

NDRI invites you to

Estimating the societal cost of methamphetamine use in Australia

A free public seminar with

Steve Allsop and Robert Tait,

National Drug Research Institute

Wednesday, 23 August 2017 @ 12.30pm-1.30pm

Technology Park

Building 603, Level 2 Seminar Room (Room 213)

Sarich Way, Bentley, WA

(map at <http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/pdf/maps/tech-park-map.pdf>)

Background: This presentation reports on the recent cost-of-illness (Col) study that aimed to quantify the overall social costs associated with methamphetamine use. It will also explore the challenges in conducting drug related Col studies.

Findings: We estimated the total social cost of methamphetamine use was AU\$5,023.8 million in 2013/14. The single largest cost area was criminal justice (e.g. police, courts, prisons and victims of crime) at AU\$3,244.5 million. The other major cost areas were premature death (AU\$781.8 million) and workplace costs (AU\$289.4 million). Some costs were separated from the overall estimate due to their exploratory nature (harms to partners and resident children) or the controversy of including them (costs incurred by the drug using individual.)

Conclusions: Methamphetamine related problems impinge across society with impacts including on crime, health, workplace productivity and accidents. In addition to the individual methamphetamine user, those affected include partners, children and other family members, police and emergency services as well as the broader community. It is important to acknowledge the limitations inherent in Col studies, in particular the difficulty of estimating costs from administrative data. Col studies involving drug use also need to contend with the extent of poly-drug use and the potential for drug substitution if the availability of a particular drug is changed. Nevertheless, the Col approach can identify high cost areas, allowing policy makers and researchers to develop and evaluate ways to reduce these costs.

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