

# Should drugs be legalised?

**Nick Pamment and Tom Ellis**



# The Debate

## Statement A

★ **DRUGS SHOULD BE LEGALISED**

## Statement B

★ **DRUGS SHOULD NOT BE LEGALISED**



# *"End prohibition and get rid of immoral drug laws"*



Richard Brunstrom, former Chief Constable of North Wales  
15/10/07



<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/8079879/Americas-war-on-drugs-biggest-mistake-since-slavery-says-judge.html>



# Liberal democracy?

- \* Principle of free choice? – as long as our actions do not harm others we should be free to pursue them (Mill, 1986)



- \* *‘All laws which can be violated without doing anyone any injury are laughed at.... He who tries to determine everything by law will foment crime rather than lessen it’ (Baruch Spinoza, 1632-1677).*

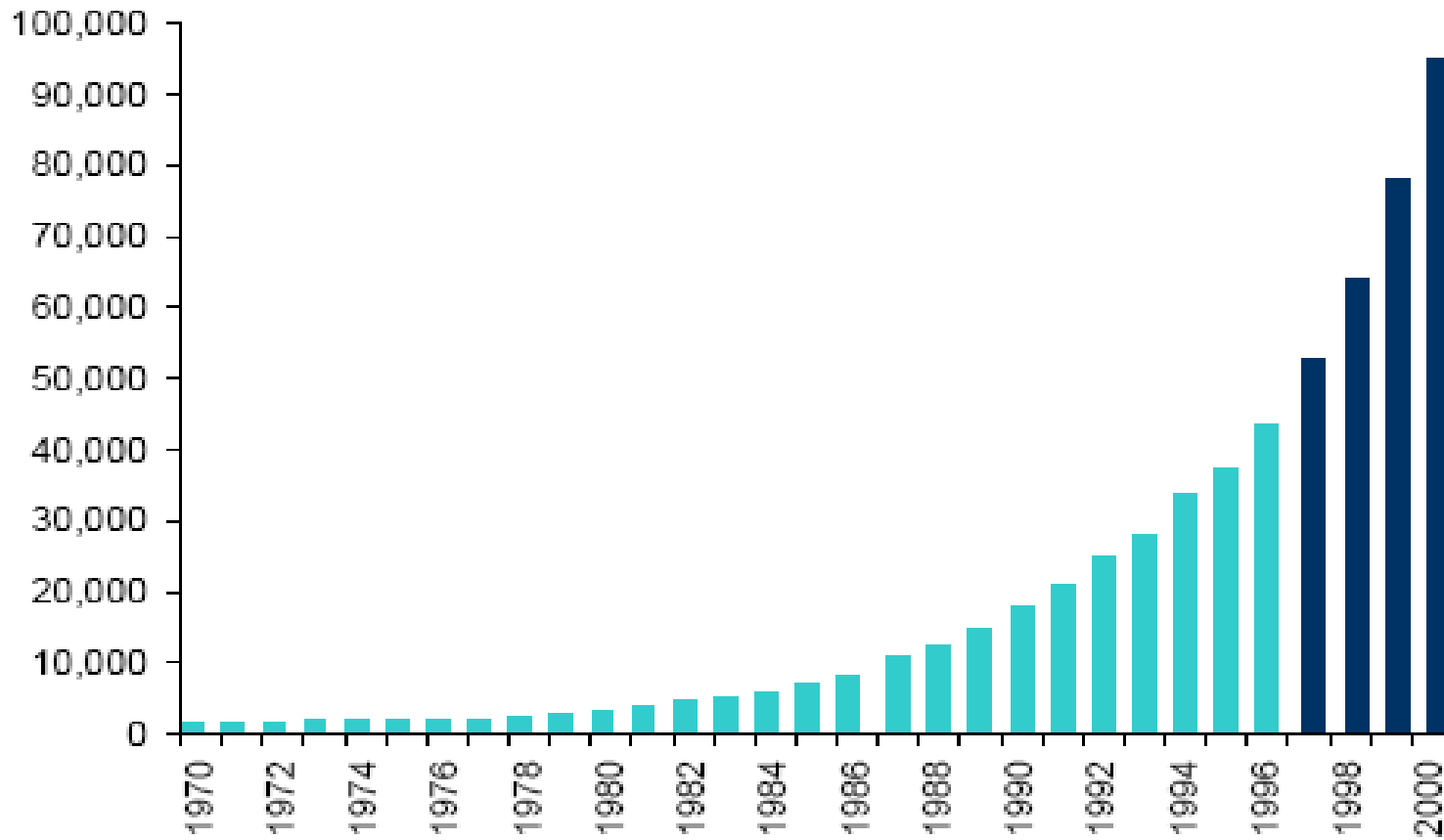


# Enforcement does not work!

- \* *'We could find **no link across 15 Member states between the robustness of their policies and the level of prevalence.** There are some countries with high prevalence, harsh policies, some countries with low prevalence, harsh policies, other countries with liberal policies and low prevalence. There is no link, there is no conceivable link'* (Home Affairs Committee, 2001, p.2)
- \* Netherlands has decriminalised cannabis and the **number of users has gone down.** Meanwhile, we have raised the penalties for dealing in cannabis, but now have not only the largest proportion, but also the heaviest users of cannabis in Europe (EMCDDA, 2005)
- \* *'Despite billions spent each year on proactive and reactive drug law enforcement, the punitive prohibitionist approach has consistently delivered the opposite of its stated goals'* (TDPF, 2009, p. 3)



Dependent opiate and cocaine users, known to services, by year, 1970-2000 (TDPF, 2009,p.12)



# Why are drugs illegal ?

- \* **American Racism**

- \* *'Most of the attacks upon white women of the South are the direct result of a cocaine-crazed Negro brain'* (Christopher Koch, 1914).
- \* *'I wish I could show you what a small marijuana cigarette can do to one of our degenerate Spanish-speaking residents. That's why our problem is so great; the greatest percentage of our population is composed of Spanish-speaking persons, most of who are low mentally, because of social and racial conditions'*.
- \* Harry Anslinger, Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics from 1930 until 1962.



