
DRUGS, MEDIA AND ENFORCEMENT :

A Survey of the Relationship between Drug Abuse
& Media Attention to Drugs including a study of the
effects of an attempt to elicit information about
drug trafficking from the Australian public

prepared by

J. HENDTLASS

MAY 1985

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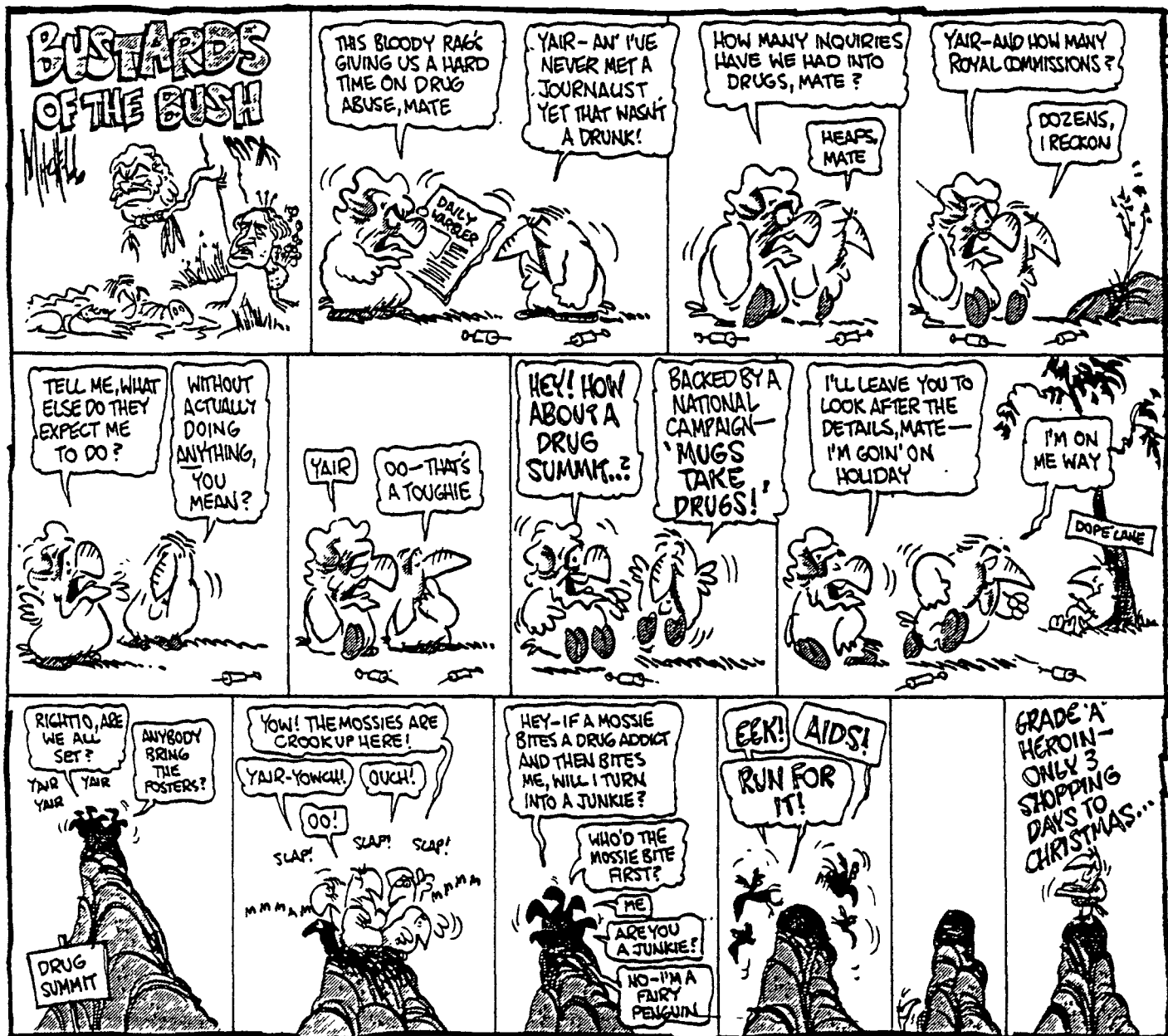
A Survey of the Relationship between Drug Abuse
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By

JANE HENDTLASS

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SUMMARY

Drug taking and drug trafficking worry Australians more than any other community issue except youth unemployment . Our priorities have changed since 1978 when we considered unemployment and violent crime were more important.

Further, drug offences reported to Victoria Police have increased six-fold in the last ten years and in 1982, trafficking offences increased by 17% over the previous year. For amphetamine offences the increase was 183%.

These factors influenced the Victoria Police when they were approached by Melbourne radio station 3AW in December 1982, offering its facilities and cooperation in a one day campaign directed at eliciting information about drug manufacture, growth and distribution activities in Victoria.

At about the same time as Operation Noah was under discussion, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal released a discussion paper about the relationship between advertising and alcohol consumption and it has subsequently proposed imposing restrictions on the times at which television stations may carry liquor advertising.

Both Operation Noah and the proposed Australian Broadcasting Tribunal regulations on alcohol advertising have the indirect aim of reducing drug abuse in the community. However, they have attacked the problem in two apparently entirely opposite ways.

On one hand, Operation Noah attempted to encourage the public to give information to the police by using the media to heighten community awareness of drug abuse, an approach which runs counter to current thinking among many drug control experts

(ii)

about the role which information dissemination may play in promoting drug abuse.

On the other hand, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal plans to lessen the acceptability of alcohol consumption among the young by controlling the times and places which alcohol advertising can be shown. Advertising controls have not been shown to have any consistent effect on overall alcohol consumption.

In the light of this basic divergence of opinion about the real relationship between the media and drug abuse, this report attempts to

1. Describe drug use in the Australian community and the way in which it is treated by the media;
2. Describe Operation Noah in terms of its operational outcomes and its effect on enforcement of the drug legislation; and
3. Document the ways in which the characteristics of drug offenders and drug overdose patients in Melbourne changed between the time periods November to January 1981-1982 and 1982-83 respectively.
4. Assess the positive and negative effect expected to follow from media attention to drugs and drug abuse with particular emphasis on Operation Noah and on alcohol advertising.

Drug Use in Australia

Community opinion about drugs is not based on logic or facts and it reflects a basic ambivalence in society with regard to the moral, ethical and social implications of drug use and abuse.

(iii)

Development and measurement of opinion in this area has become progressively more complicated as pharmacology and production techniques have advanced, the range of substances available to drug users has increased, the legitimate and illegitimate uses to which they can be put has extended and their cost to the individual consumer and the community has reduced.

Australians are consistently heavy users of all types of drugs and there is evidence to suggest the pattern of drug abuse in our community is closely following that reported in the United States five to ten years previously.

- . The alcohol consumption rate in Victoria has remained stable for the last sixteen years but the consumption rate for the rest of Australia continues to increase. Australia is 13th in rank order for the consumption of absolute alcohol in the world and is third in beer consumption.
- . Among year 10 school boys and girls, over one-third smoke cigarettes at least weekly.
- . Over-the-counter and prescribed medication is used by between 24% and 67% of the population in any two day period.
- . In Australia, weekly solvent use is now reported to be over 10% for 12 and 13 year old girls.
- . Over 20% drivers injured in car crashes have been smoking marijuana.

Drug Controls

In general, countermeasures against drug abuse have developed in an irrelevant and irrational manner. In the case of alcohol and tobacco, both the community and government seem

(iv)

unsure about the purpose of legal restrictions on availability and any change in the penalty structure for other drug offences is unlikely to have any effect on availability and use of illegal drugs unless the risk of detection is great enough to act as a real deterrent.

Role of the Media

Both the electronic and the print media are accepting an increasingly important educational role in the community. At the same time they are responding to their audience preference for immediacy and sensationalism by increasing their emphasis on news and discrete events at the expense of discussion of more complex issues.

Electronic and print media frequently refer to drugs in their news stories and in magazine material and drama programmes. Alcohol and tobacco are rarely referred to as "drugs" and their use is generally condoned. Their advertising ranks 11th & 14th in product advertising expenditure. Prescription and over-the-counter drugs are rarely mentioned in news or drama items but they rank 13th in product advertising expenditure. Illicit substances are more often featured in their criminological context.

The influence of the media on drug use and abuse remains unclear. It is possible that some sensationalised public health campaigns may be counterproductive but there is no evidence to suggest that advertising can greatly increase community consumption of any particular substance. However, some effect on the pattern of use among particular individuals cannot be ruled out.

(v)

The media could be used appropriately by drug education experts to improve community awareness of the risks and symptoms of drug abuse as part of broader community based programmes.

At the same time journalists would become more aware of their influence and the way it operates in the drug area and this should reduce the incidence of alcohol and other drug use portrayed in locally produced programmes.

Media Participation in Operation Noah

Operation Noah was a joint media-police operation aimed at eliciting information from the public about drug trafficking in Victoria. It was scheduled to begin at 9 am on December 10th 1982. However, as far as the media were concerned, their active participation began one week earlier.

Most of the media contribution was carried by radio station 3AW who ran a series of interviews with professionals involved in the drug scene throughout the day. This was supplemented by news stories on all television and major radio stations and some press attention to the Operation.

Media coverage to the Operation was often sensationalised and inaccurate, stating, for example:

- . "...Rapacious ratbags who peddle drugs..."
- . "They are the leeches of society"
- . "Sixty of the calls were about schools. Fifty people have been arrested"
- . "Is those parasites who make money out of other peoples' suffering".

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Response to Operation Noah

One fifth of the 434 phone calls made to police in response to Operation Noah, referred to places outside the metropolitan area and in one half dwellings were nominated as being associated with drug offences.

Just over half the complaints referred specifically to drug trafficking and 20% to marijuana growing.

Police responded actively to three quarters of these telephone reports and this involved them in 381 visits to premises, 40 search warrants and 96 searches without warrant.

Drugs were found in 33 places; nearly all of these were marijuana. Twenty two people were charged with drug offences.

Drug Abusers in Melbourne November, December & January 1981-82 and in 1982-83

Information has been collected about drug abusers who come to notice in two ways:

- . As drug offenders reported to Victoria Police in metropolitan Melbourne; and
- . As drug overdose patients transported by Ambulance Service Melbourne.

About 2.5% of all drug offences reported in November and December 1982 and January 1983 could be attributed to Operation Noah and this number was therefore too small to have any direct influence on the types of people and offences involved.

(vii)

There was a 35% increase in the number of drug offenders charged in metropolitan Melbourne during November, December and January 1982-83 compared with the same period a year earlier. Nearly all this increase can be attributed to a 78% increase in the figures for December 1981 compared with December 1982.

However, only 10 people were charged with trafficking offences alone in November, December and January 1982-83 compared with 23 in the same period of the previous year.

There was 29% increase in the number of drug overdose patients taken to hospital by Ambulance Service Melbourne during November, December and January 1982-83, compared with the same period a year earlier. Most of this increase can be attributed to a 50% increase in figures for December 1982 compared with December 1981.

Discussion

Australians' ambivalence to drugs use and its associated problems expresses itself in

- . Their drug taking behaviour;
- . Media attention to drugs; and
- . Development and execution of drug control procedures.

Australians are heavy users of all drugs but unsolicited media attention is mainly directed at use of illicit drugs. Advertising of alcohol, tobacco and medication may help balance the amount of exposure given to different substance categories but it is controlled in various ways and these controls may soon be extended.

(viii)

In general, legislative drug control procedures seem to have developed in response to community and political pressure and are not likely to be effective in reducing drug abuse.

It seems that the hypocritical approach to drug use and drug control has been influenced by media attention to the subject because their emphasis can have direct and indirect influence on development of drug abuse countermeasures:

- . It irrationally increases community fear and prejudice which results in their calling for punitive legislative reaction;
- . It simplifies and trivialises the situation so that "easy" answers such as legislation and advertising controls can seem appropriate and long term prevention measures appear to be overlooked;
- . It may be counterproductive among individuals at risk because it sensationalises illicit drug use.

However, the contrary viewpoints which suggest that the media has little effect on community behaviour but rather reflects existing social attitudes, that sensationalised media cover does not always elicit fear, and that successful fear arousal is not necessarily accompanied by changes in outlook or behaviour appear to have been supported in the case of Operation Noah.

Operation Noah had little effect on drug abuse in Melbourne when measured in terms of numbers of drug offenders and drug overdose patients who came to notice of the Police and Ambulance Services.

(ix)

However, in enforcement terms, the Operation did not achieve its objective of eliciting information which resulted in prosecution of drug traffickers, manufacturers and growers in the community.

The value of the Operation as an enforcement tool must therefore remain doubtful.

The relationship between the police and the media is symbiotic in that both professions need each other: one to provide a reliable source of newsworthy stories, the other to ensure community cooperation and improve public perception.

Operation Noah is a particularly good example of the way police and the media can work together and inasmuch as this provides a mechanism through which they can increase their mutual understanding of each other's professional roles, the concept has the potential for development into a useful drug abuse countermeasure.

At the level of the individual drug user, other disciplines have been involved in Operations subsequent to that undertaken in 1982, by providing a phone counselling service in conjunction with the primary enforcement theme of the campaign and this should improve cooperation and understanding between different professional groups .

At the community level, there is a need to:

- . Firstly, rationalise the continuing reliance on legislation as a drug abuse countermeasure, paying particular attention in this case to use of police resources in limited, short-term operations such as Operation Noah and,

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- . Secondly, encourage the media and other professionals such as policemen to express their concern about the drug situation in an accurate and de-sensationalised manner.

1. BACKGROUND

Drug taking and drug trafficking worry Australians more than any other community issue except youth unemployment (Australian Public Opinion Polls 1984a). These priorities have changed since 1978 when we considered unemployment and violent crime were more important (Woodward 1980).

