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40 Million Russians Affected by Narcotics, Says Drugs Tsar

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Almost a million young people have died from drug abuse in the last 10 years.

Russia has about 7.5 million drug users, of whom 3 million abuse substances on a daily basis, the Federal Drug Control Service (FSKN) head said Thursday, according to the Interfax news agency.

"They are in a binary state of highs and lows," Viktor Ivanov said in a speech at a meeting of Russian psychiatrists in the city of Kazan.

Almost a million young people have died from drug abuse in the last 10 years, and up to 70 percent of deaths between the ages of 15 and 34 result from drugs, Ivanov was cited as saying.

At the same time, the FSKN claims that it is now registering 30 percent fewer drug addict deaths than in previous years, which it said was the result of government policies.

Ivanov said some 30 to 40 million people are affected by drugs, including family members of the addicts themselves, Interfax reported.

The drugs expert also said that addicts commit about 40,000 crimes every year and spend about 4.5 billion rubles on their habit, the Rossiiskaya Gazeta government newspaper reported.

Other government structures offer very different estimates of the number of drug addicts in Russia.

In December 2014, there were about 700,000 registered drug addicts in the country, according to the Health Ministry's top drug specialist, Yevgeny Bryun.

In an interview with Interfax, Bryun suggested that the real number, taking into account unregistered users, was 2.5 times higher. That would mean there were about 1.75 million drug users in the country.

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