# Bad Science

- \* *'Under the influence of cannabis, the danger of committing unpremeditated murder is very great; it can happen in cold blood, without any reason or motive, unexpectedly, without any preceding quarrel; often the murderer does not even know the victim, and simply kills for Pleasure'* (WHO, 1955).
- \* *'Most violent crimes in the capital are linked to alcohol. I have never seen an incident where an assault has been linked to cannabis. A fortune is spent bringing people to court and then they can be fined as little as £25'* (Reshard Auladin, Deputy Chair of the MPA, 2005).



# Bad Science continued

- \* MDMA was safe when used under medical supervision, did not have a high potential for addiction, and had legitimate medical use (Judge Young, 1986).
- \* DEA condemned Judge Young as biased, short sighted, and incorrect in his interpretation of the laws. They rejected his non-binding ruling and declared MDMA permanently Schedule 1.
- \* Decision later examined by panel of experts and reversed (see Jenkins, 1999)
- \* DEA intervened again and remains illegal (DEA, 2005)



# The Most dangerous drug known to man?

- \* 935 deaths in New York officially labelled as 'cocaine related'.
- \* *'half these deaths had been due to trauma (caused by accidents homicides, and suicides) and that less than 12% were even possibly related to the pharmacological effects of cocaine'* (Morgan and Zimmer, 1997, p.7).
- \* *'only about one in eight (12.3%) of those who have ever tried crack had used it in the month prior to the survey'* (p.10).
- \* 87.7% resisting the drug?



# Relative dangers

- \* Taking an e: 1 death in 3.7 million
- \* A skiing holiday in Switzerland: 1 death in 600,000
- \* Parachuting: 1 death in 85,000 jumps
- \* Attempting to climb K2: 1 in every 4
- \* Smoking kills about 120,000 people in the UK every year which is the equivalent of 330 people a day.
- \* Alcohol around 6,000 to 40,000 (see Drugscope, 2006)
- \* ***'in nearly half (48%) of all violent incidents, victims believed offenders to be under the influence of alcohol [and] this figure rose to 60% in cases of 'stranger violence'***

(Source: British Crime Survey 2004/05)



# Drug use and crime?

- \* See Goldstein's (1985) tripartite typology for understanding drug crime
- \* **Pharmacological crime:** Minority of cases/ rare
- \* **Economic compulsive crime:** legalise and **offer support!**
  - See Bean (2001, p.11): 50% of drug users were criminal before they started taking drugs.
- \* **Systemic crime (drug debts/ gang violence):** legalise!
- \* *'The general conclusion ..over four decades of research on the relationship between drug and crime is whilst there is a clear and significant statistical relationship ,casual connections are difficult to establish' (McBride,2002 cited in Bean, 2005,30)*



# Enforcement or support?

- \* Backgrounds characterised by social exclusion, poverty and educational failure (Wincup, Buckland and Bayliss, 2003).
- \* Smokescreen?
- \* Clear link between illegal drug use and unemployment (Peck and Plant, 1986)
- \* Economic downturn and increased worry (see Arkes, 2007)
- \* Penalises and punishes the most excluded
- \* **Free up money from enforcement?**



# ***The situation in the USA***

- \* *'the number of drug offenders imprisoned in America today – more than 330.000- much larger than the number of people imprisoned for all crimes in 1970' (Schlossser, 2003, p.57).*
- \* Dramatic racial disparity!
- \* Anti Drug Abuse Act 1968:
  - 5 grams of crack = 5 year sentence
  - 500 grams of cocaine (-baking powder) = 5 year sentence
- \* 89% of crack cocaine defendants black; 7% Hispanic; 4% white
- \* Cocaine powder: 34% white; 39% Hispanic; 27% black
- \* Black Americans serving on average sentences 49% longer than their white counterparts (Davenport Hines, 2001, p.356)



# The situation in the UK

- \* *'Black people account for 12 per cent of the London population however they accounted for 39% of those accused of crack possession and 67% of those accused of crack supply' (GLADA, 2004, p.32).*
- \* Clear disparity!
- \* Amongst 16-24 year olds 10% white, 8% mixed race, 2% black people had used a class A drug in the last year
- \* Amongst 16-24 year olds 10% white, 8% mixed race, 2% black people had used a class A drug in the last year.
- \* two main ethnic groups 'accused of cannabis possession,' accounting for approximately 79% of the total. These are 'White Europeans' (45%,) and 'African-Caribbean' (34%) (MPA, 2004)



# Cost

- \* It has been estimated that 770,000 hours a year (equivalent to 500 full-time officers) and £350 million is spent on policing cannabis (May et al, 2002)
- \* 80-90% of those arrested for drug offences are arrested for cannabis possession
- \* As prosecutions have gone up, prices have gone down
- \* *'I say legalise drugs because I want to see less drug abuse, not more. And I say legalise drugs because I want to see the criminals put out of business'* (Ellison, 1998, p.1)
- \* 15% of prison population / drug mules/ decoy (Green, 1998)
- \* Growth in Jamaican and Nigerian women (Morgan, 2003)



★ *'A move to legally regulated drug supply would deliver substantial benefits to the treasury and wider community, even in the highly unlikely event of a substantial increase in use'* (TDPF, 2009, p.3).