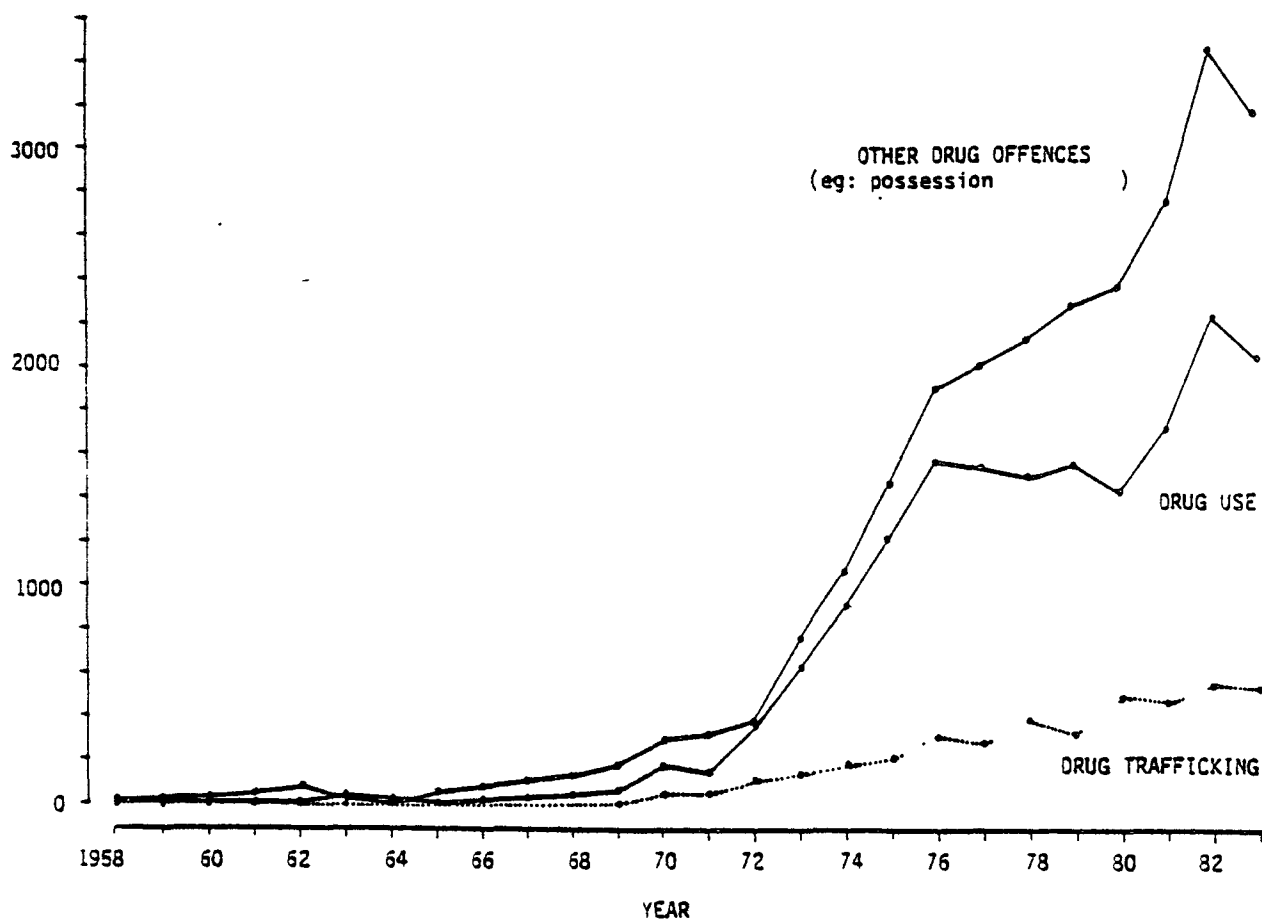
There have been three Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Enquiries in the last twelve years which have been specifically concerned with the Illicit Drug Distribution System (Senate Select Committee on Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse 1972; N.S.W. Royal Commission into Drug Trafficking 1979; Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs 1980) and several other enquiries have covered drug trafficking as part of a more general investigation (Royal Commission into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs in South Australia 1978; Interdepartmental Working Party on the Drug Problem in Victoria 1980; AFADD 1981, Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Nugan Hand Bank 1983, Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Activities of the Painters and Dockers Union 1984).

These have served to focus the attention of law enforcement bodies and others on the implications of the drug distribution network, not only in the area of drug abuse but also in the whole milieu of organised crime.

1.1 Reasons for Operation Noah

In Victoria, drug offences reported to Victoria Police have increased six-fold in the last ten years and in 1982, trafficking offences increased by 17% over the previous year. (Figure 1). For amphetamine offences the increase was 183% (Victoria Police 1983).

FIGURE 1
DRUG OFFENCES REPORTED TO VICTORIA POLICE



Drug trafficking offences remained static in 1983 but the number of other drug offences reported to the police declined.

These factors influenced the Victoria Police when they were approached by Melbourne radio station 3AW offering its facilities and cooperation in a one day campaign directed at eliciting information about drug manufacture, growth and distribution activities in Victoria. A similar idea had been previously implemented in Baltimore, U.S.A.

On December 10th, 1982, radio station 3AW and Victoria Police participated in a joint effort aimed at obtaining information from the general public about the illegal drug distribution network. 3AW's regular programmes for the day carried various drug themes and listeners were encouraged to use a special telephone hotline if they had any knowledge of illegal drug activities which they could give to the police.

The campaign was heralded as a success by both the police and the media and it was among the finalists in the 1983 New York International Radio Festival Award for community effort by a radio station.

At about the same time as Operation Noah was under discussion, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (1982) released a discussion paper about the relationship between advertising and alcohol consumption and it has subsequently proposed imposing restrictions on the times at which television stations may carry liquor advertising (Australian Broadcasting Tribunal 1984).

Both Operation Noah and the proposed Australian Broadcasting Tribunal regulations on alcohol advertising have the indirect aim of reducing drug abuse in the community. However, they have attacked the problem in two apparently entirely opposite ways.

On one hand, Operation Noah attempted to encourage the public to give information about drug traffickers to the police by heightening community awareness of illicit drug use. This approach runs counter to current thinking among many drug control experts about the role which information dissemination may play in promoting drug abuse. Concern was also expressed about the campaign's implications for protection of civil rights such as invasion of privacy and providing a channel for vindictive reports (e.g. McCroach 1982).

On the other hand, restriction of alcohol advertising to particular times of day is an attempt to reduce the acceptability of alcohol consumption among young people. The liquor industry and others do not consider that advertising or other media attention to alcohol changes the amount of alcohol consumed. They say that it merely alters brand preferences among drinkers. Further, the media is considered unimportant in initiation of drinking behaviour compared with other family and peer group influences (Australian Associated Brewers, 1982; 1985; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Road Safety 1983).

In the light of this basic divergence of opinion about the real relationship between the media and drug abuse, this report attempts to

1. Describe drug use in the Australian community and the way in which it is treated by the media;
2. Describe Operation Noah in terms of its operational outcomes and its effect on enforcement of the drug legislation;
3. Document the ways in which the characteristics of drug offenders and drug overdose patients in Melbourne changed between the time periods November to January 1981-82 and 1982-83 respectively;

4. Assess the positive and negative effects which can be expected to follow from media attention to drugs and drug abuse with particular emphasis on Operation Noah and on alcohol advertising.

1.2 Aims of Project

The research project which is described in this report had the general aim of:

Assessing the effects which a highly publicised media campaign about drugs can be expected to have on drug abuse in the Victorian community and on enforcement of the drug control legislation.

1.3 Organisation Arrangements

The project was performed under the auspices of the Department of Criminology, University of Melbourne, with the cooperation of 3AW; it was funded by the Criminology Research Council.

Victoria Police and Ambulance Service Melbourne made their records available to the study.

1.4 Research Procedures

The aims of the project have been achieved in three stages:-

- 1) A review of the current literature regarding the factors known to affect drug use and abuse was undertaken, with particular emphasis on the relationship between different forms of media attention to drugs and drug use in the community;

- 2) The media attention to Operation Noah, the telephone responses to the request for information from the public, and the ways in which the police acted on the information which they received were documented and assessed;
- 3) Drug offenders and drug overdose patients who came to notice of Victoria Police or Ambulance Service Melbourne during November and December 1982 and January 1983 were compared with those who came to notice in the same period one year earlier.

1.4.1 Data Sources

Media

Radio and television stations and the daily press in Melbourne were monitored for references to Operation Noah and tape recordings were made of extended radio discussions of the Operation, including the Radio Station 3AW programme on 10th December 1982.

Telephone Responses

A form was completed by the detective who answered the telephone for each response to the request for information from the public about illegal drug activities.

These forms were used to create a data file of information given anonymously to the police.

Drug Offenders

All persons reported for drug related offences in the Metropolitan Police District between November 1st 1982 and January 31st 1983 were identified from Modus Operandi forms routinely collated by the Statistics Section of the Information Bureau, Victoria Police.

This information was compared with data which had been previously collected for the same months in 1981 and 1982 (Hendtlass, 1983).

Drug Overdose Patients

All persons transported to hospital by Ambulance Service Melbourne with symptoms consistent with drug overdose between November 1st 1982 and January 31st 1983 were identified from the routine computer records maintained by the Service.

This information was compared with data which had previously been collected for the same months in 1981 and 1982 (Hendtlass 1982).

All information was coded in a form acceptable for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Nie et al 1975). No personally identifying information was recorded in this way.

1.4.2 Data Analysis

Statistics - All statistical information has been analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Nie et al 1975). Differences between categorical variables have been tested statistically using Chi-square test but chi square values have been excluded from the text for simplification. All differences are regarded as:

- . significant at the 5% level;
- . very significant at the 1% level; and
- . highly significant at the 0.1% level.

Missing information accounts for differences in sample size in tables which report different variables describing the same study population. No missing information has been used in the statistical analyses.

Geographical Information - All geographical information has been recorded according to Sectors within the Melbourne Statistical Division (M.M.B.W., 1982) (Fig 2). Ambulance Service Melbourne services a slightly different area of the city from that covered by the Victoria Police Metropolitan Region.

All areas outside the are designated Metropolitan Melbourne for the Study are recorded as "Other".

1.4.3 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in this report:-

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFADD	Australian Foundation on Alcohols Drug Dependence
CCP	Chief Commissioner of Police
MMBW	Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works
METRO	Metropolitan
N.S.W.	New South Wales
RACV	Royal Automobile Club of Victoria

UK	United Kingdom
U.S.A.	United States of America
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
W.A.	Western Australia.

1.4.4 Definitions

In this report the following definitions apply:-

Drug -	Any substance which is taken to effect change in the physiological or psycho- logical functioning of the individual.
Cannabis & Marijuana	are used synonomously, and include derivatives of cannabis such as hash oil.

OPERATIONAL BOUNDARIES METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

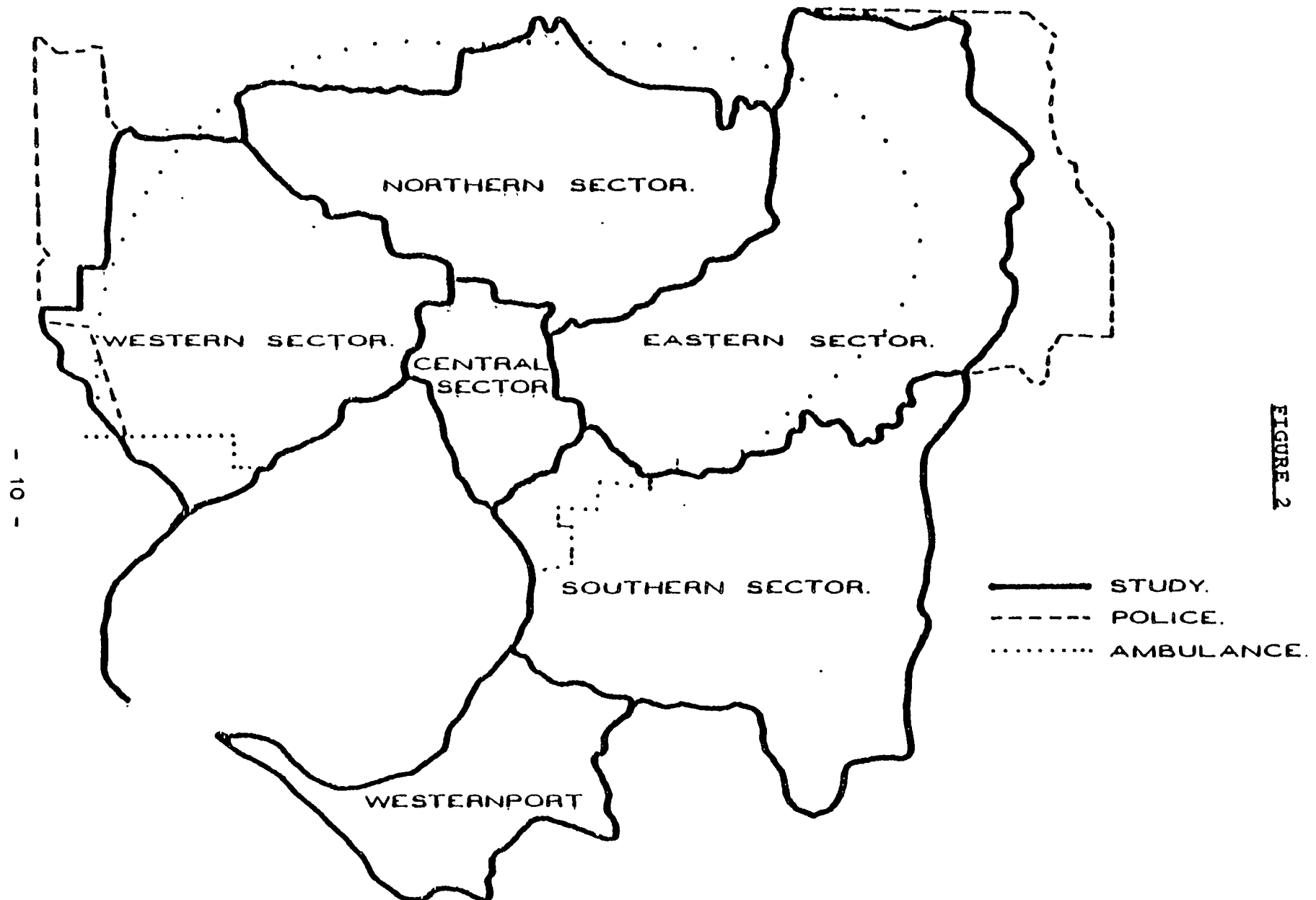


FIGURE 2

2. DRUG USE & CONTROLS

Community opinion about drugs is not based on logic or facts and it reflects a basic ambivalence in society with regard to the moral, ethical and social implications of drug use and abuse (Bean 1974; Lonie 1979; Sackville 1981).

This chapter will provide background for the report by describing in general terms, the characteristics of drug use and drug users in Australia and comparing these with those from other countries. It will also review the formal drug control measures which operate in Australia and overseas and the ways in which they can be expected to work.

2.1 Drug Use

Cultural acceptance of drug use differs from country to country. For example, alcohol is an intrinsic part of the diet in France but prohibited in Kuwait. Similarly, cannabis appears to be freely used by young people in Australian society but its use is frowned upon by the older generation (Ahlstrom-Laakso 1973; Morgan Gallup Poll 1984a).

There appears to be a positive correlation between average drug consumption rates and the incidence of drug abuse in many populations (de Lint and Schmidt 1968; Smart and Whitehead 1973; Hendtlass 1983a).

People's attitudes and behaviour with respect to drug use and abuse often change. For example, individual drug abusers appear to go through a series of inappropriate consumption patterns and most heroin addicts were initiated into drug abuse behaviour through heavy alcohol and tobacco consumption (Inciardi 1977).

Further, societal acceptance of drug use can alter. Heroin was legally used and accepted in the United States during the First World War. Its use subsequently became prohibited but there are now calls from both sides of the Pacific to allow its use again in treatment of cancer and rehabilitation of drug addicts (e.g. Trebach 1982; Mitchell 1984; Elias 1985).

Development and measurement of opinion in this area has become progressively more complicated as pharmacology and production techniques have advanced, the range of substances available to drug users has increased, the legitimate and illegitimate uses to which they can be put has extended and their cost to the individual consumer and the community has reduced.

2.1.1 Alcohol

Alcohol has been available to most societies since time immemorial although the aboriginal culture did not use the drug before the settlement of Australia by Europeans (Lonie 1979).

The alcohol consumption rate in Victoria has remained stable for the last sixteen years (Ross, 1984) but the consumption rate for the rest of Australia continues to increase (Brown et al 1982). Australia is 13th in rank order for the consumption of absolute alcohol in the world and is third in beer consumption (Stolz 1978; Brown et al 1982).

The total abstention rate from alcohol varies dramatically between countries from 7% in Australia & New Zealand to over 30% in some part of the United States, Northern Ireland and Sweden (Caswell 1980; Lowry 1981; Atkin & Block 1981; Mugford 1981).

In Australia, as in the U.S.A., 16% of drinkers drink 52% of the alcohol, and 7% of drinkers drink 32% of the alcohol. Death from liver cirrhosis is relatively frequent in both Australia and the United States and low in Sweden, United Kingdom and Canada (Brown et al 1982; Smith 1983).

In Australia, women and older people are less likely to drink than men and those aged under 45 years (ABS 1978). However, nearly 60% of both male and female 17 year old Australians drink alcohol at least once a week (Rankin 1983; Homel et al 1984).

