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PAYING FOR HEROIN

**Estimating the financial cost of acquisitive crime
committed by dependent heroin users in England and Wales**

Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence

32-36 Loman Street, London SE1 OEE.

Report based on work carried out for the Central Drug Coordination Unit.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

● This Report attempts to quantify the annual cost to society of acquisitive crime committed by dependent heroin users which finances their purchases of heroin; and the proportion of all acquisitive crime (by value) that this represents, in England and Wales.

● To do so we need to calculate values or ranges of values for the following:

- the quantity of heroin consumed by an individual user
- the cost of that heroin per user
- the number of dependent heroin users in England and Wales
- the percentage of heroin users' income which is derived from acquisitive crime
- the multiplier for the value of stolen property sold by the user.

● We utilise the following data and assumptions for England and Wales:

- on average each dependent heroin user (who also typically uses other drugs) consumes one third of a gram of heroin on 228 days of the year;
- the price of heroin purchased approximates to retail prices as collated by enforcement agencies;
- there are between twice and five times as many dependent heroin users than are notified to the Home Office as being addicted on heroin;
- the proportion of the cost of heroin which is financed by acquisitive crime falls within the range 16% to 48% (calculated from international studies);
- and that stolen property is sold for only a third of its value.

● On this basis, it is estimated that, in the early 1990s, dependent heroin users in England and Wales raised **between £58 million and £864 million** per annum from acquisitive crime in order to finance their heroin use - depending on (a) whether there are twice or five times as many dependent heroin users as notified, (b) whether their heroin costs them £50 or £100 per gram, and (c) whether 16% or 48% of their cash income comes from acquisitive crime.

● This is equivalent to **between 1% and 21%** of the annual cost of all acquisitive crime reported to the police (in 1992) in England and Wales. We can only have low to moderate confidence in the range of costs so estimated, due to inadequacies in the underlying data and also to the assumptions that have had to be made.

● A mid-range estimate would lie somewhere in between 1% and 21% but to cite any particular figure instead of the range would give a spurious impression of accuracy.

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The structure of this Report is as follows:

- a statement of intent;
- an overview of the method employed;
- a critical commentary on previous estimates of heroin-related crime;
- calculation of the data ranges employed, based on the assumptions we have made;
- resulting estimates of the costs of heroin-related acquisitive crime;
- and finally, in an Appendix, an overview of the international studies from which our data is drawn.

The question asked

- What is the annual cost to society of acquisitive crime committed by dependent heroin users which finances their purchases of heroin; and what proportion of all acquisitive crime (by value) does this represent, in England and Wales?

The question of the criminality of drug users attracts public attention for a variety of reasons. Amongst these reasons may be:

- (i) a need to understand all aspects of drug problems, in order to steer social policy;
- (ii) a search for evidence of particular negative social impacts of illegal drug use, which might be addressed by a commitment to reducing demand and supply; and
- (iii) the perception that, if part of the increase in property crime in the last fifteen years can be attributed to an increase in drug use, then the police may be regarded as being more effective (against mounting odds) than would otherwise be perceived.

Taken together, this is a powerful set of reasons for enquiry.

Yet our ability to give a soundly-based answer to questions about drug-related acquisitive crime is bedeviled by incomplete research data and questionable or erroneous assumptions (to which we draw attention as the report proceeds).

The aim of this Report is to present not only an improved estimate (which we do in the form of a range) but also an improved understanding of the issues involved.

Overview of our method and the data

Before we go any further we will set out the minimum necessary information required if a calculation of the costs of heroin-related crime is to be made:

We calculate:

- A. The quantity of heroin consumed by a dependent user (0.33 grams on 228 days a year)
- B. The cost of that heroin per dependent user (between £3,762 and £7,524)
- C. The number of dependent heroin users (between 31,894 and 79,735)

These three Factors allow us to calculate:

- D. The total annual cost of heroin used by dependent users (between £119,9845,220 and £599,926,140)

We then introduce an important consideration:

- E. The percentage of heroin users' income which is derived from acquisitive crime (between 16% and 48%)

Which allows us to calculate:

- F. The total cost of heroin which is funded by income derived from acquisitive crime (between £19,197,635 and £287,964,540)

We then introduce:

- G. The multiplier for the value of stolen property sold by the user (three)

Which allows us to calculate:

- H. The cost to victims of acquisitive crime committed to purchase heroin (between £57,592,905 and £863,893,620)

We will use this nomenclature throughout the Report (Factors A to H).