★ A) 50% fall in use, net benefit = **£13.943 billion**

★ B) No change in use, net benefit = **£10.843 billion**

★ C) 50% Increase in use, net benefit = **£7.724 billion**

★ D) 100% increase in use, net benefit = **£4.616 billion**

★ \*analysis based on heroin and cocaine use only!\*

★ *'We estimate the total crime, health and other social costs of class A drug use (heroin and cocaine only) in E&W in 2003/04 was **£16.785 billion** under the prohibitionist regime'* (TDPF, 2009, p.3).



# LEGAL POSITIONS

- \* Drugs are designated as illegal through domestic laws and international agreements and treaties
- \* UK = Tiered classification system, ranked by 'HARMFULNESS'
  - CLASS A Opiates (inc. Heroin, morphine), cocaine, LSD, MDMA (Ecstasy)
  - CLASS B Amphetamines, Barbituates, cannabis
  - CLASS C Tranquilisers, mild stimulants
- \* Ecstasy: *nowhere near as dangerous as other class A drugs and should be downgraded to class B (ACMD, 2009)*
- \* *"not prepared to send a message to young people that we take ecstasy less seriously".*

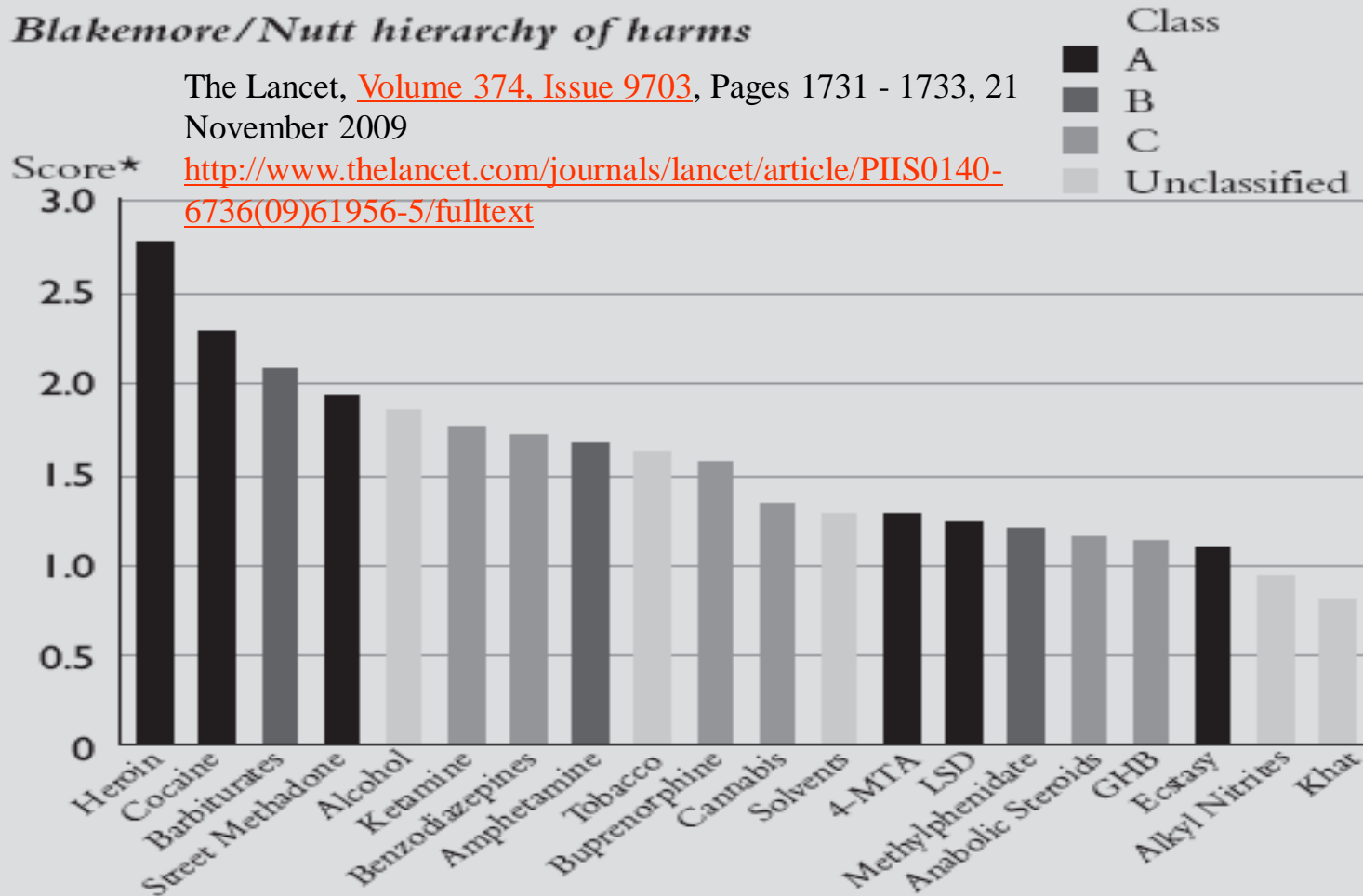


# Hierarchy of Harm

## Blakemore/Nutt hierarchy of harms

The Lancet, [Volume 374, Issue 9703](#), Pages 1731 - 1733, 21 November 2009

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)61956-5/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)61956-5/fulltext)