Further, in Australia and the U.S.A., women who drink are more likely to drink wine, while men and young people drink more beer and spirits (Atkin & Block 1981; ABS 1984).

With regard to attitude to alcohol use, most drunkenness in public is socially acceptable behaviour in Australia and people do not generally consider drink-driving, for example, to be a criminal or even serious offence unless it is associated with a fatal road accident. However, the community contradicts itself by expressing general support for punitive, intrusive legislation in these areas (Broadhurst and Indermauer 1982; Homel et al 1984; Morgan Gallup Poll 1984b).

Alcohol abuse appears more likely to be associated with violent crime than other drug abuse (Austin & Letterieri 1976; Hendtlass 1982, 1983). It is also considered contributory to 33% of hospital admissions, 80% of family breakdowns and about 3% of all deaths (Geikie 1980; A.M.A. 1982; Drew 1982).

2.1.2 Tobacco

Tobacco was taken home to England from the U.S.A. by Sir Walter Raleigh. Its use was fostered during the two World Wars when cigarettes were a normal part of the soldier's kit and tobacco is now used by 36% of Australians (ABS 1978). Among Year 10 school boys and girls, over one-third smoke cigarettes at least weekly (Interdepartmental Working Party on the Drug Problem in Victoria 1981; Homel et al 1984).

2.1.3 Caffeine

Caffeine is a socially acceptable, mild stimulant but it only became known to the Western World in the 18th and 19th centuries when it was imported as coffee from Arabia and Turkey, tea from China, cola nuts from West Africa and cocoa from the West Indies and Mexico (Inciardi 1977). Sometimes caffeine is sold as a pharmaceutical stimulant. About 80% of victims of motor car crashes have measurable caffeine levels in their blood or urine (Vine & Watson 1982; Bailey 1984).

2.1.4 Over the Counter Medication

Aspirin has been used as a pain killer since ancient Greek civilisation, although it has now been partly replaced by other mild analgesics such as paracetamol and phenacetin.

Over the counter medication is used frequently in Australia:

- . Nearly one-third of six month old babies have already been given analgesics and less than 25% of these drugs had been prescribed (Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare 1981);
- . Between 16% and 30% of high school students have taken mild pain killers in the last week including over 40% of 17 year old girls (Interdepartmental Working Party on the Drug Problem in Victoria 1981; Homel et al 1984; Stewart 1984);
- . One quarter of adult Australians take over-the-counter medication in any two day period (ABS 1979).

Over 50% of Australian sportsmen and women have used drugs in association with their performance in the last year, with 24% using anti-inflammatory drugs, 18% using pain killers, 22% using respiratory drugs, and 40% using stimulants (Blackman 1983).

2.1.5 Prescribed Medication

Prescription drugs have been taken by one quarter of Australians aged under 5 years in any two day period. This frequency increases with age to 67% for those aged 65 years and over. In general, women are more likely to take prescribed medication than men though this gender difference is not observed until the age of 15 years has been reached (ABS 1979).

About 4% of Australian high school students say they take sedatives on a weekly basis and 19% have previously used this type of drug (Rankin 1983).

In the U.S.A. it is reckoned that between 25% and 50% of sedative, hypnotic and anti-anxiety drugs are diverted into illegal channels in any one year (Fink et al 1974). Further, 30% to 40% of prescriptions for tranquillisers and sedatives are in excessive quantity (Braithwaite 1984).

These figures are also high in the United Kingdom, particularly for methadone, methylphenidate, barbiturates and dipipanone, although illicit use of barbiturates in that country is declining. Medical officers who prescribe drugs for addicts have been estimated to make up to 30,000 Pounds per week from the practice (Burgess 1984).

2.1.6 Solvents

Glue sniffing appears to be a relatively new phenomenon, its earliest reference dating back to only 1959 (NSW Drug and Alcohol Authority et al undated). Since that time the behaviour has apparently reached worrying proportions in the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom (Woodcock 1982; Roberts 1982).

In Australia, weekly solvent use is now reported to be over 10% for 12 and 13 year old girls (Homel et al 1984).

2.1.7 Illicit Drugs

Drugs such as marijuana, opium and cocaine, which are proscribed in most western countries, are an integral part of the social and religious life in the cultures from which they originally derive.

Australia's role as a heavy illicit drug consuming nation can be traced from the history of her settlement and her involvement in overseas military campaigns (Willis 1984). However, less than 5% of all drug use in the community involves illegal drugs other than marijuana (Interdepartmental Working Party on the Drug Problem in Victoria 1981).

Cannabis

Cannabis was described in Chinese literature as early as 2737 BC and it spread from there to India then to Europe (Bean 1974).

Marijuana use seemed to become more prevalent here following the return of the Australian soldiers from the Vietnam war zone where initiation in the use of the drug was frequent. Our favourable weather pattern has meant that its production and use has continued to increase since that time (Willis 1984).

About one third of Australians aged 14 to 30 years have tried smoking cannabis (Morgan Gallup Poll 1984a; Homel et al 1984). Five per cent of this age group, including 15% of 16 and 17 year old boys, say they use marijuana at least once a week (Homel et al 1984).

Over 20% of drivers taken to hospital from road crashes in Sydney have been smoking marijuana (Chesher and Starmer 1983). These figures are similar to those from the U.S.A. and Canada, and higher than the frequency of use in Great Britain (Teale et al 1977; Cimubra et al 1980; Illman 1983; Owens et al 1983).

Amphetamines

Amphetamines were used in the treatment of narcolepsy, obesity, hypokinesia in children and as an anorexiant appetite suppressant from 1930 to the late 1960's (Rawlins 1966; Inghe 1969; Kato 1972; Morgan 1979). They were also administered to American soldiers during the Korean and Vietnam Wars (Grinspoon and Hedbloom 1975).

Abuse began immediately and legal controls restricting their synthesis and use have been only temporarily effective in the U.S.A. and Australia (Morgan and Kagan 1979; Cook and Flaherty 1981; Hendtlass 1983b; Blizzard 1984).

Other Illicit Drugs

Opium has been smoked by the Chinese and other Asian cultures throughout history. Synthetic opiates and opiate derivatives such as heroin, morphine and methadone are, however, relatively recent innovations.

Opium was first seen in Australia in the 1880's and concern about its use was expressed as early as 1886. In 1936, Australians consumed 14% of the world's legal morphine supply and 7.5% of its heroin. Even at that time, the per capita consumption rate of these substances was higher than in any Western Nation (Lonie 1979).

Cocaine comes from the coca plant, which is still largely grown in South and Central America, where it is known to have been prolific as early as 1583 (Bean 1974). Coca leaves were

taken to Europe about the mid 1800's and cocaine was a constituent of Coca Cola until 1903 (Smart, 1983). Cocaine was introduced for treatment of "shell shock" following the First World War and became endemic in the prostitute population in the early 1920's (Lonie 1979). Cocaine use in Victoria is now rare though there is no doubt the drug is available. Usually it is used in combination with other drugs (Ross 1984).

2.1.8 Summary

Australians are consistently heavy users of all types of drugs and there is evidence to suggest the pattern of drug abuse in our community is closely following that reported in the United States five to ten years previously (Morgan and Kagan 1979; Ungerleider 1979; Hendtlass 1982, 1983b).

2.2 Drug Controls

Formal drug abuse countermeasures in use in Australia can be categorised as:

- . Legislative controls
- . Educational controls
- . Advertising controls

2.2.1 Legislative Controls

Legal controls on drug availability are supposed to act mainly as a deterrent to drug abuse (Law Reform Commission 1980). Their imposition is primarily the responsibility of the criminal justice and the health systems and laws carrying varying degrees of punitive harshness are the main control measures supported by governments in the Western World.

In Australia, the State Liquor Control Act, Excise Acts and Police Summary Offences Acts control availability of alcohol and tobacco.

In particular, alcohol may not be sold to people aged under 18 years and it must be sold from licensed premises. Both alcohol and tobacco are subject to State and Federal taxation controls but wine is exempt from excise duty. Tobacco may not be sold to those aged under 16 years. There is, however, no lower age limit for use of these drugs.

In Victoria, the caffeine content of foodstuffs is controlled by the Food & Drug Standards Regulations, while manufacture, distribution and use of over the counter medication must meet criteria laid down in the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981, Schedules 2 and 3.

Prescription drugs identified in Schedule 4 of the Drugs Poisons & Controlled Substances Act 1981 may not be manufactured, used or sold without appropriate authority from the Health Department and, subsequently, a medical officer.

Control of illicit drug use and abuse is largely based on legislative prohibition of possession, use, manufacture, importation, and selling of these substances under Schedule 8 of the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981.

Australia is signatory to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1974 Convention on Pyschotropic Substances. She is also a member of the United Nation Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Department of Health 1981). These allegiances have required her to impose legislative prohibition on heroin, cannabis, cocaine and other illicit substances.

Different countries enforce these proscriptive controls in different ways. For example, in Canada, courts admit evidence of drug use obtained in random searches without warrants or by open assault of individuals carrying the substances in their mouths (Trebach 1983a). In the U.S.A. penalties for use and abuse of heroin continue to increase without any apparent effect on the

use of the drug or on the crime associated with its use (Trebach 1983b) while the British system which allows medical doctors to prescribe heroin to addicts has lost some of its support and reputation (Trebach 1982; Burgess 1984).

There has been a substantial shift in community opinion internationally with regard to marijuana use and the degree to which this should be legalised (AFADD 1982; Broadhurst & Indermauer 1977; Morgan Gallup Poll 1982; Morgan Gallup Poll 1984a; Friedman & Santo 1984) but in the United Kingdom, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (1981) generally felt the illegality of use of cannabis still acted as a deterrent. They considered its decriminalisation would encourage increased use.

There are several comments to make about the role of legislation as a drug abuse countermeasure:

- . Legislation has not generally been shown to be effective as a social control mechanism unless it is in line with community opinion and acts as a supporting definitive backup to an essentially informal control system which has been engendered in society (Anderson et al 1977). This attitude appears to be open to significant influence by media reports (Indermauer 1982; AFADD 1982).
- . The role of penalties in the deterrent value of law is minimal unless it is accompanied by a real, high risk of detection (Grasmick & Bryjak 1980).

Justice Woodward (1980) considered there is no evidence to suggest that severe punishment deters crime:

"It is therefore fallacious to believe that heavier penalties will automatically lead to reduction in illicit drug trafficking or abuse. Even a a mandatory penalty cannot increase the likelihood that a drug offender

will be imprisoned beyond the bound of the likelihood that he will be caught and convicted It is difficult to see how even radical changes in sentencing behaviour will increase the deterrent effect of the law on the prospective drug offender".

Further, penalties handed down by different Australian courts are known to be inconsistent with each other particularly when offenders charged under Federal law are compared with those who are charged with State offences (Potas 1983).

For any individual, previous experience is probably the best predictor of subsequent behaviour and experience coupled with non-arrest for novel, illegal behaviour is a better predictor than perception of personal or generalised risk of detection (Haertzen et al 1983).

2.2.2 Educational Controls

Many people consider all social and health problems can be solved by "education" and this has led to hastily developed drug education programmes with confused aims (Smart 1983).

Irwin (1981) has described the dilemma which Australian drug control policies must face in the education field as a series of fallacies including the following:

- . "The empty vessel fallacy....all you need to do is pour information into empty minds;
- . The you only need to focus fallacy....a strong overwhelming focus on a social action will solve health and social problems;

- . The fallacy of the inherent superiority of some methods;
- . The awful warning fallacy....if you tell people of the harm and negative consequences of a behaviour category, they will logically desist from a series of behaviours in that category;
- . The drug taking is a disease fallacy....the medical model will provide the necessary theoretical base for drug education;
- . The we are all educators fallacy....everyone can be a health educator, regardless of training - they teach it anyway;
- . The isolated symptom fallacy....the problems associated with drug use are not like the problems related to social and personal choice behaviour".

While the Australian community is currently well disposed to the role of education as the primary drug control measure (e.g The Royal Commission into Non-Medical Use of Drugs in South Australia 1978; Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs 1980; The Interdepartmental Working Party on the Drug Problem in Victoria, 1980; The Senate Select Committee on Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse, 1972; Royal Commission into Human Relationships, 1977), and the Commonwealth Department of Health has established a national drug education programme, the perversity of the situation is that educators themselves are not so convinced (Irwin 1981). They are more inclined to see education as part of a comprehensive coordinated approach to drug control, acting in conjunction with medical and social methods of intervention.

There are a number of factors acting in the education system itself which may even contribute to the formation of chemical dependency in some children (Cheetham et al 1978). It is contended that one source of need for some students to turn to

drugs may lie in the relationship between the educational system and contemporary society. They cite factors such as inadequate selection criteria for teachers, inadequate training of teachers in basic skills required to work in a real classroom situation and inadequate preparation of teachers for their role as the major socialising influence on students.

There is also a basic disparity between knowledge and attitude and further, there appears to be no direct relationship between stated attitude and subsequent behaviour (Casswell 1981; Wilson and Hendtlass 1983).

Education and awareness may be helpful in deterring drug use among people who are having their needs satisfied by means other than drugs, but they are probably of limited value in changing the behaviour of people whose needs are not being met. Assumptions that knowledge and awareness will lead to rational decision making do not take into account the fact that serious unmet need mitigates against rational decision making.

This theory is supported by Quinn and his co-workers (1975) who found that 73% of high school students who were given cognitive information about the dangers of drug use stated that they would use them anyway.

Drug education needs to involve a broad range of teaching/learning situations which attempt to provide the opportunity for intellectual, emotional, psychological and physiological development of young people (UNESCO 1972). It has been accepted by the Commonwealth Department of Health, after submissions by the Health Education Council of N.S.W. to the Royal Commission into Human Relationships (1977), that:-

"Issues in which the needs of people in society are addressed are really what is at stake rather than the effect of chemical substances".

2.2.3 Advertising Controls

The Australian Advertising Council has overall control of advertising of therapeutic drugs, alcohol and tobacco (Kirby 1983). In the case of tobacco there is an advertising ban on television and radio, but not in the printed media.

Alcoholic beverages may still be advertised on television, radio and in the press and oversight of these promotions presently lies in the hands of the Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Council, a voluntary industry based body. There is a move to legally prevent alcohol advertising on television at times when children are most likely to be among the audience (Australian Broadcasting Tribunal 1984).

Analgesics for internal use may be advertised and control is administered through the Commonwealth Department of Health in the case of the electronic media, and the Australian Newspapers Council.

Advertising of prescription drugs is restricted to professional publications.

Some drug professionals consider that existing controls on advertising are ineffective and there have been suggestions that all drug advertising should be the responsibility of a Standing Committee of the Health Department or some other government body.

It has been suggested that the imposition of drug controls in Australia is influenced by the media through its effect on political decision making. In turn, media reporting can be influenced through pressures from advertisers (e.g. Kirby 1983; Chapman & Peachment 1984).

In the United States, this influence has also been documented (Braithwaite 1984):

"In January 1976 the New York Times ran a series of articles on medical incompetence including the misuse of prescription drugs. Retaliation in the form of cancellation of half a million dollars worth of advertising in Modern Medicine, a journal owned by the Times Company, was said to have been accepted".

2.2.4 Summary

In general, countermeasures against drug abuse have developed in an irrelevant and irrational manner (Lonie 1979). In the case of alcohol and tobacco, there seems to be considerable ambivalence in the community and government about the purpose of legal restrictions on availability. Any change in the penalty structure for other drug offences is unlikely to have any effect on availability and use of illegal drugs unless the risk of detection is great enough to act as a real deterrent (Joint Committee on New York Drug Law Evaluation 1977; Erikson 1978; Trebach 1982).

