



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Children hospitalised after taking drugs soars by up to 50%

By Daily Mail Reporter and Matthew Hickley 15th August 2008

The number of children taken to hospital because of drug use has soared since 1997. Hospital admissions to treat overdoses or drug-induced mental problems **jumped 43 per cent among the under-16s.**

In the population as a whole, admissions doubled from 19,000 to 38,000 in a decade. Critics said the figures showed startling numbers of younger schoolchildren are drifting into drug use. **Among 15-year-old boys 42 per cent admit having taken illegal drugs** - including 32 per cent in the past year.

But ministers insisted the figures were proof of success, pointing to slight falls in overall use and record numbers entering **treatment programmes - up from 85,000 to 195,000** in the past eight years. NHS data from hospitals in England show a huge rise in admissions where drug abuse was the primary diagnosis or underlying cause, with figures doubling over the past decade to 38,170 last year.

Just over **10,000 cases last year were for overdoses - up from 7,000 a decade ago** - with the remainder dealing with **mental or behavioral problems**. Among children aged under 16 admissions reached 1,241 last year, up 43 per cent from 868 in 1996-97. That included 839 youngsters suffering from drug poisoning (up from 596) and 402 needing urgent treatment for mental and behavioural problems (up from 272). Among 16 to 24-year-olds drug-related hospital admissions rose by almost a fifth to just under 7,000.

In 1996 just 1.3 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds admitted taking cocaine in the past year. That rose to 6 per cent last year. The peak age is among 20- to 24-year-olds where 8.3 per cent have used cocaine in the past year. The proportion of over-16s taking cannabis has fallen from 10 per cent to 8.2 per cent, but those using more harmful Class A drugs are up from 2.7 to 3.4 per cent.

The PPP comments Our front page written over 4 years ago predicted what would happen and we would much prefer to have been proven wrong. A massive 130% increase in people on treatment for drug dependency being seen as a success is like applauding there being more lung cancer wards full of smokers. There appears to be a reality gap between numbers using drugs and ALL the drug related Hospital figures. This also happened, markedly with serious injury statistics from road incidents.

We believe a combination of... a lack of strong moral leadership and advice, the wrong messages from government policies on drugs and alcohol and the far from zero tolerance policing will continue to exacerbate the problem. We need harsher penalties for drug dealing.

**A PPP member writes about people he knows and work experience in Africa ...
I know two people who are really ill , one with kidney failure and one who looks like a concentration camp survivor. Both are (were) intelligent individuals some years ago, look at their stories;**

One, a skilled aircraft fitter decided to change career and ended up working for a Liverpool based firm. As he worked away from home the end of the day was often spent having a few beers with the lads. One night (note) he was offered some drug which he unwittingly & being a bit worse for wear, took. All the next day he felt a bit rough and was given a bit more that night. He was hooked just like that! Soon all his money was going on his habit, he lost his job , moved back home and destroyed his parents lives. He now lives in a hostel in North Wales. I saw him recently and could have cried. From a fit, good looking, man he's now down to about 7 stone, no teeth and grubby, he asked if I could "lend " him a fiver !

The second, has wealthy grandparents and professional parents she had a brand new car for her 18th birthday. Not a seriously disadvantaged teenager from some dreadful estate. She got in with the "wrong crowd " , clubbing , flitting from one college course to another and taking drugs. She's now in her mid thirty's, weighs about six stone , is on permanent dialysis and probably will not see 40. She is , I gather , no longer on the so called hard drugs but it is too late for her. Her dad's life is ruined and he no longer works as he has to care for her almost full time.

Lets move to Africa;

I lived in Africa for years. Then it was not so much hard drugs but Marijuana and a plant called Mirah which the locals used to chew on to keep them awake. I would often fire my operators off for a few hours because they had been smoking Marijuana and could barely stand up. They wandered around aimlessly and were both a danger to themselves and others. OFTEN they would become very aggressive. Are we going down a road that leads to a similar state?

We would like to hear and publish other stories about this problem ...it affects us all one way or another. The advocates of legalisation can write to us to explain **how it will reduce consumption & addiction and prevent such life stories as these. We will be happy to publish their letters on this site.**

We know that **legalised cheap alcohol has taken many people close to having a drink problem and most, the lucky one's have drawn back from the brink.**