Need for a realistic approach

The most recent and widely remarked upon British method is that of the Manchester Police, from whose work others have extrapolated the estimate that half the acquisitive crime by value in England and Wales is committed by notified addicts).¹

That calculation starts with an estimate of the annual cost of a heroin habit, assuming all notified addicts in England and Wales in 1992 used a gram of heroin a day every day throughout the year, at a cost of £80 per gram. Critically, it also assumes that all purchases of heroin are financed by acquisitive crime.

We consider that the assumptions made by the Manchester method result in an overestimation of the financial value of property/acquisitive crimes by dependent heroin users:

- It overestimates the levels of heroin consumption (overestimating the amount typically used) and hence overestimates the financial requirements of heroin users.
- It also makes no allowance for the fact that some - in all probability, most - heroin purchases are funded by means *other than* acquisitive crime.

On these grounds, we believe the Manchester method overestimates substantially the cost of heroin-related property crime. However, there is also a 'tilt' in the method that would result in a clear underestimate of acquisitive crimes, for the following reason:

- No allowance is made for the fact that more heroin dependent persons exist than are notified to the Home Office.

Had the authors factored in the assumption that there are twice as many dependent heroin users as notified to the Home Office, then their method would have accounted for all acquisitive crime by value in England and Wales. This potential result and its prima facie improbability was possibly perceived by the originators of the model. Yet such an assumption (x2) is at the lower end of the ratio conventionally employed. Had they factored in an assumption of x5 (sometimes taken as an upper estimate), then they would have accounted for 250% of the value of acquisitive crime.

Such difficulties should point to the need to re-assess the assumptions made in the model.

¹ Report by Greater Manchester Police Drugs/Crime Working Group, 1992, p.2-9; subsequently Drugs - the Need for Action, 1994, Labour Party, London. In the latter report, a figure for notified addicts is employed -- about a half of whom were notified as being dependent on heroin alone, and about a fifth on heroin and other drugs (in most cases methadone, but in some cases cocaine, ie in the context of polydrug use). Thus in their calculation, persons notified as dependent on drugs other than heroin are counted as heroin addicts. Contrast with our own approach, following pages.

In the more refined method which we set out below, an attempt has been made to accommodate these points (insofar as the available data and reasonable assumptions permit).

Quality of data

In spite of the public interest in the questions of criminality and of drugs, data from England and Wales is distinctly patchy in respect to the socio-economic lives of drug users.

In the absence of any reliable English data on Factor E, the proportion of heroin users' income which is derived from acquisitive crime, we turn to studies carried out in Scotland, other European settings and the United States.

In no case, however, do we classify the quality of data on the income and expenditure of dependent drug users as 'good'. Due to the relative scarcity of studies, problems of methodology, incomparability across different studies, and the passage of time, we can only have 'moderate' confidence in the data quality.

A: THE QUANTITY OF HEROIN CONSUMED BY A DEPENDENT HEROIN USER

Although we broadly rely on international research to calculate the proportion of heroin users' income which is derived from acquisitive crime, most of the other data can be found within England and Wales.

As regards frequency and amount of heroin consumed, available research³ (in which we have moderate confidence) suggests that the average dependent heroin user in Britain uses

0.33 grams of heroin a day for 228 days in a year.

That is, over a year, an average of a third of a gram on four days out of seven.

The international surveys studied in this Report (and commented on in detail in the Appendix) present us with some opportunity for comparison with this finding.