Educational controls, have heavy community support but are unlikely to be helpful unless they address the broad issue of societal need and controls on drug advertising are selective in the ways they affect different media and particular drugs.

3. THE MEDIA & DRUGS

Chapter 3 will discuss the ways in which the media treat drug issues and the effects which they can be expected to have on drug use and abuse. This will be put in context by a brief description of the different media and their audiences in Australia and the ways in which these are changing.

3.1 Media

The average Australian spends 6 to 8 hours a day involved with the media (Hanna 1974). Consequently, the media has assumed an increasingly educational role and the public use the media more and more to improve their knowledge of topics about which they are unable to obtain first hand information (Hooper 1983).

However, the main business of privately owned newspapers, radio and television stations is to sell space or time to their advertising clients. Their attraction to these clients can be assessed in terms of circulation or proportion of the reading and listening public which they can claim.

This means that it is the responsibility of private media organisations to present programmes in a way which entertains the biggest audience and attracts the greatest share of the advertising (Day 1984).

Different media preferences appear to be exhibited by different groups in the population. For example, in the Netherlands, women, the poorly educated, and the elderly are less likely to watch the news or read the "quality" newspapers (Van Dijk 1979) and they are also more likely to read and watch more entertainment stories relating to violent crime, motor car accidents, sport and family affairs than they are to read high information content articles or to watch television documentaries, even within the reading matter and television channels they select (Van Dijk and Coenen 1978).

In 1982, \$2,298,426,000 was spent on main media advertising in Australia, an increase from \$1,061,081,000 in 1977 (Commercial Economic Advisory Service of Australia 1983) (Fig. 4).

About 23% of advertising expenditure is placed in metropolitan daily newspapers, 33% in television, 28% in other print media, and 9% in radio. These figures have been changing in favour of television for the last 13 years at the expense of daily newspapers and radio, but not other print media.

There has been therefore a coincidental change in the way that non promotional information is disseminated by the mass media generally, with radio and television threatening the very basis of the Press' economic foundations (Macklin 1982).

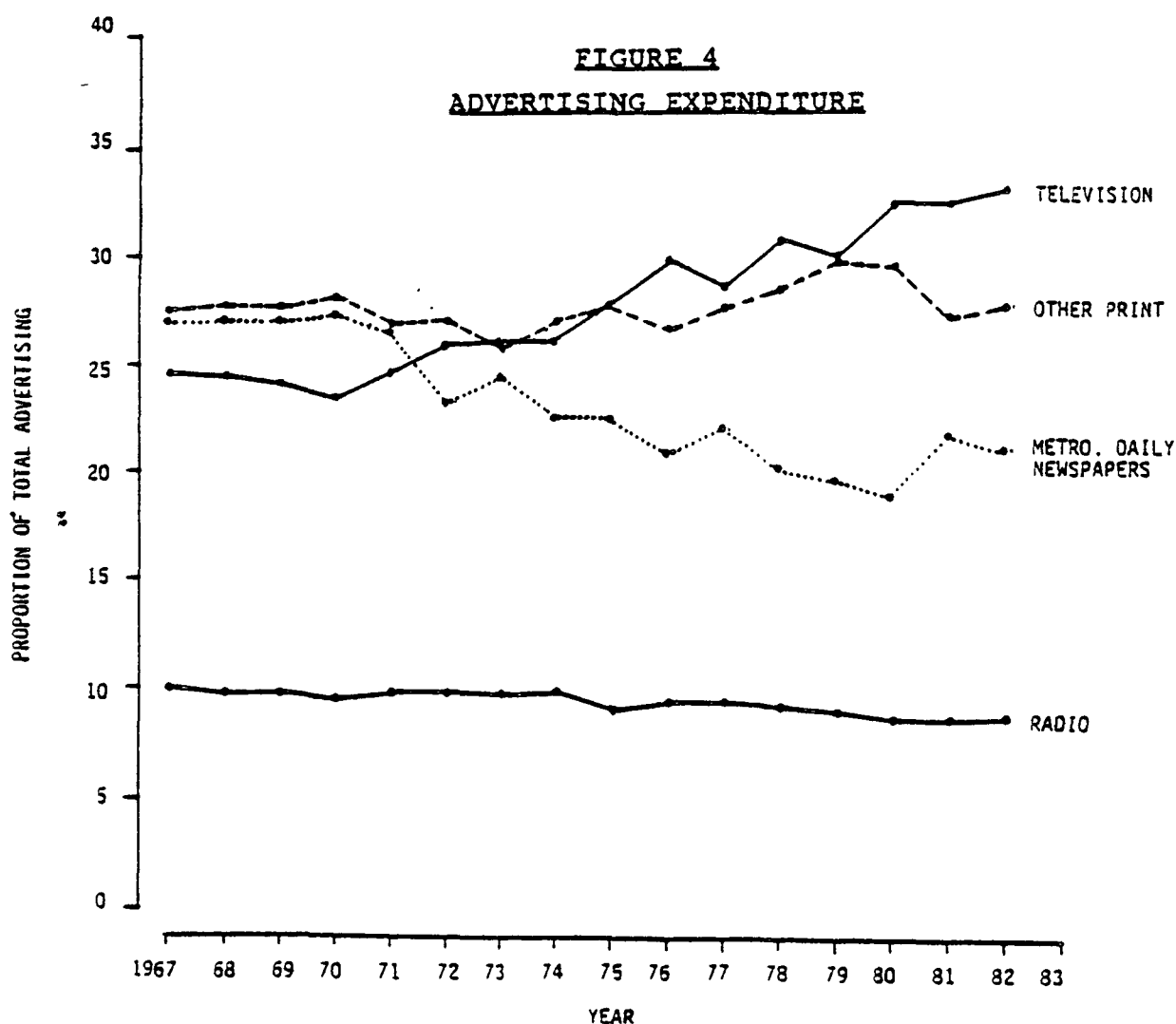
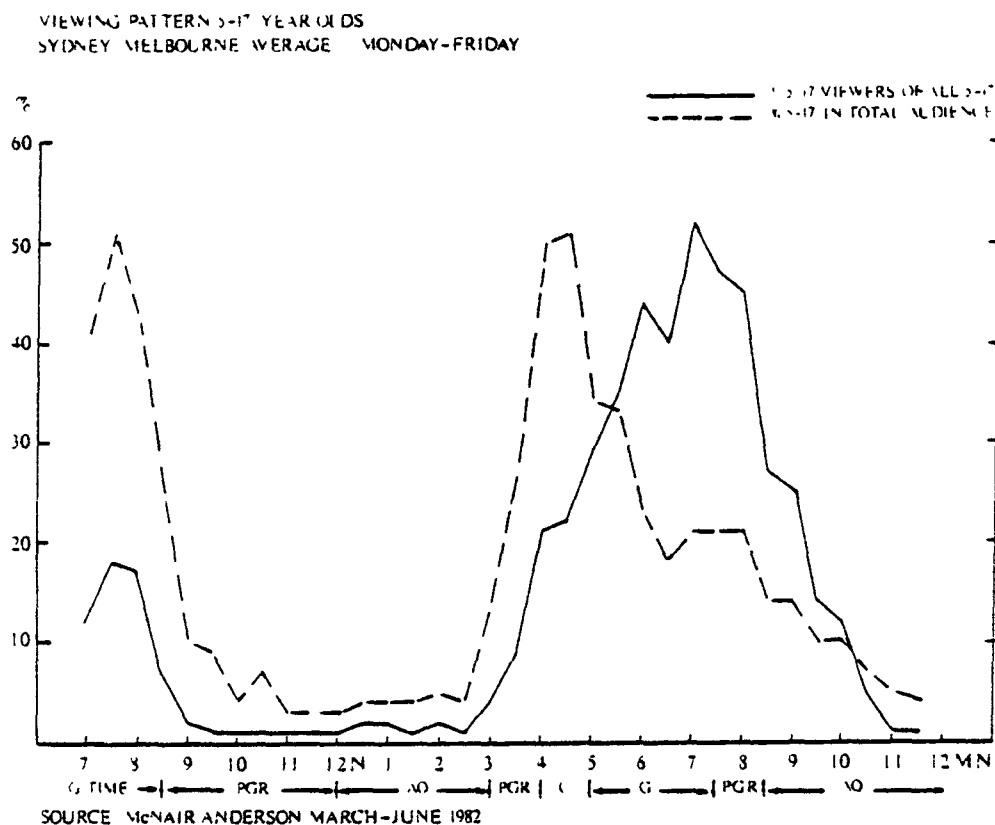


FIGURE 5
TELEVISION VIEWING PATTERNS OF AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN



House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Road Safety

3.1.2 Newspapers

An average Australian newspaper is picked up 1.7 times and read for 35 to 40 minutes. Most people only read the items which interest them (Age 1984a). Newspapers therefore reflect the interests or attitudes of their readers and the more accurately they do so, the more successful the newspaper (Macklin 1982). It has been claimed that at least half of the metropolitan daily newspapers in Australia cater more to the sensation seeking public than to an educated audience because they seem to perceive their principal readership to be unable to comprehend rational debate (Bell 1982).

Further, total newspaper circulation is static or falling, both in Australia and overseas, and there is no longer room in the Australian market for more than two profitable daily newspapers in any of our major cities. These factors have led to newspaper companies becoming financially involved with the electronic media to ensure economic viability (Gordon 1984).

In order to counter loss in relative sales figures and rising costs, most newspapers have responded to their readers' preference for international, political and economic news and increased their commentators in these areas (Macklin 1982; Age 1984; Gordon 1984). This move can only continue to increase the immediacy of their journalism and, as in the electronic media, daily newspapers are therefore becoming more likely to report discrete dramatic events than to direct the readers' attention to more complex issues.

3.1.3 Summary

Both the electronic and the print media are accepting an increasingly important educational role in the community. At the same time they are responding to their audience's preference for immediacy and sensationalism by increasing their emphasis on news

and discrete events at the expense of discussion of more complex issues.

3.2 Media Attention to Drugs

"Media coverage of drug issues in Australia has, with notable exceptions, been extravagantly uninformed and intimidating" (AFADD 1982).

In general, the media help us to learn that chemical methods of solving problems are acceptable and they present very little counter value information about the hazards (Smart 1983). Drugs are referred to in news items, in magazine material or drama programmes and in advertising paid for by the drug manufacturers and distributors. Some counteradvertising can take place from time to time, particularly with regard to alcohol or tobacco use.

3.2.1 News Items

Different media carry different types of news stories about drugs.

Radio and Television News

Television and radio news cover of drugs is selective.

In general, alcohol and tobacco use or abuse is portrayed as socially acceptable while use of illegal drugs is seen as a youth behaviour (Smart 1983). News items about illegal drugs are often accompanied by pictures of hyperdermics and other paraphernalia and "Drugs" are nearly always illicit drugs.

Newspapers

There is one drug-story in the newspaper every day of the week in Adelaide, while in Perth each newspaper carries an average of two articles about drugs. Most of the stories concern themselves with marijuana, opiates, alcohol or tobacco and there seems to be relatively little mention of prescription or over the counter medicines (Windshuttle 1981; Cowling 1981; Bell 1982).

This emphasis on illicit and social drugs is reinforced by the frequency with which alcohol and nicotine are referred to as "drugs" (about 3%) compared with 80% of articles about marijuana and opiates referring to "drugs".

The Australian Press is not alone in identifying the word "drug" largely with illegal substances. In France, the only substances referred to as drugs were in the illicit category (refer Cowling 1981), while in the German language, illegal drugs have quite different terminology from medicines.

The information which newspapers disseminate and the way in which it is presented are considered likely to perpetuate this ignorance by continually presenting oversimplifying models which reinforce important sets of assumptions widely held in the population and by drawing special attention to the threatening and criminological implications of drug use (AFADD 1982, Bell 1982).

Headlines from recent Victorian newspapers show that we are not immune from this approach (Figure 6).

Cocaine 'threat to U.S. security'

Aspirin joins the killer drugs of the highway

LOS ANGELES — I would say that 90 per cent of the girls are addicts

MURIEL DOBBIN of Baltimore Sun

growth of the drug problem in the country for four years. "Compr existed that he contri second He there ment elect alar oth for. A HUGE international drug syndicate smuggled almost 100 tons of heroin into Australia in a single shipment

By JANE MUNDAY chief police reporter

\$45m. heroin in one load

By TONY WILSON

Australia is drug staging post to world, say police

SYDNEY — Australia is being used as a transit point for huge amounts of heroin and other illegal drugs from Asia's "Golden Triangle" according to senior Federal police.

The police said the post is the latest considered it. As a result, police have been considering a "black list" of countries from which they are to ban drug imports.

Police said the "black list" would include Australia, which has been a major source of heroin for the past 10 years.

Inspector Worthy said some 10 per cent of the heroin imported into Australia is from the "Golden Triangle" area.

He said the "black list" would include countries from which the police would ban drug imports.

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Spotlight turns on drugs and driving

THE FATAL MIXTURE

Drugs fight: we have to look at ourselves

'I have seen the best minds of my generation searching the streets at dawn for an angry fix'

Cocaine

How an Australian lawyer discovered drug millions were corrupting the highest levels of Government

Heroin: a \$100,000 buy

By DAVID MARR

HEROIN is not the cause of a life in crime so often as the spur that drives a criminal on

THERE IS NO HOPE

doctors a he days

In Western Australia, 90% of newspaper items referring to cannabis and 56% of items referring to drugs in general, explicitly characterised substance use as an incentive to anti-social behaviour. In 40% of cases the focus was on the criminal problem and in 55% on the community, social, health or political problem (Cowling 1981).

Further, in New South Wales newspapers, alcohol and tobacco items were much more likely to be concerned with education or prevention (40%) while cannabis and narcotics centred items reported individual offences, seizures or distribution syndicates (70%) (Bell 1982).

In both States, nearly 40% of newspaper items defined drug-related issues as essentially criminal problems, often even in items which discussed social or administration themes.

3.2.2 Magazine Material and Drama Programmes

Dramatic presentation of drug use in in the community, whether it is the factual discussion of the subject or fictional representation designed for pure entertainment, continues to present alcohol and tobacco use as socially acceptable and illegal drug use in the criminological connotation.

All Australian-made television drama programmes reviewed in one survey showed alcohol being consumed. No behavioural problems were shown associated with its consumption however, and negative comment was made only once (Australian Federation of University Women 1978).

We are not alone.

A television documentary "The Chemical People", much heralded as a drug countermeasure in the U.S.A., made no mention of cigarettes (Drugs and Education Newsletter 1983).

Further, an average of 9 drinking events were portrayed per programme or per 70 minutes in a survey of American afternoon television programmes. This was approximately the same rate as portrayals of soft drink consumption (2.6 per programme and 1 per 8.1 minutes) which ranged from 1 every 8 minutes to 1 in 46 minutes depending on the serial and the television network (Garlington 1977).

In prime time television programmes in America, 8 pm to 11 pm, an average of 0.29 drinking incidents were portrayed per programme with 36% having no reference to alcohol at all. This could be broken down to a rate of 1 incident per 34.3 minutes in children's time (8 pm to 9 pm) and 1 per 14.1 minutes in adult time (9 pm to 11 pm) (Lowry 1981).

The situation with regard to depiction of illicit drugs in the United States is also similar to that in Australia, with cannabis use frequently alluded to a humorous or harmless way in youth oriented and family dramas or television movies (Breed & de Foe 1980; Smart 1983).

