

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the question on notice.

The question was : *“Is ice more addictive than other substances?”*

As I indicated during the Hearing, this is a difficult question to which to give a simple or straightforward answer.

One of the reasons for this is that the word ‘addiction’ itself has complex meanings, for example, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders describes addiction as:

“Addiction is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by three (or more) (symptoms) occurring any time in the same 12-month period”

“DSM-IV criteria for substance dependence include several specifiers, one of which outlines whether substance dependence is with physiologic dependence (evidence of tolerance or withdrawal) or without physiologic dependence (no evidence of tolerance or withdrawal)..”

The International Classification of Disease describe Dependence Syndrome (in Mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use) as:

“A cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drug use than to other activities and obligations, increased tolerance, and sometimes a physical withdrawal state.”

While there has been a small amount of research comparing the addictive potency of various drugs, it must be recognised that addiction to ice will depend on how often the individual uses ice, how much ice they use, their personal context, and how they take the drug. The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) indicates that smoking and injecting ice are the most addictive ways to take ice (for further information see <https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/ndarc/resources/On%20Ice.pdf>).

I trust this information is helpful to the Committee.

Regards, Louise

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