\*Mean harm rating by independent experts

Source: Science Select Committee

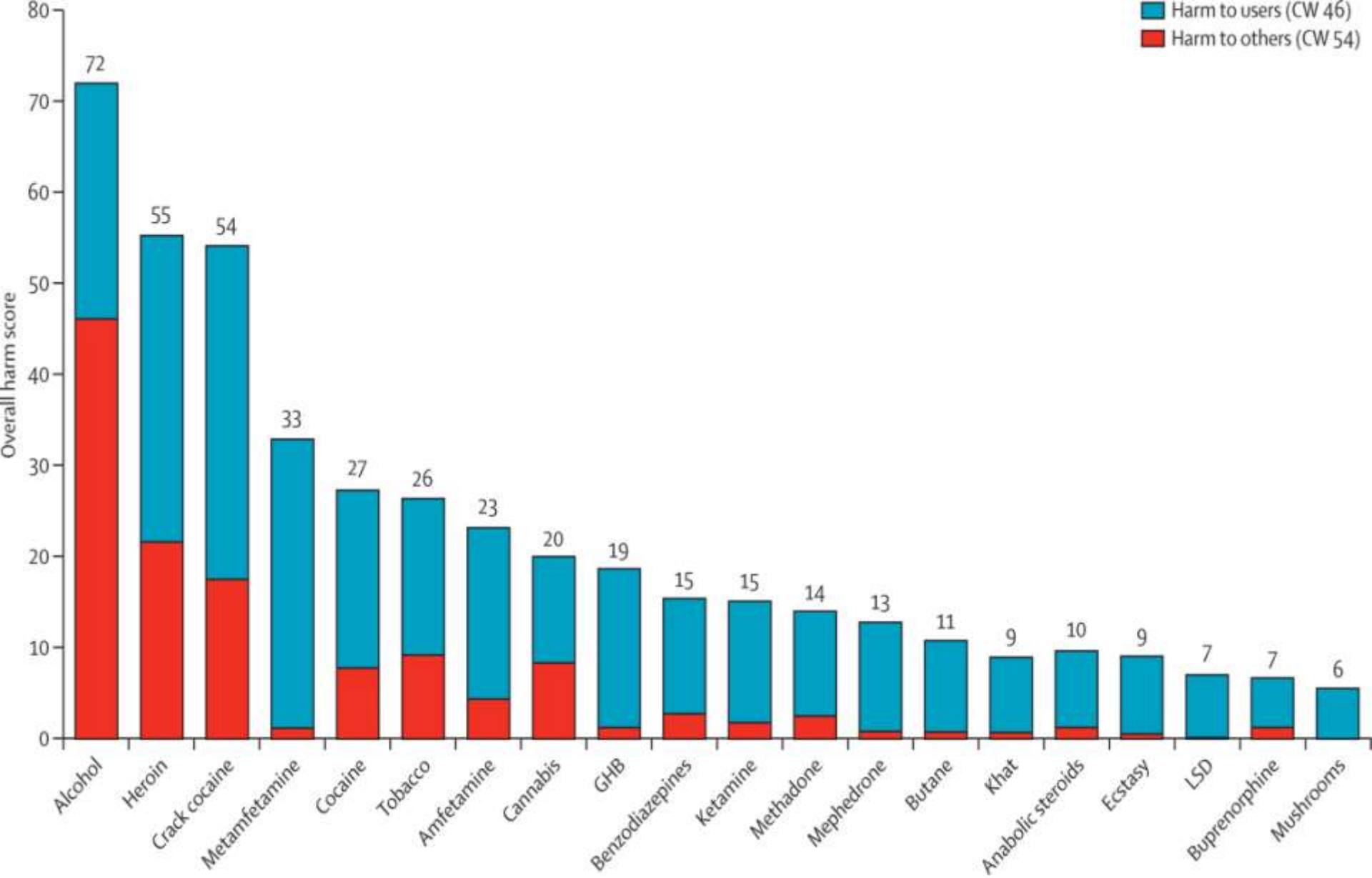
## Drug harms in the UK: a multicriteria decision analysis

David J Nutt, FMedSci, Leslie A King, PhD, Lawrence D Phillips, PhD and on behalf of the Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs

Volume 376, Issue 9752, Pages 1558-1565 (November 2010)

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(10\)61462-6/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)61462-6/fulltext)





[The Lancet 2010; 376:1558-1565](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60800-0)



# Observer/ICM Oct 2008 poll

How much do you spend on the  
following in an average month?

Base - all respondents

Drugs	£12.17
Alcohol	£57.56
Tobacco	£21.74



# Widespread usage!

- \* Over eleven million cannabis smokers in the UK and 48 per cent of fifteen-year olds have tried drugs at some point (Department of Health, 2002).
- \* Drug taking is becoming more and more popular. Over the last fifty years it has become so prevalent that **academics are now debating the normalisation of illegal drug use** for young people today (Parker *et al.*, 1998; 2001; Blackman, 2004).