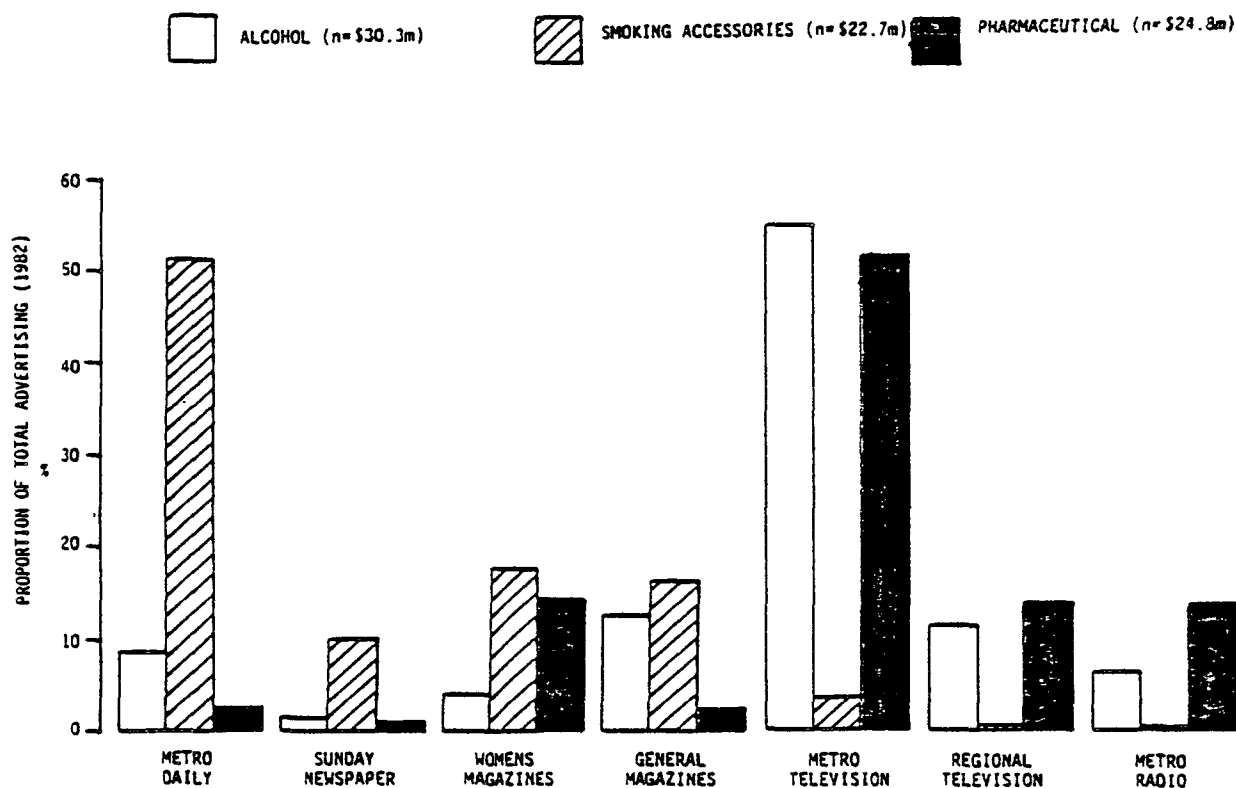
3.2.3 Advertising

"Advertising helps to generate a large market which can result in the economics of mass production and lower prices" (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Road Safety 1983)."

Advertising of Alcohol

In Australia alcohol advertising expenditure costs \$30,336,268 per year and is 11th in rank order of products promoted through the mass media. This expenditure is greatest in television and in general magazines and it is low in radio and in women's magazines (Commercial Economic Advisory Service of Australia 1983). (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7
DRUG ADVERTISING EXPENDITURE



A survey of alcohol publicity in Northern New South Wales was undertaken in November 1977 and April 1978 (Australian Federation of University Women 1978). There was a significant reduction in the amount of alcohol advertising shown on television in the later survey period and this is consistent with the seasonal nature of alcohol purchases (ABS 1983).

As well about the same number of advertisements for products other than alcohol featured alcohol as part of the background scene.

In the United States, \$411 million is spent on national advertising of alcohol, excluding newspapers. Advertising of spirits on the electronic media is banned in the United States and this influences placement of advertising. For example, about 80% of alcohol advertisements on television are for beer while in magazines only about 5% are for beer and 90% are for spirits (Atkin & Block 1981; Strickland 1982).

People appear in less than one third of these alcohol promotions. Most of these references are to white men in their early 30's and in less than 7% intoxication is clearly evident.

In the other cases, the alcohol bottle is the central feature of the advertisement. The product is often held by the characters but is never consumed.

Advertising of Tobacco and Smoking Accessories

Advertising of tobacco and smoking accessories in Australia costs \$22,694,219 per year and is 14th in rank order of all advertising expenditure. This figure has remained constantly high despite the ban on tobacco advertising in the electronic media which has influenced the distribution of these promotions (Figure 7).

Tobacco promotions have 8th highest expenditure in the print media and the high proportion of this money spent in women's magazines is consistent with the recent changes in the distribution of smokers in the population, the biggest increase being amongst women aged under 25 years (Commercial Economic Advisory Service 1982; Hill & Gray 1984).

Advertising of Medication

Pharmaceutical advertising in Australia costs \$24,790,985 per year and is 13th in rank order of product advertising expenditure. At present there are no legislative controls on the media used to carry over-the-counter drug promotions and television is the most important method (Fig 7). However, radio and women's magazines also carry a significant proportion of over the counter drug advertising, particularly aspirin advertisements on radio and proprietary medicines, internal correctives and sun care products in womens magazines (Commercial Economic Advisory Service of Australia 1982).

These facts are consistent with the epidemiology of over the counter drug use which suggests that women are more likely to use these drugs than men (ABS 1979; Homel et al 1984). In America, drug companies occupy four out of the five top places in terms of television network advertising spending and drug advertisements are shown at the rate of 1 per hour in North America. Most are directed at women, shown during times directed at women and show women buying or using the drug (Inciardi 1977; Smart 1983).

3.2.4 Summary

Electronic and print media refer to drugs in their news stories and in magazine material and drama programmes. Alcohol and tobacco are rarely referred to as "drugs" and their use is generally condoned. Their advertising ranks 11th and 14th in product advertising expenditure.

Illicit substances are more often featured in their criminological context.

Prescription and over the counter drugs are rarely mentioned in news or drama items but they rank 13th in product advertising expenditure.

3.3 Effects of the Media on Community Attitudes and on Drug Abuse

There can be no doubt that much of the media attention to drugs is well intentioned as a drug abuse countermeasure:

"It has long been claimed that the media can encourage people into acts that they would not otherwise consider and into beliefs that they would not otherwise espouse" (Tudor 1979).

However, there are also inconsistencies in this area, even among drug control experts. An expert group convened in 1981 (AFADD 1981) has addressed the need for aggressive information dissemination about safe and unsafe drinking:

"So that those people who are drinking at an unsafe level....can be identified and counselling offered to them".

They have recommended that the media adopt positive attitudes in making public comment that alcohol and chemical dependency can be overcome.

On the other hand, this same group has criticised the media for communicating uninformed and intimidating information to its audience.

3.3.1 General Effect of Media Content on Drug Use

In the general situation, both children and adults can learn attitudes and behaviours through modelling of particular responses which they see in the media (Bandura 1977) and young people do not always distinguish between the real world and the images which they see on television (Noble 1981). Children in the 12 to 16 year age group still generally follow parental lifestyle but they question and consider alternatives and their leisure activity characteristically includes media oriented pursuits such as television, records and radio (Australian Broadcasting Tribunal 1980).

Further television has been found to promote discussion about use of goods advertised between adolescents and their families but it decreases this interaction among peers (Churchill & Moschis 1979).

Canadian researchers found no evidence that media education on alcohol, drugs or a variety of other health matters had any substantial effect on behaviour (Smart 1983) and Bell (1982) suggests that, although the media alone cannot and does not determine community attitudes to, or knowledge of, complex social issues, it may continually present oversimplifying models which reinforce those sets of assumptions which are widely held in the population.

However, scientific information exists neither in quality nor in depth to dismiss completely those opinions which maintain that the media may have a negative impact on emotionally unbalanced personalities (Pittman 1980). It must be emphasised that the fact that many portrayals of violence on television have little significance for most of their viewers does not imply that such portrayals are harmless to everyone.

There is a high correlation between the times in which non-prescribed psychoactive drugs are used in the U.S.A. and the times in which television is watched, except in the case of caffeine and cocaine use. However, it is thought that this coincidence occurs because use of recreational drugs and watching television are both pleasure-oriented relaxing behaviours and will occur at the same times of day rather than that television viewing causes drug use (Sinnott and Morris 1977).

The effects of mass media on drug use have been summarised by Klapper (1960):

"Mass media seem best at supporting existing attitudes, norms and behaviours and there is little evidence that they can cause major shifts".

From the point of view of media involvement in the drug countermeasure system, community anxiety can be raised, often falsely, by the bias of media reports of drug issues towards illicit drugs and criminal involvement (Windshuttle 1978; Cowling 1981; Bell 1982), and in the same way as with crime:

"Crime waves are generated by the press from the very coverage and emphasis given" (Reckless 1973).

David Biles (1975) has described adequately how this can and does happen in Australia.

This use of horror or sensationalised media cover does not always elicit fear (Sheppard 1982) and further successful fear arousal is not regularly accompanied by changes in outlook or behaviour (Stacey undated).

Despite these professional opinions, there is well documented circumstantial evidence which links increased solvent abuse to sensationalised public health campaigns in several cities in the United States, including Denver, Salt Lake City and New York (N.S.W. Drug and Alcohol Authority et al 1981).

3.3.2 Effect of Advertising on Drug Use

"Mass media influences, particularly advertising, on human behaviour patterns such as drinking practices have been grossly exaggerated" (Pittman 1980).

Three broad areas of concern have been expressed by those who seek to control advertising of drugs, particularly alcohol and tobacco:

- . Role models
- . Thematic content
- . Social norms.

Some experts feel that advertising seeks to reinforce inappropriate alcohol consumption using celebrity models, peer groups or lifestyle themes, that the content of these advertisements can appeal to desires and needs which are irrelevant to the product or that it can model drinking behaviour in the social and environmental situations which define an inappropriate social norm (House of Representative Standing Committee on Road Safety 1983; Eggar and Chapman 1978; AFADD 1982; RACV Consulting Services 1984).

Effect of Alcohol Advertising

Very little empirical research has been undertaken to discover the relationship between advertising and individual alcohol consumption and the conclusions from six studies which have been undertaken are weak and conflicting (Pittman & Lambert 1978; Atkin & Block 1981; Strickland 1982; Atkin & Block 1984; Strickland 1984).

In America, lifestyle themes and inappropriate role models do not generally form a major component of alcohol advertising (Atkin and Block 1981; Strickland 1982). As well, when exposed to these advertisements, most people report no change in their preference for particular drugs. More favourable ratings are achieved by advertisements which have a high amount of product information.

Atkin and Block (1981) emphasise the difficulty in interpreting the data presented in studies which correlate mass media content with consumption patterns:

"The design of this study does not enable cause and effect to be inferred. If the analysis shows that two or more variables are positively related (eg high levels of reported advertising exposure are associated with high levels of drinking), it should not be concluded that one variable is necessarily causing the other. It is possible that reverse causation may be operating".

While exposure to alcohol advertising is strongly associated with brand awareness and preference, only moderate association is found between reported adult alcohol consumption, drink driving behaviour, heavy drinking and attitude to inappropriate drinking situation. Heavily exposed high school students were significantly more likely to report heavy spirits consumption.

Further alcohol advertising is rarely cited as the cause for initial experimentation with alcohol. Peers are more influential (Atkin and Block 1981) and, when community alcohol consumption levels are considered, there seems to be evidence that there is no significant correlation between changes in the amount of advertising and changes in total alcohol consumption in the community:

"There is nothing in either the results of our statistical research or in other investigations in the area which could cause any one to predict with even a modest degree of confidence that a reduction in drink advertising would produce anything more than a marginal reduction in per capita consumption of alcohol in this country. To the extent that any such change in marketing cost in this oligopolistic market was translated into increased price competition, then consumption could rise and the situation could be exacerbated" (Duffy 1982).

In general terms it seems that total advertising expenditure in the media has little or no effect on per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages (Smith & D'Amelio 1984). A 50% increase in advertising of a particular brand can be associated with increased consumption by about 7% of the population but total elimination of advertising does not affect sales until 18 months later (Smart and Cutler 1976; Osburn and Smart 1980; Duffy 1982).

Effect of Tobacco Advertising

When tobacco use is considered, many factors may contribute to establishment and maintenance of a smoking habit. Advertising is only one, but the more potent factors are probably mainly psychological or social.

It is difficult statistically and scientifically to isolate the impact of any one factor and the impact of advertising is, at most, of relatively little significance (Australian Council on Smoking and Health 1980).

The advertising industry's voluntary code of self regulation was successfully tested in 1980. A Clause of this code states:

"No advertising for cigarettes may include persons who have major appeal for children or adolescents under 18 years of age",

and the Chairman of the Advertising Standards Council, Sir Richard Kirby, ruled that use of popular entertainer, Paul Hogan, breached this Section of the Code.

There seems little doubt that sympathetic media cover of the protagonist group, MOPUP, was influential in getting the case to the attention of the Chairman (Chapman 1980).

Research from Scandinavia suggests that only a total ban on cigarette advertising reduces tobacco consumption (Roemer 1982) and flow of publications throughout Australia means that any State attempt to control cigarette advertising will be unlikely to have an identifiable impact on smoking habits (Australian Council on Smoking and Health 1980).

Few Australians favour imposing further bans on tobacco advertising (Morgan Gallup Poll 1984b).

Effect of Pharmaceutical Advertising

American work on over the counter substance use suggests that advertising these products on television does not have a significant effect on use of illicit drugs (Payne 1976). Further, there seems to be no causal relationship between amount of television viewing and illicit drug use or use of medication (Milavsky et al 1975-76; Atkin 1978).

However, among American teenagers there does seem to be a correlation between drug advertising on television and perceived frequency of illness in the community (among boys only) or belief in efficacy of the drugs (among higher status groups only). An apparent positive relationship between exposure and use of over the counter preparations was negligible when the data were controlled for illness and parental attitude (Atkin 1978).

For medical practitioners, to the most important source of information about drugs is the pharmaceutical industry and it can have a strong influence on prescribing habits. Misleading advertising is well know in this industry. For example, Indocid is an effective anti-arthritic for four types of the disease yet it is promoted for general use in this area. In the United Kingdom, 22 of 45 advertisements for pharmaceuticals contained unwarranted claims (Braithwaite 1984).

3.3.3 Summary

The influence of the media on drug use and abuse remains unclear. It is possible that some sensationalised public health campaigns may be counterproductive but there is no evidence to suggest that advertising can greatly increase community consumption of any particular substance. Some effect on the pattern of use among particular individuals cannot be ruled out.

However, the lack of decisive information about the relationship between advertising and use of different types of drugs contrasts with public opinion as expressed in various reports both in Australia and overseas:

Control of advertising of all drugs including alcohol, tobacco and prescription products has been recently recommended by a national seminar on the relationship between drug abuse and crime (Australian Institute of Criminology 1983) while several of the Federal and State enquiries into drug abuse in this country have related the

use and abuse of drugs to their promotion by interested bodies.

- . Further, a report to the Social Development Committee of the Parliament of Victoria (RACV Consulting Services 1984) concluded that a ban on television advertising of alcohol would be cost beneficial in terms of reducing drink driving and consequent road trauma.
- . The response to recent Australian surveys which show that use of analgesic pain killers by teenagers has doubled in the last three years has been a call for advertising bans on these drugs (Stewart 1984).
- . In the United States, the Senate has expressed the opinion that there is a connection between exposure to television advertising of over the counter substances and illicit drug use (U.S. Senate 1970). A similar view has been expressed by the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse (Kramer 1973).