- In Scotland it was found that heavy users of opioids took them on 285 days a year.
- A Dutch study of Amsterdam heroin users found that in the week to which the interviews related, 27% of interviewees had taken between one and two grams of heroin and 29% more than two. This meant that on average those questioned took 2.3 grams per week.

Thus the available research suggests that the frequency of heroin use of the 'average' dependent user in England and Wales is slightly lower than that of the 'heavy' user in Scotland (which makes sense).

The research also suggests that the weekly heroin consumption in grams of the 'average' dependent user in England and Wales is slightly lower than that found in the Amsterdam sample. This may be because of greater availability of heroin in Amsterdam (ie, relative to the rest of the Netherlands, as well as relative to England and Wales).

- Therefore, on balance, we stick to the available English data on this point.

³ Hartnoll R., Lewis R. (1985) The Illicit Heroin Market in Britain: Towards a Preliminary Estimate of National Demand, quoted in 'Economic Aspects of the Illicit Drug Market and Drug Enforcement Policies in the United Kingdom', Home Office Research Study 95, 1988.

B: THE COST OF THAT HEROIN PER USER

Once again, given the variable nature of the data relating to the cost of heroin, we will stay with the available data for England and Wales, with which we also have moderate confidence.

Statistics gathered from enforcement agencies and the National Criminal Intelligence Service estimate the retail cost of a gram of heroin as varying between £50 and £100 in the early 1990s.⁴

Combining this figure with Factor A, we can calculate how much a dependent heroin user spends on their habit each year. This is estimated to lie within the range:

between £3762 and £7524 per year for a dependent heroin user.

This result can be compared with the international data:

- The Dutch study found that with the average cost of a gram of heroin standing at Dfl250 (c. \$150), each user consumed Dfl575 (c. \$345) of heroin *by value* per week. This corresponds roughly to the top end of the range we calculate for the average dependent heroin user in England and Wales.

- A German study found users spending 250DM (c. \$140) per day on drugs; drugs were not used every day and drug use was financed in the main without direct financial outlay.

- In the Scottish study, low level users of opioid drugs spent £220 per week on their general drug use, and heavy users £386 per week. This is rather more than our calculation for heroin purchases in England and Wales.

- And finally, a New York study found that irregular users spent \$986 per year on heroin, regular users \$4019 and daily users \$7601. These figures are considerably lower than our estimates for England and Wales.

● Thus our calculation for the 'average' dependent heroin user's annual expenditure on heroin in England and Wales roughly corresponds to (fits within) the range suggested by international studies.

⁴ From NCIS, cited in National Audit of Drug Misuse in Britain 1994, ISDD, in press.

C: THE NUMBER OF DEPENDENT HEROIN USERS

There is no direct measure of the number of dependent heroin users in England and Wales.⁴ This means that an estimate has to be derived indirectly. A conventional way of doing this is to apply a multiplier to the addict notification statistics. Doctors are required to 'notify' the Home Office when they attend a patient they consider to be addicted to certain drugs. The quality of this indicator depends on how many dependent users come forward for medical attention, and how diligent doctors are in complying with the Notification Regulations. One complication is that the choice of multiplier is somewhat arbitrary. A further complication is that the proportion of heroin users in the community who are seen by doctors will, in all probability, vary from time to time, so the 'multiplier' which is used may need to change over time. The nuances of this issue are beyond the scope of the present Report and in principle insoluble in the absence of improved direct measures of the number of dependent heroin users. For our present purposes, the number of dependent heroin users is calculated on the basis of multiplying the number of notified heroin addicts by either 2 or by 5, to give high and low estimates respectively.⁵ Unlike the figures applied in the Manchester estimate (noted above), the following figures relate solely to persons notified as dependent on heroin, alone or in combination with other notifiable drugs (such as methadone or cocaine). This is in accordance with other data we use, which also relate to heroin (alone or in combination with other drugs). Thus our eventual calculations apply to dependent persons of other drugs only insofar as they also are dependent on heroin.