**Figures for the proportion of 16- to 59-year-olds reporting having used drugs in their lifetime by age group, 2005/6 BCS (England and Wales).**

<b>Age group</b>								
<b>Drug</b>	16–19 (%)	20–24 (%)	25–29 (%)	30–34 (%)	35–44 (%)	45–54 (%)	55–59 (%)	All ages 16–59 (%)
Cannabis	35.1	44.4	46.7	40.1	28.5	18.8	11.1	29.8
Amphetamines	7.5	14.5	23.8	20.5	11.8	5.6	2.8	11.5
Any cocaine	6.5	14.5	15.2	10.4	6.4	2.4	1.1	7.3
Ecstasy	5.8	14.4	18.2	14.0	5.7	0.9	0.2	7.2
Opiates	0.4	1.1	1.9	1.2	0.9	0.5	0.3	0.9
Class A	11.2	21.8	26.5	21.4	13.6	6.6	3.6	13.9
<b>Any drug</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>34.9</b>

(Roe and Man, 2006 cited in Reuter and Stevens, 2007)



# The situation in the UK

	ICJS Students 2007	BCS National 2006/07
Cannabis-	83%	50%
Cocaine -	47%	7%
Ecstasy --	37%	10.7%
Amphetamine –	23%	20%
Crack-	2%	1%
Heroin –	0%	1%

Check the latest figures at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb1807.pdf>





# Conclusions

- \* Supported position
  - \* Liberal democracy/ choice/ rights and responsibilities
  - \* Enforcement ineffectual
  - \* Prejudice/ Racial disparity
  - \* Bad science
  - \* Reduces crime: '*forces organised crime from the market place*' (TDPF, 2009)
  - \* Saves billions/ frees up the prison population
  - \* Smokescreen?
  - \* Current legal position not fit for purpose
  - \* Drug usage widespread
  - \* Make all drugs safer: truthful information and education
- 
- \* TDPF. (2009). *A Comparison of the cost effectiveness of the Prohibition and Regulation of Drugs*. Available at: <http://www.tdpf.org.uk/Transform%20CBA%20paper%20final.pdf>
  - \* Reuter, P. And Stevens, A. (2007). *An Analysis of UK Drug Policy: A Monograph prepared for the UK Drug Policy Commission*. Available at: <http://www.ukdpc.org.uk/docs%5CUKDPC%20drug%20policy%20review.pdf>



# Against Legalising Drugs



# Dangers of drugs Clip

- ★ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w6oiR5IbE>



# Why are drugs illegal?

- \* Because they harm you
- \* & affect your abilities and judgement!  
(even if you are a grandmother)



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,2161868,00.html>

- \* Victim impact - costs are substantial
- \* Dependent heroin users alone = £58-864m p a (Hough, 1996)
- \* Spending
  - \* Crack-cocaine users 20m pa spending
  - \* Heroin-dependent £10m p a
  - \* Acquisitive crime, benefits & legal work



# Most people realise this and don't take them

Observer/ICM Oct 2008 poll

Have you ever taken an illegal  
drug?

Base - all respondents

Yes	27%
No	73%





THE TRUTH ABOUT...

**MARIJUANA**

**THE SMOKE OF HELL!**

**“DEVIL'S HARVEST”**



# Reefer Madness

- ★ <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=L1jB7RBGVGk&feature=related>
- ★ [http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=bM\\_vLk1I6G4](http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=bM_vLk1I6G4)
- ★ Watch the whole film
- ★ <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=QZdhcNegZgU&feature=related>
- ★ Or get more up-to-date!
- ★ <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=kQ5SwhtSZoU&feature=related>



# Cannabis is the gateway to even worse drugs

Observer/ICM Oct 2008 poll

## What was the first illegal drug you ever took?

Base – all those who have ever taken an illegal drug

Marijuana	83%
Amphetamines	6%
Ecstasy	5%
Cocaine	3%
Magic mushrooms	3%
LSD	2%
Crack	0%
Ketamine	0%
Other	1%



# **Cannabis also doubles the risk of testicular cancer!**

- ★ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/feb/09/testicular-cancer-cannabis-risk>



# Once you are hooked, treatment usually fails

50% increase in funding

- \* £253m in 2004-05
- \* £384m 2005-06

\* BUT

- \* % of users emerging drug-free after treatment = falling
  - \* Starting at 3.5%
  - \* And falling to less than 3%

\* See:

- \* **Figures reveal high cost of 'curing' drug addicts Observer**

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/story/0,,2201927,00.html>



# Ecstasy

- ★ Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) report on ecstasy, just before it was officially published 11 February 2009
- ★ Based on a 12-month study of 4,000 academic papers says that:
- ★ Ecstasy use poses a significant public health issue in Britain, with up to 5m tablets taken every month.



**<http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/acmd/mdma-report?view=Binary>**

- ★ MDMA ('ecstasy'):
- ★ a review of its harms
- ★ and classification under
- ★ the Misuse of Drugs Act
- ★ 1971
- ★ Advisory Council on the
- ★ Misuse of Drugs (2009)



# Illegal vs Legal drugs

- ★ Alcohol is our favourite drug, legal or illegal (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 1987)
- ★ Mortality from tobacco & alcohol much higher than for illegal drugs
- ★ Alcohol 1997 = 4,907 deaths (Alcohol concern, 2000:4)
- ★ Illegal drugs 1998 = 1,076-2,997 deaths (ACMD, 1999)



# BUT

- ★ **Illegal drugs are restricted –  
what if generally available?**

(Taylor, 1999)

SO.....

- ★ Do you legalise illegal drugs because they are less harmful?

OR

- ★ Do you minimise harm from ALL drugs?