These positions are inconsistent with the data available and it has been suggested that the typically negative and effectively proscriptive opinion of drug and alcohol educators reflects their lack of skill, experience and political sophistication in the presence of large commercial interests and lobby groups (Eggar and Chapman 1978).

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Road Safety (1983) and the Social Development Committee of the Parliament of Victoria (1984) took an apparently more valid stand on this issue. They expressed special concern about the influence of alcohol advertising on use of the drug by young people but decided that there was insufficient evidence to conclude that advertising of alcohol affects the per capita level of alcohol consumption and the incidence of drink-driving and that interference was currently socially unacceptable.

3.4 Use of the Media as a Drug Control Agent

Media reporting of drugs and crime can alter individual and public opinion and knowledge and, in the manner in which it reports community concern, could influence the development of drug control policy and procedures.

It is therefore unfortunate that both media and political figures seem to respond to community concern in ways which can increase levels of anxiety (Sackville 1981).

For example, there is very little connection between, on one hand, community or political concern with rising crime rates and, on the other hand, personal fear of crime except among individuals who have had personal involvement as victims. In fact, concern levels appear to be often higher in areas with the lowest crime rate (Fiselier 1978 cited by van Dijk 1978, Furstenberg 1971).

These perceptions are largely influenced by reports in the news media (Davis 1952; McIntyre 1967; Van Dijk 1978) and the consequence of high levels of concern about social issues can result in a call for repressive control measures (Furstenberg 1974) which are often inconsistent with the professional opinion in the area (Lonie 1978).

Further, the precedents cited to justify the introduction of harsh legislative countermeasures can be based on inaccurate knowledge about existing laws in other communities with different mores. For example, the Swedish drink-driving legislation is supposed to be an effective road safety measure and has been cited often as an example of the value of repressive legislation based on license disqualification, compulsory jail terms and zero blood alcohol limits.

However, not only do the Swedes have an exceptionally large total abstainer population (Brown et al 1982) and many live in near Arctic conditions which render them almost housebound for long periods. Also the maximum legal blood alcohol level for drivers is 0.05 g/100 mls, as it is in Victoria, there is no mandatory license disqualification and jail terms involving rehabilitation are imposed on drivers with a reading over 0.15 g/100 ml (Swedish Consulate 1984).

Even the authenticity of some magazines purporting to educate or inform the public has also been placed in question. For example, three different publications have been scrutinised by the NSW Drug and Alcohol Authority (Nicholson 1980) and found to misrepresent their credentials to their advertising clientele. They also contained information which, if not inaccurate, is generally regarded as counterproductive to the drug control exercise which they say they support.

For example, one of these publications (People and Drugs) stated:

"20% defendants in court have records of drug abuse" and

"There are 12,000 heroin addicts on the street of Victoria".

Neither statement can be substantiated.

Advertising has been used as a drug abuse countermeasure in the drink driving and health fields. Those advertisements directed at modelling of positive behaviours (e.g. Boughton & South 1984) seem more effective than those which portray negative outcomes (e.g. Freedman & Rothman 1979).

Despite activity in the alcohol field, a counter-film to the Marlboro Man series of tobacco advertisements was withheld from general release by an injunction taken out by Phillip Morris (Taylor 1983).

The professional difference between drug control experts and journalists in their perception of what type of information is useful as a drug abuse countermeasure probably reflects considerable mutual misunderstanding and ignorance about each others roles, similar to that described by Hooper (1983) with regard to military and media personnel.

It is also been referred to by Peachment (1984):

"Those who work in the various disciplines of applied science and community health should be more able to promote effectively their ideas of what constitutes the public interest".

In a limited way, the network of Clemenger advertising agencies have addressed the interdisciplinary communication problem recently when they encouraged junior staff participation in a competition to design advertising campaign with four subject options including "How to Control the Drug Problem". The winning entry in this section (Hayes et al 1984) states:

"Researching the drug problem has been tremendously satisfying, if a little unsettling. The most rewarding aspect of this project is that each one of us (and some of the people we've questioned and argued with), has been educated by it. Each of us came into this project with fixed ideas based on personal experience and snatches of sensationalism. As the project draws to a close, we are all much closer to seeing the true nature of the problem.

The problem is vast. If we are to tackle it, we must do it realistically We would only expect results after years of continuous activity".

Moreover, Fejor and his co-workers (1971) found that the mass media was a more effective and influential drug educational medium than didactic lectures among non-users, while drug users relied more on their peers for information.

This means that with mutual understanding of each other's role, the media and the educationalists could cooperate as a powerful professional influence on drug abuse.

The media could be used appropriately by drug education experts to improve community awareness of the risks and symptoms of drug abuse as part of broader community based programmes, as proposed by McDermott & Trinca (1983) and by the Expert Consultative Group on Drugs (AFADD 1981).

At the same time journalists would become more aware of their influence and the way it operates in the drug area and this should reduce the incidence of alcohol and other drug use portrayed in locally produced programmes.

4. MEDIA PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION NOAH

Operation Noah was scheduled to begin at 9 am on December 10th 1982. However, as far as the media were concerned, their active participation began one week earlier and it can be seen in three sequential parts:

- . The lead-up;
- . The operation itself; and
- . The follow up

This chapter will describe the ways in which the media contributed to the joint media police operation aimed at eliciting information from the public about drug trafficking in Victoria.

4.1 Lead-Up to Operation Noah

The Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Mr. S.I. Miller, announced the forthcoming Operation Noah at a press conference on 3rd December, 1982, which was reported by most Melbourne electronic and print media (See also Figure 8).

He said that the Operation was a cooperative effort involving his police force and radio station 3AW, directed at detecting traffickers, growers and manufacturers and he specifically excluded "small time drug users" from attention.

This was followed by several references to the Operation during the following week. These reported that Telecom had donated 6 telephone lines for the operation and they covered other "newsworthy" aspects of the drug problem such as the disappearance of anti-drug campaigner Donald Mackay, the alleged causal sequence of marijuana use and heroin use, and the purported relationship between drug abuse and criminality.

The telephone number for the Operation was not publicised until 8:30 am on the day of Operation.

4.2 Radio Station 3AW Programme 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM 1982

The 3AW programme on the 10th December 1982 included a series of interviews with people with special knowledge about the illicit drug situation in Victoria. As well frequent reference was made to the anonymous telephone number, particularly on the hour and half hour and during the news programmes.

Time (Radio Interviewer)	Guest Interviewees
9:00 to 9:15 (Derryn Hinch)	Chief Commissioner, S.I. Miller referred to the entrenched drug use in society its association with organised crime and the community's responsibility.
9:15 to 9:30 (Derryn Hinch)	Brian White, General Manager of 3AW and previously involved in reporting on the international drug organisations, talked about cocaine and opium:their history and their use. He related tobacco addiction to use of other drugs.
9:30 to 9:45 (Derryn Hinch)	Jane Hendtlass, Research Consultant to Victoria Police, addressed the use and abuse of prescription drugs and their involvement in the continuum of drug use

which has implications
to crime and road safety.

12:30 report
(Mike Edmonds)

Rex Haw, 3AW Police Reporter, described the Operation room scene and the types of calls that were being received. He interviewed Chief Inspector Doug Millar, Head of the Drug Squad who said 160 tasked detectives were fully engaged. He thought that people were more likely to ring the radio station than the police because of the publicity.

12:30 Report
(Mike Edmonds)

Justice Woodward, Royal Commissioner into Drug Trafficking, explained that the terms of the Royal Commission specifically excluded alcohol and tobacco.

Marijuana trafficking is related to heroin trafficking because:

"The average street pusher - pushes marijuana and heroin when he can get it". He describe laundering of money through Tattsлото, racing and casino gambling facilities.

12:30 Report
(Mike Edmonds)

Chief Inspector Ted Page,
Homicide Squad, talked about
the relationship between
drugs and murder:

"The incidence of drug related
murders has increased in the
last few years".

These crimes are more
difficult to investigate than
other homicide.

1:08 PM to 1:30 PM
(Muriel Cooper)

The topic was introduced
by describing drug dealers
as parasites.

Kevin Mason SM, City
Coroner, described his
role in investigating death.
He said that about 60 out
133 drug deaths in the
previous year were aged
under 30. He thought:

"Possibly about 60% of those
that die from drug overdose
are as a result of actually
receiving drugs on pres-
cription from some medical
practitioner".

As far as drug related death
was concerned he thought
this was increasing.

"It seems to be particularly
over the last twelve

months, the number of cases where I have committed a person for trial for murder that there has been at least an association with drugs and considerable money involved in relation to these drug dealings".

2:40 PM to 2:50 PM
(Muriel Cooper)

Bill Menhellick, Task Force Coordinator, spoke about those most at risk:

"Young people who are having problems at home, young people who are perhaps in institutions and probably young people who are having trouble getting employment".

He described the way in which people get introduced to injectable drugs and a related case study about the "fairly typical" addict who found herself in care and subsequently used heroin. He discussed the sensationalised aspects of withdrawal and rehabilitation experiences and pointed out that most clients are quickly physically recuperated.

2:50 PM to 3:00 PM
(Muriel Cooper)

Inspector Tom Egan, Federal Police, said the Federal

Police Force is responsible for importation offences relating to prohibited drugs and it works closely with customs authorities and the State Police. There is a special drugs unit trained in drug detection and importation procedures:

"The main function of the Federal Police is to crack down on drug movement".

Drugs are now entering from the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent. There are four methods of importation: cargo, light aircraft, airports and parcel post.

3:40 PM to 3:45 PM
(Muriel Cooper)

Chief Superintendent Phil Bennett, Operation Commander, discussed the ways in which the police were coping with the information which they were obtaining. He referred to the incidence of drugs in schools:

"You'll be amazed at the number of schools that are nominated as having drugs sold or being sold by the pupils
There are great problems in

high schools".

Further, he gave parents advice on how to cope to with a drug situation in the home.

4:00 PM to 4:20 PM
(Mark Day)

Day introduced his programme with Operation Noah, described the situation and announced the phone number. He emphasised the give and take of community responsibility and pointed to the "rapacious rat bags who peddled drugs." Group pressure is important in initiation to drug use and there is no social discrimination between kids who use drugs.

Senior Sergeant Neil McDonald, Drug Squad, discussed the raids that were being undertaken by the Police on the day and reported many phone calls were from concerned parents.

6:23 PM to 6:30 PM
(Dave Pincombe)

Senior Sergeant Elliot, Drug Squad, described marijuana plantations along the Murray River and the effects marijuana can have:

"I remember a young 16 year old lady that started smoking marijuana and she wasn't getting enough kicks out of that so she gradually got into the heavier drugs and finally to heroin".

7:30 PM to 8:00 PM
(Dave Pincombe)

Rex Haw, 3AW Police Reporter, talked about the relationship between drugs and other crime and the influence of the United States and the Vietnam War:

"The people usually (breaking into milkbars or houses) are people who are usually doing that to get enough money to buy their next deal of marijuana or their next hit of smack or whatever it is".

Further he described some of the more sensational behaviour of drug addicts in administering their drug of choice.

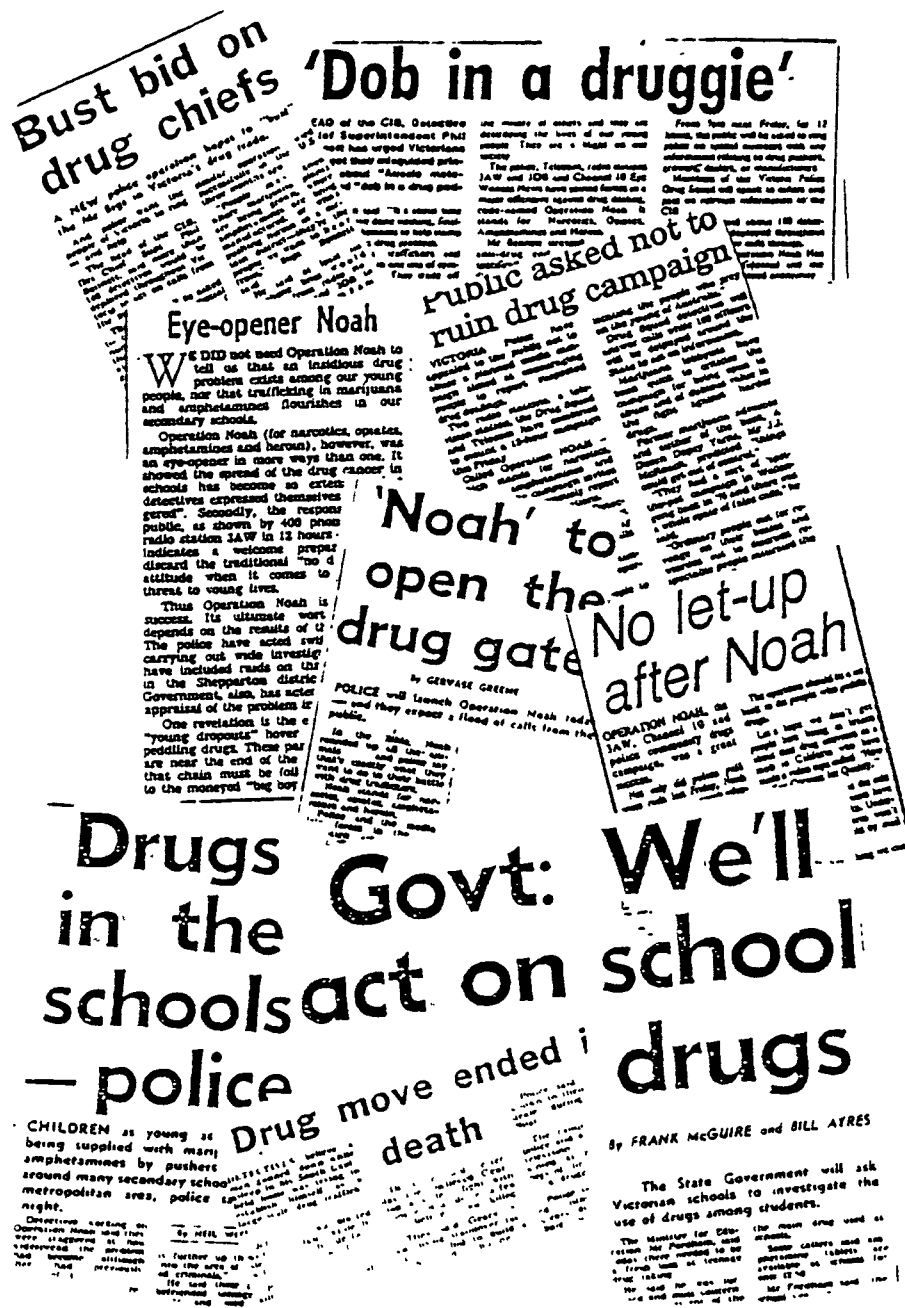
4.3 Press Cover of Operation Noah

Press references to Operation Noah began on 4th December, 1982, when The Sun Newspaper reported the forthcoming attempt to 'bust' the Mr. Bigs in Victoria's drug trade (Figure 8).

This was followed up by the Sunday newspapers, the Australian, and Scene magazine.

On December 10th the "Sun" and the "Herald" reported the Operation, the Sun anticipating a flood of telephone calls from the public and the Herald heralding a success. The "Age" newspaper does not seem to have made significant comment on the effort.

FIGURE 8



4.4 Follow-Up to Operation Noah

A series of media releases was made by the Police subsequent to the Operation. These were carried by both the electronic and print media but, in general, the "Age" did not refer to them.

