

Drug dealers

Do "pushers" create more addicts?

The "evil drug dealer"

'Pushers' create new users and addicts

The idea of the drug 'pusher' - i.e. someone who tempts the non-drug user (often portrayed as children) into using drugs (perhaps initially by giving free samples) - is misleading in a number of ways and detracts from where the real problem with initial drug exposure/use lies.

Firstly, the vast majority of nonusers initially experiment with drugs obtained from friends, family or acquaintances, certainly not from strangers.

Secondly, giving away free drugs as a matter of course does not make economic sense. Few drug dealers, if any, can afford to simply give away free drugs in the hope that people will buy from them as opposed to other drug dealers in the future. This idea is also predicated upon another long-standing myth - that once 'hooked' the new user will have to have more drugs. The reality is that addiction to drugs is never immediate, usually taking many months to develop. No street -level dealer has the resources to invest in such an unpredictable and costly exercise, and certainly not on a systematic basis as some reports have suggested.

Under certain circumstances free drugs ('freebies') are provided by dealers in drug transactions, but research shows that these tend to be only with buyers who have an established relationship with the dealer, having proven themselves to be reliable clients. Freebies are used to reward good clients and to cultivate improved relationships - they are however not a regular or predictable part of drug transactions.

Finally, children are risky to sell to. They are a bad risk, being more likely to tell others about the dealer and being less likely to have a secure and regular income (although other youngsters may be involved in the supply of drugs).

References

Coomber, R. (forthcoming) `There's no such thing as a free lunch: how 'freebies' and `credit' operate as part of rational drug market activity not as a device for `pushing' drugs onto the innocent and uninitiated' Journal of Drug Issues

Coomber, R. (1999) `Cutting the crap: The reality of drug adulteration', Druglink, July/August, Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp. 19-21.

Kaplan, J. (1985) The Hardest Drug: Heroin and Public Policy, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

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[DrugSearch - Dealing](#) Dealing means supplying drugs to another person, usually in exchange for money

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