- ★ Will harmful effects



★ **LEGALISATION:** Selective decriminalisation could reduce harm through disrupting ‘outsider cultures’ of social exclusion & drug use (Taylor, 1999)

★ **BUT** What about real primary costs of hard drug use?

– are multiple pathologies of drug use all reduceable to prohibitionist regulatory policy?’ (Currie, 1993)



# Legalise Crystal Meth?

- ★ Creeping menace of crystal meth, the drug more dangerous than crack
- ★ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,2763,1642885,00.html>

- ★ How to change your appearance  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=af3RjDntlhs>

[http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/DrugIssue/MethResources/faces/photo\\_12.html](http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/DrugIssue/MethResources/faces/photo_12.html)

- ★ Effects

[Find out more about methamphetamine](#)

[And more](#)



# Shocking local example



# Useful web sites on drug effects

- ★ Check out the FACTS
- ★ [http://www.rethink.org/how\\_we\\_can\\_help/campaigning\\_for\\_change/cannabis\\_and\\_mental\\_illness/index.html](http://www.rethink.org/how_we_can_help/campaigning_for_change/cannabis_and_mental_illness/index.html)

For your essay, you will be expected to cite the academic materials on the same site

Tools for the debate

- ★ <http://www.tdpf.org.uk>



# **Tom Palmer, a knife-obsessed cannabis addict who was jailed for life for the brutal murders of two schoolboys**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,,2038576,00.html>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,,2038696,00.html>

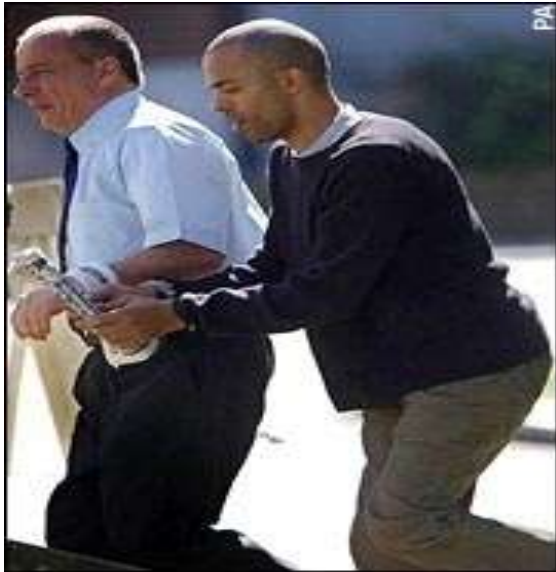


# Other cases misery and death caused by drugs



# \* Junkies' rights before victims' rights?

- The Killer John Barrett  
'He was a heavy cannabis user and specialist reports on him concluded that the drug made him more psychotic'



- The Victim Dennis Finnegan
- 'he was killed doing something as ordinary as riding a bike in a park in Britain.'



# Boy on skunk cannabis butchered a grandmother

Ezekiel Maxwell killed Carmelita Tulloch



# Soldier killed friend's dad with 'cannabis-induced delusions'

Destroying your friends' families

Laurie Draper killed Paul Butterworth



# Drugs don't respect class

Heroin UK Drugs, Murder and Prostitution

Toffs & celebrities can't handle it either Coke, booze & the Priory

Jackass star

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkvVcQr6JU4>

\* Cannabis keeps me sane and happy, says George Michael



The cannabis diaries How to tear your own family apart




# 'Cannabis use is not good for health.'

World Drug Report 2006

p. 185

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

- \* • Cannabis smoking is as bad for the lungs as tobacco smoking is.
  - \* • Impairs one's ability to drive a car and other complex operations requiring motor skills.
  - \* • A fifth of cannabis users have experienced unwanted psychic effects during cannabis intoxication, inc. panic attacks, paranoia, and 'psychotic symptoms' and risk increased by using of high potency cannabis.
  - \* • Cannabis dependency **is a reality**: just under 10 per cent find it difficult to stop, and over 1 million people are treated for cannabis dependence each year worldwide.
  - \* • Younger users' brains are especially vulnerable to the negative effects of cannabis.
  - \* • Significant risks associated with prenatal exposure to cannabis and effects on cardiovascular system.
- 

# UN conclusions p185

**‘Whether these negative effects are greater or lesser than other substances, including legally available substances, is of little relevance to the users whose lives are impacted by them.’**

**‘Despite its normalization in some countries and its occasional celebration in popular culture, it should be noted that cannabis is a powerful drug that has recently become more powerful in many parts of the world.’**

★ UNODC World Drug Report 2006

<http://www.unodc.org/newsletter/en/perspectives/0601/page010.html>

★ Now World Drug Report 2007

[http://www.unodc.org/india/world\\_drug\\_report\\_2007.html](http://www.unodc.org/india/world_drug_report_2007.html)

★ GO MAD AND UPDATE!



