

Martin Drinkwater

14/05/2015

Submission
To the Commissioners of
The National Enquiry on Methamphetamine as
A comment:

Dear Sirs/Madams

I observe media with interest recently as your enquiry progresses and as a result the spotlight is cast firmly on the scourge of “Ice” abuse in our society.

Retired for four years now as an emergency and intensive care psychiatric nurse, I had for the last fifteen years or so of my working life been witness to the ever increasing number of presentations of individuals, who have as the catalyst for their presentation amphetamine or methamphetamine use/abuse.

My experience, simplistic as some may perceive it, suggests to me, that from a media and resultant social perspective, the apparent immediacy of this issue for individuals and families fails to acknowledge that, as well as a multiplicity of social issues in the majority of cases, the individual has been on a pathway, pre-empted by historical Marijuana (THC), addiction for a number of years, and that readily available cheap amphetamines, offer a short term fix for the resultant anxiety, depressive and sometime psychotic symptomatology they experience and are unable to escape.

I remain unable to reconcile for myself that society appears to condone this epidemic as “Mental Illness” affording it some sort of credence as socially acceptable. The availability of a broad selection of Anti-psychotic medications with minimal side effects, available to the medical profession in the last twenty years have increased compliance and subsequently afforded those individuals within our society experiencing straight mental illness (without substance abuse complications), a degree of remission, that is for them, their families, friends and supporters, like winning the lottery.

In conclusion, I wonder that this current social emergency closeted in the guise of mental illness and nurtured in the cradle of the so-called “soft drug” culture, requires more political will than is currently available and that subsequently if we fail too act on a multi-jurisdictional level we may one day in the very near future, need as a society to confront our own “Opium War”.

Regards

Martin