Heroin myths

How addictive is heroin?

Heroin myths and misconceptions

Instant addiction

That heroin is addictive is a fact. Heroin is not however, instantly or even nearly instantly addictive (neither is crack cocaine or any other substance). This idea is based upon a fundamental misunderstanding of addiction and the supposed power of the drug. Research consistently shows that becoming addicted to any drug takes time, usually at least 2-3 months (often much longer) where the user builds up to regular daily use. No drug has the power to instantly addict a user. This is a myth which often gets reinvented by the media (often due to authorities such as the police or politicians making such a statement) each time a 'new' drug comes on the scene (witness 'crack', 'ice'). Usually the new drug is not a new drug at all.

References


Controlled heroin use

Heroin use in many cases leads to heroin addiction. However there are also many occasional or 'controlled' heroin (and other drug) users who are capable of using the drug with informal controls/constraints on their using behaviour e.g. using only at weekends, never on a working day, never alone, never with children around etc. In some cases such use can go on indefinitely with little physical harm accruing to the user. It is not uncommon for the drug use of such users to be unknown by those close to them.

References


Heroin is relatively non-toxic

Heroin itself is relatively non-toxic (it doesn't destroy skin tissue or other cells in the body as does alcohol and tobacco). Most of the health problems that stem from heroin use are life-style related or linked to the route of administration (injecting drug use for example - through sharing needles or improper use - often leads to various blood-borne diseases or viruses such as HIV or Hepatitis B/C and/or abscess or collapsed veins).

Heroin itself cannot give you spots, make you thin etc. as suggested by previous 'educational' campaigns. Those with the resources to buy their heroin without it impacting on money for food or personal welfare and who are careful about how they administer the drug, can live a generally healthy lifestyle.
Although overdose, (fatal and otherwise) can result from heroin use, it is rare that this is solely the result of heroin use alone.

**Heroin is not cut with dangerous substances**

Heroin is almost never purposely adulterated ('cut') with dangerous substances, despite popular belief that it is.

**Addiction is not forever**

Heroin addiction is not necessarily a 'life sentence'. Many heroin addicts 'mature out' of their addiction. The research literature reports extensive evidence of 'spontaneous remission' and 'maturing out' that demonstrates that even the most chronic of addicts may leave their addiction behind them when their circumstances change, (e.g. new partner/child/job/perspective on the world, fed up with lifestyle/being arrested/having no money/having no relationships with family/friends/children etc). This relates primarily to ideas around 'addiction pathways' and undermines simplistic ideas of addiction being primarily biochemical in nature.

**References**


**Related Links:**

DrugSearch - Heroin Boy, brown, china white, dragon, gear, H, horse, junk, skag, smack...

For more information please contact Ruth Goldsmith

©2008 DrugScope
Built on OneStopCMS