# Normalisation?

- ★ Normalisation debate is significant in law making and in service provision (South 1999)
- ★ Normalisation of drug use well underway and more prevalent in UK than in Europe (Druglink, 2001, Parker et al, 1998)
- ★ Shiner & Newburn (1999) argue that this is exaggerated



# Social exclusion, deprivation & drugs

- ★ 1980s saw high unemployment
- ★ Drug use & socio-economic conditions = focus of research
- ★ 1970-1984 +ve correlation between annual unemployment rate and number of cautions, convictions & user notifications (Peck & Plant, 1986)
- ★ North of UK - high drug use areas were also high u/emp, lone-parent families, poor social mobility, etc. (Pearson et al, 1986)



# Will legalisation change experiences like this?

- ★ ‘In Ravensthorpe....”J” who runs a drop-in centre for addicts and their parents, is bringing up her grandchildren because her son and daughter are both addicts’
- ★ ‘A white-collar worker tells me her niece buys her two sons a bag [of heroine] each a day, rather than have them stealing to get it’



# DRUGS & CRIME

- ★ **DECRIMINALIZATION** vs **PROHIBITION**
- ★ Illegality makes possession, supply, preparation, & manufacture an offence
- ★ Cannabis forms the bulk of enforcement statistics, yet is the main recreational choice for large part of population (Sharp et al BCS 2001)
- ★ Relatively harmless cf other illegal (or legal) drugs (Jacobson, 1999)
- ★ Therefore, often questions of whether prohibition & resources used are sensible/rational (Police Foundation, 2000)



# LEGALIZATION

## ★ Proponents argue that:

- law enforcement is **COSTLY, COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, & UNSUCCESSFUL** (Nadelman, 1989; Stevenson, 1991; Graham, 1991)
- Wider Availability would **NOT** mean unacceptable rise in use
- Legal Taxation would provide education, Health & counselling funds
- Regulation over purity & adulteration would reduce harm
- Legality would destroy criminal markets' profitability



# Anti-legalizationists

(Inciardi & McBride, 1989; Wilson, 1990)

- ★ Legalization WOULD increase USE
- ★ Increase in social costs to society
- ★ Example - Netherlands
- ★ Misunderstood by US prohibitionists
- ★ Policy aimed at MARKET SEPARATION
- ★ Cannabis vs Drugs with unacceptable risk (Dorn, 1992)
- ★ Recent restrictions by Dutch Govt on perceived abuses of café system (Horstink-Von Meyenfeldt, 1996)



# Regulation: make some drugs legal and regulate them?

- ★ [http://current.com/items/91503842\\_master-debaters-pot-vs-meth.htm](http://current.com/items/91503842_master-debaters-pot-vs-meth.htm)



# Regulation: who should be drug tested in a legalized world?



✦ Airline pilots?

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/airlines/story/0,,1968060,00.html> G 09 12 06

✦ Train drivers?

✦ Police officers

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article3098016.ece>

✦ Politicians?

✦ Surgeons?

✦ Students?

✦ Lecturers?

✦ Benefits Claimants?

[http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/sep/27/drugs-test-benefit-](http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/sep/27/drugs-test-benefit-unemployed-rehab)

[unemployed-rehab](#)

# Observer/ICM Oct 2008 poll

**In general, do you believe that the drug laws in this country are...?**

Base – all respondents

Too liberal	32%
About right	50%
Not liberal enough	18%

**Do you believe that certain drugs that are currently illegal should be legalised or decriminalised?**

Base – all respondents

Yes	27%
No	73%

**Which of the following key workers do you believe should undergo routine drugs tests?**

Base – all respondents

Police officers	85%
Pilots	83%
Doctors/nurses	74%
Drivers	72%
Teachers	68%
None of these	6%



# Conclusions

- ★ We don't know enough!
- ★ Raistrick et al (1999) No answer to why some become dependent on a single substance, most avoid or grow out of dependence, or grow into relatively stable and patterned drug use as adults
- ★ Imperfect knowledge on successes and failures of prevention, treatment and CJ intervention



# Final Anti-drugs message

- ★ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBP-SJqnJGY>



# The Debate

**Statement A**



**\* DRUGS SHOULD BE LEGALISED**

**Statement B**

**\* DRUGS SHOULD NOT BE LEGALISED**



**Rounding up**

**Thinking  
about your  
assessment**



# Moving beyond the debate

- ★ To what extent is there a trade of between:
  - evidence of harm?
  - and political rhetoric based on perceived public opinion?



## ★ PERCEIVED HARMFULNESS

- Behaviour & subjective experience also influenced by culture, context and expectations (Zinberg, 1984)
- ★ International laws & conventions can be misguided & ineffective in preventing traditional drugs use (Saxena, 1995)



# Drugs & crime

## 2 EXTREME POSITIONS

1. Criminal lifestyles facilitate drug involvement

**[WILL LEGALISATION REDUCE THIS?]**

OR

2. Drug dependence leads to criminal activity to pay for more drugs

**[LEGALISATION LIKELY TO HAVE GREATEST IMPACT HERE?]**

\* See Walters (1994) for treatment along this continuum - theory



# 1. Crime involvement → Drug use

(Preble & Casey, 1969; Hammersley et al, 1989, 1990)

- ★ Involvement in crime or deviant sub-cultures exposes the availability of drug sold
- ★ Deviant life-style accommodates deviant drug use with ease
- ★ Money from criminal activity pays for drugs, but drug use did not lead to committing crime
  - ★ ethnography shows hustling & dynamic enterprise in contrast to stereotype of dazed junkie
  - ★ explanations of delinquency are more important than explanations invoking drug addiction
  - ★ moderate heroin users =/= more criminal than cannabis or alcohol users

## 2. Drug use → crime

- ★ Drug use (esp heroin) causes crime
- ★ Convictions doubled after using heroin regularly (Jarvis & Parker, 1989)
- ★ 60s & 80s = specific break ins to pharmacies



# Resolution?

- ★ Addicts and users are not an homogenous group (Nurco et al, 1985)
  