Estimates of numbers of dependent heroin addicts in England & Wales⁶

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>Average</u>
Notified:	14,298	15,946	17,596	15,947
Applying multipliers:				
- if x2 notified:	28,596	31,892	35,192	31,894
- if x5 notified:	71,490	79,730	87,980	79,735

● If the average for these years is taken, it is estimated that the number of dependent heroin users in England and Wales in the early 1990s lies in a range whose lower limit is 31,894 and upper limit 79,735.

⁴ There is a measure of the numbers of persons in households who have ever taken heroin at some time in their lives, and in 1991 specifically (Self-reported drug misuse in England and Wales: main findings from the 1992 British Crime Survey, research Findings 7, by Mott J and Mirrlees-Black, C, Central Drug Prevention Unit, Home Office, free). But as a household survey this is not designed to give indications of regular use.

⁵ One British study which provides a method of estimating a ratio (this time that between notified addicts and drug injectors rather than between non-notified and notified addicts) is Frischer M. (1992) Estimated Prevalence of Injecting Drug Use in Glasgow, British Journal of Addiction, 87, p.235-43.

⁶ Source: Home Office (Annual) Statistics of drug addicts notified to the Home Office, Area tables, London: Government Statistical Service, tables A5 and A6.

D: THE TOTAL COST OF HEROIN

Pulling together Factors A, B and C, we are now able to calculate a range of values for Factor D, the total cost of heroin used:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total cost of heroin} &= \text{Cost per user} \times \text{number of users} \\ &= (\text{between } \pounds 3,762 \text{ and } \pounds 7,524) \times (\text{between } 31,894 \text{ and } 79,735) \end{aligned}$$

We can therefore estimate that the total annual cost of heroin consumed by dependent users in England and Wales lies in the range:

between £119,985,220 and £599,926,140.

E: THE PROPORTION OF DEPENDENT HEROIN USERS' INCOME WHICH IS DERIVED FROM ACQUISITIVE CRIME

The Manchester Police report ignored the existence of 'other means' of financing heroin consumption apart from through crime. These 'other means' can include legitimate income (benefits and wages), drug dealing (often an important income source) and prostitution (more commonly reported as a significant source of income by women), and as such, may be considerable sources of income.

Surveys carried out in England and Wales, Scotland and in several other countries confirm that dependent heroin users have this variety of income sources. We do not, however, intend to rely on the studies from England and Wales in this Report.⁷ This is because they do not refer to the proportions of drug users' income deriving from different sources, but rather to the proportion of persons who reported various income sources.

Anticipating data which we will later present in greater detail in the Appendix, the following table summarises results from studies carried out in Scotland, Holland, Germany and America, which suggest that the proportion of dependent heroin users' income deriving from acquisitive crime typically falls below 50% of their total income.⁸

Comparative international findings on income derived from acquisitive crime by dependent heroin/polydrug users, compared with their other sources of income

	<u>Acquisitive crime(%)</u>	<u>Drug dealing(%)</u>	<u>Legitimate income(%)</u>
German females	16	32	49
Netherlands	21	18	60
USA (Johnson) ⁹	29	24	26
Scotland	30	60	10
German males	31	36	31
USA (Deschenes)	48	28	24

Note: percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding. For dates, see studies.

⁷ Jarvis G., Parker H. (1989) Young Heroin Users and Crime, *British Journal of Criminology*, 29, p.175-85. Also, Stimson G. et al (1993) Patterns and Trends in Cocaine and Crack Use in England and Wales 1990-1992, The Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour, unpublished report. For methods and detail see these sources.

⁸ Hammersley R. et al (1989) The Relationship between Crime and Opioid Use, *British Journal of Addiction*, 84, p.1029-43; Grapendaal M. (1992) Cutting their Coat according to their Cloth: Economic Behaviour of Amsterdam Opiate Users, *International Journal of the Addictions*, 27(4), p.487-501; Kreuzer A. et al (1991) Perspectives on Drug Users, p.151-62, in Kube E. and Storzer H. eds., 'Police Research in the Federal Republic of Germany', Springer-Verlag, Berlin; Johnson B. et al (1985) Taking Care of Business: the Economics of Crime by Heroin Users, Lexington Books, Massachusetts; Deschenes E., Anglin M., Speckart G. (1991) Narcotics Addiction: Related Criminal Careers, Social and Economic Costs, *Journal of Drug Issues*, 21(2), p.383-411.