They referred particularly to:

- . The association between drug use and secondary schools;
- . The number of reports (300) which required immediate action;
- . The number of people charged as a result of Operation Noah (17), the number of charges laid (53) and the size of the resulting drug hauls.

On 3rd January, 1983 Rex Haw from 3AW was interviewed on Radio Australia:

Sixty of the calls were about schools. Fifty people have been arrested".

Most media reports of Operation Noah ceased after 12th January, 1982 when a report of a raid in Shepparton was released and the Sun reported a drug related murder which was apparently retaliation for release of information to the Operation.

5. TELEPHONE RESPONSE TO OPERATION NOAH

Chapter 5 will describe the 434 phone calls made to police on the Anonymous Phone line in response to the Operation Noah call for information about drug traffickers, manufacturers and growers.

5.1 Time of Call

Almost all of the phone responses to Operation Noah occurred during the active period of the Operation (Fig 9).

Thirty five per cent of calls were received between 9 am and noon, 16% between noon and 2 pm, and a further 18% between 2 pm and and a further 31% between 5 pm and 9 pm.

About 18% of calls were received on the hour or the half hour, that is at times when news broadcast the Operation telephone number.

There was no obvious correlation between the times during which the 3AW programme focussed on drug-related matters and the times when telephone calls were most frequent.

5.2 Callers

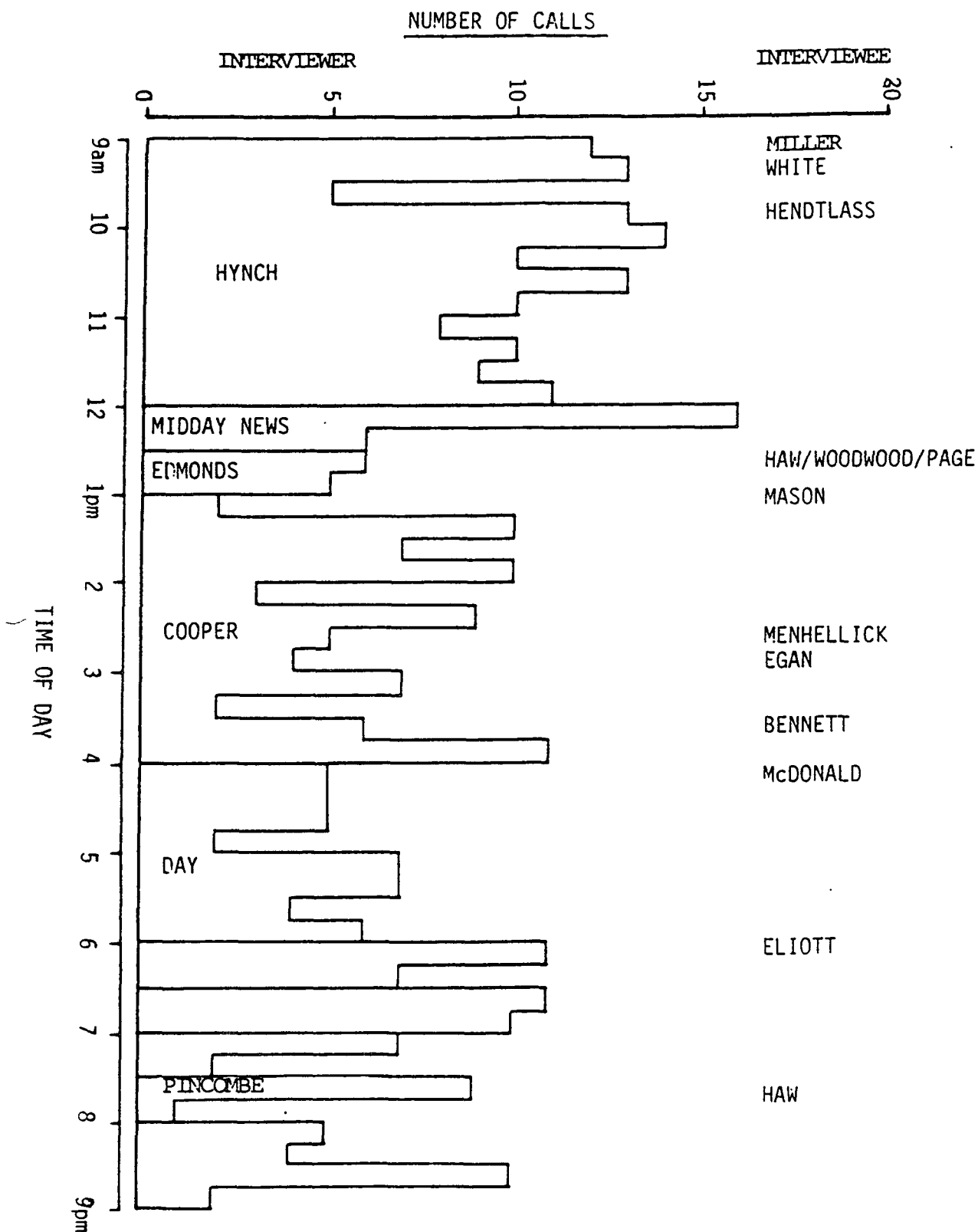
The characteristics of those people who responded to the request for telephone information were recorded by police manning the phones.

Over 91% of callers declined to give their names but the sex of the caller was recorded in 60% of cases: 47% of these callers were men and 53% were women.

About 7% of calls were hoaxes in that they nominated nonexistent addresses. In another 3% of calls, hoaxes involving innocent people, for example business addresses, were involved. Male and female callers were equally likely to give this type of information.

FIGURE 9

NUMBER OF TELEPHONE CALLS RECEIVED DURING
RADIO STATION 3AW PROGRAMME DECEMBER 10th, 1982



5.3 Information

Information requested by the police included the address and type of premises being reported, the type of behaviour which had given rise to the report and the characteristics of those about whom the report was lodged.

5.3.1 Location and Type of Premises

One quarter of the places reported were outside the metropolitan area and 13% were in the Central City Area (Table 1). There was no relationship between the sex of the caller and the location of the premises they reported.

TABLE 1
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF PLACES REPORTED TELEPHONE CALLERS

Sector of Victoria	Places Reported involved with Drugs (N=410) %	Population of Victoria (ABS 1981) (N=2298687) %
Central City	12.9	8.5
Western Suburbs	10.5	11.7
Northern Suburbs	14.4	17.8
Eastern Suburbs	16.1	23.0
Southern Suburbs	22.4	22.7
Rural Victoria	23.7	16.3
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Dwellings were reported in nearly 50% of cases, farms or other property in 9.3% and business premises in 15.5%.

Male callers were significantly more likely to report business premises, hotels and clubs while women more often reported residential addresses, brothels and outdoor sites such as roads and carpark sites (Table 2). Twelve callers reported educational institutions.

TABLE 2
TYPE OF PLACE OR MEANS OF LOCATION REPORTED
BY TELEPHONE CALLERS

Type of Place or Means of Location	Sex of Caller	
	Men	Women
	(N=121) %	(N=134) %
Dwelling	39.7	48.5
Sheds etc.	0.8	4.5
Business Premises	15.7	7.5
Shop	4.1	4.5
Brothel	-	3.0
Hotel/Club	14.9	6.7
Hospital	5.0	-
Educational Institution	4.1	3.0
Taxi/Cars	1.7	1.5
Property	8.3	8.2
Riverbanks, Carparks, etc	5.0	11.2
Telephone numbers	0.8	1.5
	<hr/> 100.0	<hr/> 100.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Chi Square Test
Very Significant

5.3.2 Nature of the Report

There was no significant difference between male and female callers in the behaviour which caused them to make their report or about which they were suspicious (Table 3).

Over 56% of the information given to police specified general drug selling activity, in some cases coupled with use of drugs. A further 20% of callers referred to the growing of marijuana.

TABLE 3
BEHAVIOUR GIVING RISE TO THE REPORT
MADE BY TELEPHONE CALLERS

Behaviour	Sex of Caller	
	Men	Women
	(N=122)	(N=134)
	%	%
Selling Drugs	52.5	60.4
Using & Selling	6.6	1.5
Growing Marijuana	18.9	13.4
Strange Activity	4.1	5.2
Importing	3.3	1.5
Fast Wealth	1.6	2.2
Travel Overseas	-	0.7
Prostitution	1.6	-
General Suspicious		
Behaviour	6.6	8.2
Drug Use	4.9	6.7
	-----	-----
	100.0	100.0
	-----	-----

Chi Square Test
Not Significant

About 37% of complaints specified more than one drug, and 54% referred to marijuana alone or with other substances. Other drugs reported included amphetamine (15%), heroin (16%) and cocaine (5%). Men were significantly more likely to report activity relating to marijuana use while women callers more often reported cocaine or were unspecific about the types of drugs involved (Table 4).

TABLE 4
DRUGS REFERRED TO BY TELEPHONE CALLERS

Drug Type	Sex of Caller	
	Men	Women
	(N=123) %	(N=134) %
Unspecified	3.3	13.4
Marijuana	48.0	27.6
Amphetamines	5.7	3.0
Heroin	8.9	7.5
Cocaine	1.6	5.2
"Pills"	0.8	-
More than 1	31.7	43.3
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Significant

5.3.3 People Reported

Over 41% of complaints involved only one specific person and 26% did not specify the number of individuals.

Sex

Nearly 85% of those complained of were men and 15% were women.

For comparison, women comprise 20% of drug offenders routinely reported by police (Hendtlass 1983).

Complaints made about men were different from those associated with women. Women were more associated with using and selling complaints while men were more often accused of growing marijuana.

The types of premises associated with male suspects were significantly more likely to be business premises than those associated with female suspects.

Age

Age or approximate age was known for 53% of the people about whom complaints were made. Age was not related to gender (Table 5).

TABLE 5
AGE OF SUSPECTS

Years	Suspects (N=178) %	Drug Offenders Melbourne (N=734) %
10 to 19	9.6	17.2
20 to 29	57.3	65.3
30 to 39	22.4	15.0
40 & Over	10.7	2.5
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Although the 20 to 29 year age group was most frequently reported, they contributed less to the suspect group than they did to the drug offenders in Melbourne in 1980-81 (Hendtlass 1983).

The telephone reports tended to nominate a greater number of people aged over 39 years compared with police reported offenders.

5.3.4 Criminal Record

Among 252 suspects identified through Operation Noah for whom criminal records could be determined, 40% were known to police. For comparison, 55% of drug offenders charged by police had previous criminal records (Hendtlass 1983).

5.3.5 Summary

One fifth of reports made to police in response to Operation Noah, referred to places outside the metropolitan area. In one half dwellings were nominated as being associated with drug offences.

Just over half the complaints referred specifically to drug trafficking and 20% to marijuana growing.

There were several inconsistencies in the information presented by the callers. For example, female callers were more likely to report brothels as places where drug trafficking occurred but they did not nominate prostitution as the reason for suspicion. On the other hand, some men considered prostitution was, of itself, reason to suspect drug involvement and in each of these cases in which they specified the suspect's gender another man was nominated. It is inappropriate to aggregate "prostitution" and "brothels" under one heading because of apparent differences in the pattern of illicit drug use between street prostitutes and those who work in brothels (e.g. Goldstein 1979).

Individuals reported to police in response to Operation Noah were more likely to be men, to be aged over 30 years and to not be previously known to police than drug offenders reported by police under usual operational procedures.

5.4 Outcome of Report

Police acted on 76% of the reports made to them by respondents to the Operation Noah call for information about drug traffickers, growers and manufacturers. In a further 5% of reports and 22% of individuals the information was already known to them.

5.4.1 Police Response

Police made 381 visits to premises or places reported by respondents. In 12% of reports more than one visit was necessary and the Criminal Investigation Bureau was responsible for 63% of these responses.

In 21% of cases only a superficial attendance was required. However, in 30% of cases a search was made of the premises and in a further 12% warrants were issued to legitimate the search.

5.4.2 Drugs Found

In 33 instances or 8% of reported cases, drugs were found on the premises.

In 82% of these cases marijuana was involved and other drugs seized included heroin and amphetamines.

5.4.3 Charges Laid

Twenty two people were charged with drug offences as the result of Operation Noah. Three of these were arrested and the remainder were brought before the court on summons.

All the drug charges laid were for possession of illicit drugs or possession and use of illicit drugs.

However, police were continuing their investigation of two further individuals suspected of trafficking drugs.

5.4.4 Summary

Police responded actively to three quarters of the telephone reports about drug offenders made in response to Operation Noah.

This involved 381 visits to premises, 40 search warrants and 96 searches without warrant.

Drugs were found in 33 places; nearly all of these were marijuana. Twenty two people were charged with drug offences.

6. DRUG ABUSERS WHO CAME TO NOTICE IN NOVEMBER, DECEMBER AND
JANUARY 1981-82 & 1982-83.

Information has been collected about drug abusers who come to notice in two ways:

- 1) as drug offenders reported to Victoria Police in metropolitan Melbourne; and
- 2) as drug overdose patients transported by Ambulance Service Melbourne.

Chapter 6 will describe these two groups of drug abusers and compare those who came to notice in the 1982-83 period with those who came to notice one year earlier.

The number of offenders charged as the result of Operation Noah was too small to have much direct influence on the characteristics of drug offenders charged in the 1982-83 period but comparison of the two time periods allows some assessment to be made of the possible indirect influence which the Operation could have through the media or on other police activity against illicit drug use.

6.1 Drug Offenders

There were 575 offenders reported to police in the 1982-83 period, an increase of 35% over the same period in 1981-82. Most of this increase resulted in an almost doubling of the December 1981 figures in December 1982 (Table 6) which meant that the proportion contributed in January was significantly reduced.

TABLE 6
MONTH OFFENCE REPORTED

Month	Time Period	
	1981-82 (N=427) %	1982-83 (N=575) %
November	25.1	25.9
December	27.4	36.2
January	47.5	37.9
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Highly Significant

In both December 1981 and December 1982 80% of drug offences were reported between December 10th and December 31st.

6.1.1 Time of Offences

There was no significant difference between the two time periods in the day of the week in which offences were reported. However, when time of day is considered, in 1982-83 there was more activity in the 4 pm to midnight period than in the previous year.

6.1.2 Place of Offence

The distribution of the places in the City in which the offences occurred differed between the 1981-82 and the 1982-83 time periods (Table 7). In November to January 1981-82, over 35% of offences took place in Central Melbourne compared with less than 30% in the 1982-83 period. This was balanced by a greater number of offences in the northern and western suburbs in the later period.

TABLE 7
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF DRUG OFFENCES

Sector	Time Period	
	1981-82	1982-83
	(N=427)	(N=575)
	%	%
Central Melbourne	35.4	29.7
Western Sector	11.7	9.9
Northern Sector	21.3	23.8
Eastern Sector	11.9	16.2
Southern Sector	16.9	15.7
Other	2.8	4.7
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0	100.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Chi Square Test
Highly Significant

There was a significantly higher proportion of offences detected in Central Melbourne after December 10th 1982 and in January 1983 than in the Study period before that date.

6.1.3 Type of Place

Operation Noah accounted for 2.6% of the drug offenders charged in metropolitan Melbourne between November 1982 and January 1983. A further one quarter of the offences reported resulted from vehicle checks undertaken by police and 10% were detected during routine questioning of people walking on or beside the roadway (Table 8). This figure is significantly higher than that for the period in 1981-82 and there was a decrease in the frequency with which offences were detected in other buildings and in hotels and clubs.