- ★ Read
  - ★ Hough 1996; 10-18
  - ★ South 1995, Vol.2



# **Do we care about drugs?**

★ Harm reduction

OR

★ Public order/fear of crime



# Understanding factors that 'cause' changes in drug use

- \* Broad demographic, social and economic change, not policy
- \* Drug treatment comes too late in life to have major impact and is tied to criminal justice
- \* To reduce costs of drug use to users and society needs:
  - \* Making treatment attractive to younger users
  - \* Needs to engage with crack users
  - \* Need to keep treatment entrants longer
- \* Controlling/enforcing drug supply at source, in transit, in retail has not worked



- ★ Efforts to prevent drug use have not impacted on levels of offending, but they have increased the costs of imprisonment of offending drug users.
- ★ Needs a refocusing away from CJ and on other outcomes such as reducing:
  - ★ drug related deaths
  - ★ related viral infection
  - ★ Social exclusion of users



- ★ Need to look at primary & secondary prevention:

- ★ Increasing scale & quality of drug treatment
- ★ Family support
- ★ Early education
- ★ Youth work provision

- ★ Reuter P. & Stevens A. (2008) Assessing UK drug policy from a crime control perspective. *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 8 (4) p.475.



# Final Thoughts

- ★ **LEGALISATION** does not mean **DE-REGULATION**
- ★ It can only get rid of the problems associated with prohibition & criminal markets
- ★ It does Not address underlying causes of misuse
  - Poverty
  - Unemployment
  - Boredom
  - Lack of opportunity
  - Mental health problems
  - Histories of abuse/being in care
  - It still requires regulatory framework (and taxes!) just as with alcohol and tobacco
- ★ **ALL SOLUTIONS CREATE NEW PROBLEMS**
- ★ **After the war on drugs** [www.tdpf.org.uk](http://www.tdpf.org.uk)
- ★



# Legalising illicit drugs: A signposting resource

- \* BMA – free access through University @

<http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/legalisingillicitdrugsresource>

A must for those who will tackle this topic in the examination.

- \* This can be downloaded as a Word file and many of its reference sources/citations can also be accessed electronically through the document
- \* NO EXCUSE FOR NOT READING THEM
- \* NO EXCUSE FOR NOT REFERENCING THEM CORRECTLY



# Cannabis: a special case?

## Issues since Jan 2004

- CANNABIS
- I didn't want it downgraded
- One simple message law relaxed but drug is still harmful and illegal
- Lottery of police action after Jan 2004
- Cannabis use down since legal change
- Cannabis loses allure but cocaine use upward
- Brown announces review of cannabis classification



# Drugs: evidence based enforcement? (1)

## CONVINCING?

See 'One in four at risk of cannabis psychosis' <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3561-1565337,00.html>

[Rats yield clue to part of brain behind addiction](#) Guardian

[Cannabis use linked to 40% rise in risk of schizophrenia](#) Guardian

[Off Your Head - Cannabis link to mental illness](#) Observer

[Cannabis can lead to harder drugs](#) Telegraph

[It's not a moral panic. Drugs really do destroy communities](#) Guardian



# Drugs: evidence based enforcement? (2)

## OR NOT CONVINCING?

Cannabis chemical curbs psychotic symptoms, study finds

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,,2069281,00.html>

[Ben Goldacre: Cannabis data comes to the crunch | Science | The Guardian](#) 28 07 07

[Panel says link with mental illness is 'very small' | Guardian](#)

[Increment of harm Guardian](#)

[Expert advisers threaten revolt against Clarke | Guardian](#)

[Drug misuse The weight of evidence](#)

[Cannabis is bad for you, but it's also impossible to ban Guardian](#)

[Drug laws 'ought to recognise that most users are no harm to anyone' Times](#)



# Observer/ICM poll

## October 2008

- ★ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/series/drugs-uncovered>
- ★ There are a lot of other useful materials here, but think about how academically sound they are – do you need to trace some original sources (other than the poll).
- ★ Play the clip (you have to sit through the ad at the beginning, but it is worth it)



# Also see:

**Give heroin to addicts, says police chief** 23 11 2006 Guardian

(Howard Roberts, deputy Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,,1954749,00.html>



**Badge of honour** 12 09 07 Guardian

(Jack Cole Former US undercover narcotics officer)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,,2166824,00.html>

**Prescribe more free heroin: Birt's secret advice to ministers** 09 02 2006 Guardian

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,,1705587,00.html>

## BUT ALSO

Check out the 'leaked' 'SU Drugs Project Phase 2 Report: Diagnosis and Recommendations' in full yourself

<http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2006/02/08/Drugs.pdf>

**Britain's fight against drugs 'a total failure'** Observer 15 04 07

[http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk\\_news/story/0,,2057565,00.html](http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,2057565,00.html)

## AND

Check out the **UK Drugs policy Commission (2007) 'An analysis of UK Drugs Policy'** report for yourself

<http://www.ukdpc.org.uk/docs%5CUKDPC%20drug%20policy%20review.pdf>

**For both these press articles and full reports:**

- \* **How well did the press article represent the balance of the findings?**
- \* **What does this say about the need to check original sources, use proper referencing, etc?**
- \* **Who are the authors? Use Harvard APA.**



# **Additional references**

- ★ Bennett, T & Holloway, K. (2005)  
Understanding Drugs, Alcohol and  
Crime



# Need to recap?

[mms://ondemand.port.ac.uk/ellist/test\\_drugs\\_debate.wmv](mms://ondemand.port.ac.uk/ellist/test_drugs_debate.wmv)

Video Clip 1

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w\\_6oiR5IbE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w_6oiR5IbE)

Video Clip 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBP-SJqnJGY>