⁹ Does not add up to 100% due to the exclusion of an income source ('avoided expenditure') which is discussed over the page. This does not, however, affect the validity of this table.

In making estimates for England and Wales, we shall assume (with a lack of evidence to the contrary) that the situation also falls somewhere within this range:

**Between 16% and 48% of the total cash income
of dependent heroin users comes from acquisitive crime.**

This calculation rests on the working assumption that all cash income of dependent heroin users is used to purchase heroin, their living expenses being covered in other ways. The following section justifies this assumption.

Living expenses and 'avoided expenditures'

Dependent heroin users are better than non-users at obtaining 'favours' and hustling material resources from those around them, thereby avoiding some cash expenditures. Drug agency staff generally acknowledge this aspect of users' lives. The only English study we have found which touches on 'avoided expenditures' was carried out by Whynes et al in 1985/6.¹⁰ Interviewing 83 Class A drug users, it was found that all had debts outstanding and 85% had received 'drugs for favours' at some time.

Johnson et al's Harlem study suggests that around one fifth of the effective income of dependent heroin/polydrug users may be in the form of avoided expenditures - meaning that it is neither paid for in cash, nor taken illegally, but shared with or otherwise obtained from family or friends. This non-monetarised manner of getting resources is in addition to the income from state benefits, wages (if any), prostitution, acquisitive crime and/or drug dealing or assisting therewith (see Table 4 in Appendix).

In the Johnson study - which is the only one we have been able to identify that contains sufficient detail on these questions - the equivalent money value of avoided expenditures was approximately equal to the value of expenditures on shelter, food and other daily (non-drug) requirements. In other words, living expenses were covered through avoided expenditures.

We think it reasonable to assume that dependent heroin/polydrug users in Britain are as socially skilled as those elsewhere in matters of avoiding expenditures. In this report, we adopt the working assumption that living expenses of dependent heroin users in England and Wales are covered by avoided expenditures.

● This working assumption allows us to equate aggregate monetary income (all sources) with aggregate expenditure on heroin, and to suppose that the proportion of income derived from acquisitive crime is equal to the proportion of heroin expenditure funded by income from acquisitive crime.

¹⁰ Whynes D., Bean P., Giggs J., Wilkinson C. (1989) Managing Drug Use, British Journal of Addiction, 84, p.533-540.

F: THE TOTAL COST OF HEROIN FUNDED BY INCOME DERIVED FROM ACQUISITIVE CRIME

Recapping, we have calculated ranges for these five crucial variables:

- Factor A: The quantity of heroin consumed by a dependent user (0.33 grams on 228 days a year)
- Factor B: The cost of that heroin per user (range, £3762 to £7524)
- Factor C: The number of dependent users (averaged for the early 1990s) (range, 31,894 to 79,735)
- Factor D: The total cost of heroin consumed by dependent users per annum (range, £119,985,220 to £599,926,140)
- Factor E: The proportion of heroin users' income which is derived from acquisitive crime (range, 16% to 48%)

We are now able to calculate ranges for the final results.

The value for the proportion of total expenditure on heroin which is funded through acquisitive crime, is:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\text{range, } \pounds 119,985,220 \text{ to } \pounds 599,926,140) \times \frac{(\text{range, } 16 \text{ to } 48)}{100} \\ & = \pounds 19,197,635 \text{ to } \pounds 287,964,540 \end{aligned}$$

Thus the total cost of heroin funded by income derived from acquisitive crime, lies in the range:

£19 million to £288 million.

G: THE MULTIPLIER FOR THE VALUE OF STOLEN PROPERTY SOLD BY THE USER

It is conventional to assume that stolen goods (including items fraudulently obtained by using stolen credit cards) are sold for around a third of their value.¹¹

- In the face of no better method of estimation, we adopt this ratio.