TABLE 8
PLACES IN WHICH OFFENCE DETECTED

Type of Place	Time Period	
	1981-82 (N=425) %	1982-83 (N=551) %
Dwelling	49.4	48.9
Hotel/Club	2.8	1.7
Other Building	12.6	6.8
Public Place	3.5	3.7
Road (vehicle checks & pedestrians)	30.9	34.7
Operation Noah	-	2.6
Other	0.8	1.6
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Highly Significant

6.1.4 Characteristics of Offenders

Sex

The gender distribution of drug offenders charged between November 1982 and January 1983 was not significantly different from that of those charged one year earlier (Table 9).

TABLE 9
SEX OF DRUG OFFENDERS
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Sex	Time Period	
	1981-82 (N=399) %	1982-83 (N=548) %
Male	78.5	82.7
Female	21.3	17.3
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Not Significant

Age

More offenders in the 1982-83 survey period were aged under 20 years than those charged in the 1981-82 period (Table 10).

TABLE 10
AGE OF DRUG OFFENDERS
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Age	Time Period	
	1981-82 (N=396) %	1982-83 (N=546) %
10 to 19 years	16.7	21.3
20 to 29 years	59.1	63.9
30 to 39 years	20.4	12.6
40 to 49 years	1.5	1.3
50 to 59 years	1.3	0.4
Over 59 years	1.0	0.5
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.00 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Significant

Offenders who were charged between December 10th and December 31st 1982 were more than twice as likely to be aged between 40 and 49 years than those charged before December 10th or in November 1982 and January 1983. The proportion contributed by people aged under 20 years was halved in the same time period and offenders aged 20 to 29 years were also less frequent.

Occupation and Criminal Record

A greater proportion of the 1982-83 offenders were unemployed compared with the 1981-82 offenders but there was no significant difference in the proportion who had a previous criminal record.

Differences in these characteristics were not related to the date of Operation Noah.

Residential Address

Drug offenders charged between November 1982 and January 1983 were more likely to live in Rural Victoria or in the Eastern Suburbs while those charged in the previous year were more likely to live in Central Melbourne.

Differences in residential address were not related to the date of Operation Noah.

6.1.5 Drug Offences

In November, December and January 1982-83, drug offenders were charged with 953 drug related offences, an increase of 21.6% over the same period in the previous year.

Charges

This increase resulted entirely from a greater number of charges involving possession and/or use of drugs (Table 11) and there was a corresponding decrease in the number of people charged with trafficking offences. In the 1982-83 period only 10 people were charged with only trafficking drugs without being charged with their possession or use, compared with 23 for the same period in the previous year.

TABLE 11
DRUG CHARGES LAID,
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Drug Charges	Time Period	
	1981-82 (N=754) %	1982-83 (N=953) %
Trafficking	11.1	6.8
Possession	47.5	52.7
Use	31.5	34.5
Pharmacy Burglary	0.9	0.8
Surgery Burglary	2.0	1.8
Theft	0.3	-
Conspiracy	2.3	1.2
Armed Robbery	0.4	-
Other	4.0	2.2
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Highly Significant

Drugs

As well, the types of drugs involved in the two time periods were significantly different. More people were charged with offences involving only one drug in the 1982-83 period but there was no significant increase in the number charged with offences involving more than one drug. Nearly all of the increased number of offences could be accounted for by a 66% increase in the number of people charged with cannabis offences and there was no significant change in the number of offenders charged with offences involving amphetamine, heroin, cocaine or prescription drugs.

There was a highly significant change in the types of drugs detected in the second study period before and after December 10th, 1982 (Table 12). The increased proportion of cannabis offences in the later period can be explained in part by the influence which the plant's growing season has on availability and on police operations.

TABLE 12

DRUGS INVOLVED IN CHARGES
LAI D BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1982 & JANUARY 1983

	MONTH			
	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
		1st-9th	10th-31st	
	(N=164)	(N=140)	(N=176)	(N=227)
	%	%	%	%
Amphetamine	16.4	17.5	8.0	9.7
Cannabis	60.4	65.0	78.4	70.0
Heroin	7.9	7.5	9.1	14.0
Cocaine	1.2	-	1.1	-
Other	-	-	-	-
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Chi Square Test
Highly Significant

6.1.6 Other Coincident Offences

In the 1981-82 period 19.2% of drug offenders were charged with other offences at the same time, compared with 14.3% in the 1981-82 period. The distribution of these offences was different between the two periods with fire arms and prostitution offences occurring twice as frequently in the later time period (Table 13).

TABLE 13
COINCIDENT CHARGES LAID
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Charges	Time Period	
	1981-82	1982-83
	(N=96)	(N=85)
	%	%
Traffic	13.5	9.4
Assault	4.2	5.9
Burglary other than		
Drugs	17.7	2.3
Prostitution	2.1	5.9
Firearms	15.6	36.5
Sex offences	1.0	1.2
Other	45.9	38.8
	-----	-----
	100.0	100.0
	-----	-----

Chi Square Test
Highly Significant

6.1.7 Summary

There was a 35% increase in the number of drug offenders charged in metropolitan Melbourne during November, December and January 1982-83 compared with the same period a year earlier. Nearly all this increase can be attributed to a 78% increase in the figures for December 1981 compared with December 1982.

This increase was distributed across the entire month.

There were some differences in the characteristics of offences detected in the two time periods. More offences were reported in the Western and Northern sectors of the city in the 1982-83 period. As well, a greater proportion resulted from vehicle checks and routine questioning of pedestrians.

Drug offenders charged in the 1982-83 study period were more likely to be aged under 20 years, to be unemployed and to live in the Eastern Suburbs or rural Victoria than those charged in the same period in 1981-82.

Only 10 people were charged with trafficking offences alone in November, December and January 1982-83 compared with 23 in the same period of the previous year.

Nearly all the increase in drug charges laid involved offences of possession or use of cannabis. However, more coincident firearms and prostitution offences were detected during the later time period.

About 2.5% of all drug offences reported in November and December 1982 and January 1983 could be attributed to Operation Noah.

Although the Operation did not seem to significantly affect the number of drug offences reported or the number of drug traffickers charged, December 10th was associated with a change

in the age distribution of offenders, the places in which offences were detected and the types of drugs involved.

6.2 Drug Overdose Patients

There were 540 drug overdose patients transported by Ambulance Service Melbourne during November, December and January 1982-83, an increase of 29% over the same period in 1981-82. Most of this increase resulted from a 50% increase in the December 1982 figures (Table 14).

TABLE 14
MONTH OF DRUG OVERDOSE INCIDENTS
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Month	Time Period	
	1981-82 (N=417) %	1982-83 (N=540) %
November	25.1	26.9
December	27.4	36.2
January	47.5	37.9
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Highly Significant

In both December 1981 and December 1982, 69% of the drug overdose patients were transported between December 10th and December 31st.

6.2.1 Time of Overdose Incidents

There was no significant difference between the two time periods in the time of day when the overdose was reported.

6.2.2 Place of Incident

The distribution of the places in the City in which the overdose incidents occurred did not differ significantly between the 1981-82 and the 1982-83 time periods (Table 15).

TABLE 15
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF DRUG OVERDOSE INCIDENTS
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Sector	Time Period	
	1981-82	1982-83
	(N=418)	(N=498)
	%	%
Central Melbourne	29.2	33.9
Western Sector	15.0	14.5
Northern Sector	19.2	20.4
Eastern Sector	16.4	17.2
Southern Sector	10.8	9.2
Other	9.4	4.8
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0	100.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Chi Square Test
Not Significant

6.2.3 Characteristics of Drug Overdose Patients

Sex

The gender of drug overdose patients taken to hospital between November 1982 and January 1983 was not significantly different from those transported in the 1981-82 period (Table 16).

TABLE 16
SEX OF DRUG OVERDOSE PATIENTS
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Sex	Time Period	
	1981-82 (N=417) %	1982-83 (N=540) %
Male	36.5	39.1
Female	63.5	60.9
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Not Significant

Age

There was no significant difference in the age distribution of drug overdose patients transported in the 1982-83 survey period compared with the 1981-82 period (Table 17).

TABLE 17
AGE OF DRUG OVERDOSE PATIENTS
1981-82 & 1982-83 STUDY PERIODS

Age	Time Period	
	1981-82	1982-83
	(N=394)	(N=494)
	%	%
10 to 19 years	14.0	16.0
20 to 29 years	35.0	34.2
30 to 39 years	24.9	21.5
40 to 49 years	10.9	13.1
50 to 59 years	7.9	7.9
Over 59 years	7.3	7.3
	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Chi Square Test
Not Significant

6.2.4 Summary

There was 29% increase in the number of drug overdose patients taken to hospital by Ambulance Service Melbourne during November, December and January 1982-83, compared with the same period a year earlier. Most of this increase can be attributed to a 50% increase in figures for December 1982 compared with December 1981.

This increase was distributed across the whole month. There was no difference between the two time periods in the gender and age distributions of patients transported or the geographic location of the incidents.

7. DISCUSSION

Australian's ambivalence to drugs use and its associated problems expresses itself in

- . Our drug taking behaviour;
- . Media attention to drugs; and
- . Development and execution of drug control procedures.

We are consistently among the world's heaviest consumers of all types of drugs but most media attention focuses on heroin, cannabis and occasionally alcohol. It virtually ignores the influence of over the counter and prescription medication.

Further, our alcohol consumption is considered to be of most concern to health, welfare and criminological agencies yet most publicised and stringent control measures involve proscription of a few substances which, while still generally considered addictive and threatening to health, are used by less than 5% of the population.

Taken further, State and Federal governments both impose excise and tax controls on alcohol consumption, a measure which not only contributes to the public purse but also increases its cost to the consumer. Wine is exempt from most of this burden despite the fact that it is the main contributor to the increasing national alcohol consumption rate (ABS 1984).

There is a further dichotomy of opinion in the community about the role of legislation as a drug control measure. While, in general, expert opinion favours educative rather than legal countermeasures, the community seems to accept that punitive laws are appropriate as long as they do not apply to marijuana users (AFADD 1982; Australian Public Opinion Poll 1984b).

It seems that this hypocritical approach to drug use and drug control is influenced by media attention to the subject.

Newspapers, radio and television programmes continually reinforce existing concern about the way in which illicit drug use is increasing and the influence this may be having on crime without putting these factors into perspective by publicising changes in our use of other drugs.

Their emphasis can have direct and indirect influence on development of drug abuse countermeasures:

- . It irrationally increases community fear and prejudice which results in their calling for punitive legislative reaction;
- . It simplifies and trivialises the situation so that 'easy' answers such as legislation and advertising controls seem appropriate and long term prevention measures are overlooked;
- . It may be counterproductive among individuals at risk because it sensationalises illicit drug use.

Community concern about the drug problem and our reliance on the criminal justice system to implement control over illicit drugs enabled the police and the media to cooperate in Operation Noah, an attempt to elicit information from the general public about drug trafficking, growing and manufacturing in the community despite awareness that it could be regarded negatively in some quarters and its potential for infringing on civil liberty and personal privacy.

This report describes the operation which was undertaken in December 1982 but the same sort of exercise has been run twice since then in Victoria and once in New South Wales.

Media attention to the Operation was often sensationalised and inaccurate, for example:-

- . ".....rapacious ratbags who peddle drugs..."
- . "They are the leeches of society"
- . "Sixty of the calls were about schools. Fifty people have been arrested"
- . "It is those parasites who make money out of other peoples' suffering".

There was therefore reason for educationalists and drug control organisations who were aware of professional opinion in this area to be concerned about the negative effects which a media campaign of this type could have on drug abuse in the community (eg, UNESCO 1972; Reckless 1973; Royal Commission into Human Relationships 1977; NSW Drug & Alcohol Authority et al 1981; AFADD 1982; Bell 1982).

However, the contrary viewpoints which suggest that the media has little effect on community behaviour but rather reflects existing social attitudes, that sensationalised media cover does not always elicit fear, and that successful fear arousal is not necessarily accompanied by changes in outlook or behaviour (Klapper 1960; Smart & Cutler 1976; Osburn & Smart 1980; Duffy 1982; Sheppard 1982; Stacey undated) appear to have been supported in the case of Operation Noah.

Operation Noah had little effect on drug abuse in Melbourne when measured in terms of numbers of drug offenders and drug overdose patients who came to notice of the Police and Ambulance Services.

These two groups of drug abusers who come to notice of the authorities include individuals involved with each of four categories of drugs: Illicit drugs, prescription drugs, over the

counter drugs and alcohol. Over 88% of drug offences involve illicit drugs, mainly marijuana and to a lesser extent heroin and amphetamine. The other 11% involve prescription drug offences (Hendtlass 1983). On the other hand, 30% of drug overdose patients have been drinking alcohol, 81% involve prescription drug poisoning and 8% have taken an overdose of over the counter medicines. Only 7% have used illicit drugs in this incident (Hendtlass 1982).

Although there were significant increases in both these indices in December 1982 compared with December 1981, and there was not a similar difference in the November and January figures from the two Study periods, the increase does not seem to have been associated with the effects of Operation Noah. However, this does not necessarily mean that the media attention to the campaign did not influence some individuals who were at risk at the time (Pittman 1980; Cheetham et al 1982).

The Operation's potential for invasion of privacy was realised to some degree by the 13 hoax callers who nominated business premises as potential drug outlets and the 97 searches of premises which did not result in any drug seizures.

These issues were not fully discussed by the media in Victoria but a similar campaign in New South Wales in 1984 drew severe criticism of the effect that hoax calls can have on commercial enterprise (Willesee 1984).

In enforcement terms, the Operation did not achieve its objective of eliciting information which resulted in prosecution of traffickers, manufacturers and growers in the community.

Although over 400 phone calls were made to the police and 252 particular individuals could be identified from these calls, only twenty two people were charged with drug offences and in thirty three instances drugs were seized. No drug trafficking charges laid before May 1983 could be directly attributed to information obtained from the public during Operation Noah. As

well, there were 50% fewer drug trafficking offenders charged between November 1982 and January 1983 than in the previous year and there were 50% fewer offenders charged solely with trafficking offences in the later time period.

While it is acknowledged that information about one or two key people in the drug distribution network can have huge implications for enforcement officers attempting to close down the source of illicit drugs, this benefit needs to be weighed against the cost in manpower and resources:

- . over 40 hoax calls;
- . over 130 searches of premises;
- . over 45 premises requiring repeat or follow-up attendances;
- . 12 detectives manning the phone for a day;
- . 151 tasked detectives responding to information.

The value of the Operation as an enforcement tool must therefore remain doubtful.

The relationship between the police and the media is symbiotic in that both professions need each other: one to provide a reliable source of newsworthy stories, the other to ensure community cooperation and improve public perception.

This perceived interdependence could explain why both police and media have endowed Operation Noah with greater success than it can legitimately claim.

DECEMBER 10th and 11th, 1982

Noah launched
— to a success

**NOAH GETS
DELUGED!**

'Dob in a
druggie'
a success

'Success'
in drug
campaign

It is unlikely that comments which attribute the New South Wales Operation to a re-legitimisation of the police in that State (Brown 1984) are relevant to Victoria where the police force appears to be generally more highly regarded.

However, Operation Noah is a particularly good example of the way police and the media can work together and in as much as this provides a mechanism through which they can increase their mutual understanding of each other's professional roles, the concept has the potential for development into a useful drug abuse countermeasure.

At the level of the individual drug user other disciplines have been involved in Operations subsequent to that undertaken in 1982, by providing a phone counselling service in conjunction with the primary enforcement theme of the campaign.

At the community level, there is a need to:

- . Firstly rationalise the continuing reliance on legislation as a drug abuse countermeasure, paying particular attention in this case to use of police resources in limited, short-term operations such as Operation Noah and,
- . Secondly, encourage the media and other professionals such as policemen to express their concern about the drug situation in an accurate and de-sensationalised manner.

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DRUGS, MEDIA AND ENFORCEMENT:

A Survey of the Relationship between Drug Abuse
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