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DRUGS AND CRIME

Drug taking as a precursor to violent and property offending.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in Psychology
at Massey University.

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1996

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate relationships between pre-offence drug use and offence type, using a sample of incarcerated New Zealand male offenders. Self-report data addressed drug (including alcohol) use in the 12 hours before the offence and in the month before the offence, motivation for offending, and causal attributions made by offenders, and a number of other variables. Half of the sample reported being under the influence of drugs while committing the offence for which they were incarcerated; over two-thirds of the sample had used drugs in the 12 hours before the offence. Most pre-offence users had used illegal drugs, or a combination of illegal drugs and alcohol. There was a non-significant relationship between pre-offence drug use and offence type. Violent offenders reported the lowest pre-offence drug use, and property offenders the highest, which did not support previous research reporting strong links between drug use prior to offending and violent offences. Fewer offenders reported that the reason for their offence was to obtain money for drugs than in U.S. studies. Problems and limitations in conducting research of this nature are addressed, and future research needs are identified, in particular the need for more information about the situation in which drug use and offending occurs. Implications of the present findings are also discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thankyou to Joan Barnes, my thesis supervisor, for her support and enthusiasm throughout the long haul.

Thanks also to my family for their support, especially my mother Heather for the financial assistance! And thankyou Rob for putting up with the stressful moments.

I would also like to express my thanks to the staff of Manawatu Prison, Wellington Prison and Rimutaka Prison, for their assistance while the survey was being conducted, and to the inmates who took the time to complete the questionnaires. Without you this thesis would not exist.

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