H: THE COST TO VICTIMS OF ACQUISITIVE CRIME COMMITTED TO PURCHASE HEROIN

We are now able to calculate the cost to victims¹² of acquisitive crime committed by dependent heroin users in England and Wales, where the proceeds are used to purchase heroin, as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cost to victims} &= \text{range, } \pounds 19,197,635 \text{ to } \pounds 287,964,540 \quad \times \quad 3 \\ &= \text{range, } \pounds 57,592,905 \text{ to } \pounds 863,893,620 \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the direct cost of acquisitive crime committed by dependent heroin users to finance their habits, is estimated to lie in the range:

£58 million to £864 million

- This is equivalent to between **1% and 21%** of the estimated cost of all acquisitive crime in England and Wales in 1992.¹³

Should the reader wish for a single point estimate, then this could be around 11%. Although the impression of precision given by any such number would be spurious, it would be better than using either the top or the bottom of the range alone.

¹¹ For the UK: Report by Greater Manchester Police Drugs/Crime Working Group, 1992, p.2-9. For the USA: New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services, 1983, Statewide comprehensive five-year plan 1984/85 through 1988/89, Albany, NY. Note however that the ratio may vary, depending on the crime (eg from 4 for burglary to 1 for welfare fraud, with the balance somewhere around 3, depending on the exact mix of acquisitive crimes); see Johnson et al, op cit, table 11-1, page 108-9.

¹² It has been pointed out that the replacement cost of the goods stolen is not the only cost to the victims. There are indirect costs, such as repairing any damage caused, but we do not attempt to quantify these here.

¹³ In 1992 the estimated cost of all acquisitive crime recorded by the police in England and Wales was £4019 million. See Home Office (1993) Criminal Statistics, England and Wales 1992, Tables 2.18 and 2.20, HMSO, London.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary interest of the client for this piece of research (the Central Drug Coordination Unit) focused upon the annual cost to society of acquisitive crime committed by dependent heroin users which finances their purchases of heroin; and the proportion of all acquisitive crime (by value) that this represents, in England and Wales.

- We find that a significant proportion (indeed the greater part) of the income of dependent heroin/polydrug users is raised by means other than acquisitive crime - that is to say, most is raised through drug dealing, licit income including prostitution, etc.
- We estimate that the costs of all types of acquisitive crimes in England and Wales by dependent heroin users fall in the broad range £58 million to £864 million - corresponding to 1% and 21% of the estimated annual (for the early 1990s) cost of all reported acquisitive crime in England and Wales.

Finally, the data used in this Report is at best of moderate quality.

- Given the legitimate cause for public concern, we therefore strongly recommend that improvement in the quality of information and research be regarded as an urgent priority.

APPENDIX

REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ON INCOME SOURCES OF HEROIN USERS

Surveys carried out in England and Wales, Scotland and in several other countries point to the fact that dependent heroin users (ie, persons who are moderate to heavy users of heroin and other drugs) have a variety of income sources - including legitimate means, drugs dealing (often an important source of income), prostitution (more commonly reported as a significant source of income by women) and/or acquisitive crime (ie, not only the latter).

As stated in the main Report, we do not intend to rely on the studies from England and Wales in this Report.¹⁴ This is because they do not report on the proportions of drug users' income deriving from different sources, but rather on the proportion of persons who reported various legal and illegal income sources.

It should be noted, however, that while the proportion of respondents who report acquisitive crime as an income source varies considerably between these studies (from 40% in Stimson et al, to 74% in Jarvis and Parker), it always falls well below 100%. It seems reasonable to suggest that amongst those mentioning acquisitive crime as a source of income, not all would rely on it equally heavily and regularly. So, if these studies are at all indicative of the wider picture, then they cast doubt on the notion that all dependent users rely for their finances exclusively upon acquisitive crime.

