public Foundation for the Prevention of Addictive Behavior and national consultant of the UNODC. He is an expert engaged by the central state bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan (the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, etc.), as well as international organisations in the field of prevention of depend-

ent behaviour and violations of law related to drug trafficking. He participated in the development of relevant draft laws and strategic documents in the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian region.

Valentina Mankieva is a narcofeminist and trainer. She is head of the Central Asian Women's Network 'Amal' and a member of the Steering Committee of the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association for the Central Asia region, as well as a representative of the community of people who use drugs on the Country Coordinating Committee for HIV, AIDS, and tuberculosis under the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Since 2009, she has been working in the non-profit sector on projects related to the prevention of socially significant diseases. Since 2015, her work has been closely connected with advocacy, human rights, and mental health issues, as well as leadership and activism.

Vitaliy Vinogradov is the Director of HIV Prevention Programs for Vulnerable Groups and Training Coordinator of the Center for Scientific and Practical Initiatives in Almaty, Kazakhstan. With extensive experience in public health and non-governmental organization (NGO) management, he has coordinated staff, managed budgets, and developed training programmes for both NGOs and health professionals. Previously, he served as Program Director at the Center for Global Health Research at Columbia University. He is currently pursuing a master's thesis in social work based on his published research. He is Chair of the Steering Board of the Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity (ECOM).

Nikolay Lunchenkov is a medical doctor and doctoral candidate at the Technical University of Munich, TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology. He specialises in HIV infection and drug use among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. His research focuses on the complex relationships between HIV transmission, substance use, and sociocultural factors such as stigma and discrimination, using qualitative methodologies. Drawing on his experience as an LGBT health coordinator at the Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender, and Sexual Diversity, and as a research fellow at the Robert Koch Institute, Dr Lunchenkov addresses the unique challenges faced by marginalised communities in the EECA region. His expertise includes studying the phenomenon of chemsex and its impact on HIV transmission and overall health outcomes within the LGBTQ+ community.

Heino Stöver, PhD, is a social scientist and Professor of Social Scientific Addiction Research, Faculty of Health and Social Work at the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt, Germany. Since 2020 he has been the project director of the DAAD project 'Social work and strengthening NGOs in development cooperation to treat drug addiction' (SOLID) of the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. Since 1987, he has been the director of the Archive and Documentation Centre for Drug Literature and Research at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences (www.archido.info/) and the Institute of Addiction Research of the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt. His main fields of research and project development expertise are health promotion for vulnerable groups, drug services, prisons, and related health issues (especially HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, and drug dependence). He is also a consultant for the European Commission, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, WHO, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the Open Society Institute (OSI) in various contexts. He has published several articles in international journals and books on adequately preventing and treating infectious diseases (HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, STIs, and TB), opioid substitution programmes, and drug treatment in general.

Ulla-Britt Klankwarth is an MA student in "Criminology and Violence Research" at the University of Regensburg, Germany. She holds a B.A. in Social Work and is a research assistant at the Institute for Addiction Research at the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt am Main. Her main research interests include women in prison and alternatives to imprisonment.

Ainur Shukimbayeva, MD, is a researcher at the Pavlodar branch of Semey Medical University. She graduated from Semey Medical University in 2009. She has been working as a cardiologist for more than ten years. For the last four years, she has been actively engaged in research work related to the study of cardiovascular changes in patients abusing new psychoactive substances. She is participating in the development of an algorithm for early diagnosis of cardiovascular diseases in drug users of new psychoactive substances (synthetic cathinones).

Aigerim Zhumasheva is a Master of Medical Sciences and paediatrician. In 2021, she completed her residency in paediatrics at the Pavlodar branch of Semey Medical University. In 2024, she completed her master's degree

in Medicine at Semey Medical University. She has devoted the last two years to studying the problems of substance abuse among children and adolescents. She is the author of the article ‘The problem of psychoactive substance use in pediatric practice: a somatic aspect. Literature review’ in the journal *Pharmacy of Kazakhstan*. She is the author of the methodological recommendations ‘*The problem of substance abuse among minors: a clinical aspect*’, dedicated to primary care doctors, emergency care, and students. She has worked as a paediatrician for more than five years.

Alexei Lakhov has been working in different Russian and European NGOs in the field of HIV infection, viral hepatitis, and substance abuse prevention since 2011. He used to work as the Development Director of the largest Russian harm reduction programme ‘Humanitarian Action’ (Saint Petersburg), and as a consultant for WHO Europe, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNODC, HIV Justice Network, and Coact. Currently, he is an executive director of the European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD). From 2022 to 2024, he was an NGO Europe delegate to the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS. He has participated in numerous research projects for peer-reviewed journals on new psychoactive substances and online harm reduction and authored a web outreach manual for the UNODC Programme Office in Eastern Europe.

Nikolai Unguryan is a psychiatrist specialising in addiction treatment, a clinical psychologist, and an international consultant for Eastern Europe and Central Asia under the UN’s UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). He specialises in synthetic psychostimulants, including amphetamines and cathinones, and has extensive experience working in this area. He possesses a wide range of knowledge and skills in both the medical management of these conditions and psychotherapeutic approaches. He actively collaborates with major NGOs (non-governmental organisations) that focus on the prevention of HIV infection and viral hepatitis, as well as on providing support to people in socially dangerous situations. During the Covid-19 pandemic, considering the restrictions on in-person consultations, he continued to provide active online consultations for patients with anxiety disorders and issues related to accepting diagnoses. In 2017, he graduated from Omsk State Medical University with a degree in General Medicine. From 2017 to 2019, he completed a residency in Psychiatry and Addiction Treatment. In 2019, he pursued training in Clinical Psychology. From 2019 to 2021, he worked at the Omsk

Narcological Dispensary, providing outpatient and inpatient care as a child psychiatrist specialising in addiction treatment. From 2021 to 2023, he worked in the Emergency Department of the City Narcological Hospital in St. Petersburg. He also completed a residency in Psychiatry from 2021 to 2023 and served as an expert on several NGO projects focused on the social and medical support of people using new psychoactive substances.

Zhanara Nurseitova is a behavioural specialist, social psychologist, civil activist, and volunteer with over 15 years of experience in non-profit organisations. She holds a master's degree in Social Psychology and has led numerous projects focused on systemic changes in ecology, children's and women's rights, legislative infrastructure for NGOs, and addiction issues. Zhanara is an expert in government relations, strategic planning, team coordination, and programme implementation. She has pioneered a unique project in Kazakhstan for individuals with drug and gambling addictions, offering comprehensive support, including post-rehabilitation. Her team has conducted significant research in addiction, contributing to legislative changes. Zhanara regularly participates as an expert in working groups on ecology, rights advocacy, and addiction issues. She also conducts educational seminars for government leadership and heads an investment fund supporting social entrepreneurs to achieve financial sustainability and drive systemic change through innovative projects.