Due to insufficient detail in the available data from England and Wales, we will turn to Scottish, other European and north American data on the proportions of dependent heroin users' income which is derived from different sources. These studies from other countries concur that the proportion of dependent/heavy users' income raised from acquisitive crime is less than half their total income; in some cases it is well under a quarter of their total income. We will then use these data to describe a range of likelihood for the proportion of dependent heroin users' income which derives from acquisitive crime in England and Wales.

Given the problems inherent in such transposition of data, the quality and reliability must be regarded as low to moderate, at best. Even so, calculations on this basis must be regarded as *much more reliable* than any calculation done on the basis of the erroneous assumption that all dependent heroin users' income is derived from acquisitive crime.

¹⁴ Jarvis G., Parker H. (1989) Young Heroin Users and Crime, *British Journal of Criminology*, 29, p.175-85; Stimson G. et al (1993) Patterns and Trends in Cocaine and Crack Use in England and Wales 1990-1992, The Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour, unpublished report. For methods and detail see these sources.

Turning to Scottish and other studies of income data

As detailed above, a small number of studies in England and Wales have asked heroin addicts whether or not their addiction was funded by certain activities, such as drug dealing or acquisitive crime - producing quite widely varying results that seem to depend, at least in part, upon exactly what questions were asked. The main problem with these studies from our point of view is that they do not tell us what proportion of heroin addicts' income derives from crime - respondents were asked only about sources of income in general terms, with the resulting financial data being person- rather than source-specific (x% of addicts fund themselves by dealing, rather than x% of addict income derives from dealing). Due to this 'missing link' in the available English and Welsh research data, we have had to turn to data from other countries.

Fortunately, some studies conducted outside England and Wales go further than this, since they asked addicts to specify in what proportions their money comes from legal income, prostitution, drug dealing, other crime including acquisitive crimes, etc.

Of course, any attempt to transpose specific statistics directly from foreign studies into the English and Welsh situation must be strongly rejected. But, if the data from studies in a number of other countries seems fairly consistent insofar as it forms a coherent range - as we will show that it does - then the question becomes whether reasons can be adduced for saying the situation in England and Wales would be likely to fall far outside that range. With this in mind, we examine several studies which, when due account is taken of sampling issues (in particular, the gender of respondents), describe broadly comparable findings.

Scotland

A fairly recent Scottish study¹⁵ was based on drug users (mostly male) drawn partly from prison and partly from community sources, though little difference was found between them so they were combined.¹⁶ The following results refer to five categories of user: alcohol only; cannabis, with or without alcohol; miscellaneous illegal drugs other than opioids; 'moderate opioid use' (up to 273 days per year); and 'heavy opioid use' (more than 273 days), but both of the last two categories also took other drugs (polydrug use). See Table 1.

¹⁵ Hammersley R. et al (1989) The Relationship between Crime and Opioid Use, *British Journal of Addiction*, 84, p.1029-43.

¹⁶ It has been pointed out that samples drawn from treatment and from the community may differ as to reported criminal activity: 'Overall, a smaller proportion of addicts reported offending while receiving a prescription for opioids than before receiving one' (Bennett, T and Wright, R, 1986, The impact of prescribing on the crimes of opioid users, *British Journal of Addiction*, 81, page 265-273). Some of the studies examined below are of treatment samples and this may apply to them. On the other hand, as discussed in the German section, individuals in treatment may be more 'criminal' (having more criminal convictions) than those in the community.

Table 1. Some Scottish data:

Sources of income, £ per week, reported by users of -

	Alcohol	Cannabis	Misc. drugs	Moderate opioid	Heavy opioid	Mod + heavy opioid
All income	113	213	184	808	934	(100%)
<u>Of which:</u>						
Legit.	70	51	71	80 (10%)	98 (10%)	(10%)
Dealing	7	0	8	556 (69%)	471 (50%)	(60%)
Other crime	36	162	105	172 (21%)	365 (39%)	(30%)

Source: Table 1 and text of Hammersley et al p 1037.

Notes: Sample is overwhelmingly male.

Prostitution as a source of income not discussed by the authors.

The percentage figures within brackets refer to income as a proportion of all stated income.

It is striking that drug dealing became so important for opioid users, whose high involvement in dealing is more significant in terms of income-generation than other crimes. As far as variation between user-types is concerned, the authors remark (p.1038):

'Essentially, higher level drug users took more drugs and committed more crimes than did lower level users. However, things were not quite this simple: There was no relationship between drug level and delinquency and fraud, and moderate opioid users did not steal significantly more than did miscellaneous drug users or cannabis users... However, heavy opioid use was associated with increased criminality.'

Indeed, the 'heavy opioid users' in the Scottish study reported nearly twice the rate of criminality (ie acquisitive crimes) compared with the 'moderate opioid users' (although the latter were at least as active in terms of drug dealing). On this basis, income generated from acquisitive crimes by male opioid users (ie users of heroin and other drugs) vary within the range 20-40% of all their income. This is certainly not a picture of property crime being the main source of income, let alone the sole source as might popularly be supposed.

Germany

In Germany, the well known work of Kreuzer suggests that less than a third of the money needed by German addicts is raised through acquisitive crimes, although the picture differs according to gender.¹⁷ Table 2 summarises Kreuzer's data for a sample of 100 Germans who had an average of 8 years use of 'hard drugs' and were interviewed during their first few weeks in treatment. Of their income when using drugs, approximately a third was reported to be raised by drug dealing, with men raising proportionately slightly more by this means than women. Around a fifth of the

¹⁷ Kreuzer A. et al (1991) Perspectives on Drug Users, p.151-62, in Kube E. and Storzer H. eds., 'Police Research in the Federal Republic of Germany', Springer-Verlag, Berlin.

money came from legal means, which includes employment, again with minor gender differences.

There was a considerable difference in relation to prostitution, with women financing a little over a quarter of their drug addiction this way, but men very little (in line with other studies, and possibly reflecting some under-reporting by the men, amongst whom selling sex may be more stigmatised).

When it comes to 'other crimes', including acquisitive crimes, there is a pronounced difference between the sexes, with men reporting twice as much reliance on this way of financing drug use (39.3%, against 16.0% claimed by women, 30.8% both sexes combined). This seems to be related to women's greater reliance on prostitution.

Table 2. Some German data:

Means of financing drug use in 1988 (in % of drug expenditures)

	Men	Women	Sample
Legal	21.5	17.1	20.2
Prostitution (illegal)	1.7	27.7	11.2
Drug dealing	37.5	32.4	35.6
Other crimes	39.3	16.0	30.8

Note: Does not add up to 100% because some details are missing.

Source: Reproduced without amendment from table 2, Kreuzer.

Uniquely amongst the studies we report here (ie, not in the Scottish, Dutch or US studies also cited), the percentages reported in relation to German drug users refer to means of financing drug purchases (ie, excluding their financing of other living expenses). This means that their living expenses such as housing, food and clothing were met by other sources not reported by the authors. Insofar as a majority of the German sample were unemployed and qualified for social support, they would have had their accommodation costs (if any) paid direct by voucher, rather than have that cash go through their hands. Some would have had cashable state social support, reckoned to underpin a minimum standard in matters such as food (and may have spent it on that).

As a treatment-based sample - and in a country such as Germany in which entry into treatment is most commonly achieved as a form of diversion from a prison sentence - Kreuzer's respondents were probably heavier users and more criminal in behaviour than the average German user in the community. It has been suggested that his findings might need to be 'corrected downwards' to make it more comparable with samples drawn from the community in other countries. Be that as it may, the German data indicates a range similar to, but slightly broader than, that suggested by the Scottish study: roughly 16-39% of the income of moderate-heavy heroin/opioid users ('addicts') may come from acquisitive crime, women being at the bottom of this scale and men at the top. This gender difference seems likely to be reflected in general terms in England and Wales. It suggests that we should bear gender in mind when considering how this and other international data may relate to the situation in England and Wales.

