

# Drug abuse smuggling in prison term paper

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



## **ABSTRACT**

Drug abuse has been a major issue since time in memorial. The effects and increased levels of crimes as a result of the drugs more so how they are smuggled in the prisons is what forms the basis of this paper. The paper therefore looks at what drug abuse involves, what facilitates the smuggling of drugs into prisons and the remedial factors put in place to solve this menace.

Prison life among all kinds of things is full of challenges and it requires to be handled with a lot of care. In the prison several inmates are convicted with different charges of which some even amount to death penalties. Dealing with such people in such an environment can be too demanding and critical as the psychosocial aspects of such individuals cannot be easily explained without proper medical examination.

The annual Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 1998 indicated that 31 percent of the offenders were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This shows how drug abuse is largely related to crime rates in the country. From the study it also indicates that drug-related crime is committed to obtain money to sustain the habit that comes with continuous usage of the drugs. The studies of 1997 indicated that 19 percent of state prisoners and another 16 percent of the federal ones committed crimes in order to get money to buy the drugs (FBP, 2003). These figures have been increasing since 1991.

To make the matter worse, some inmates are convicted as a result of overdependence and abuse of drugs, while some of them are convicted for

smuggling drugs. This is despite various researches and reports have continually been citing issues of increased drug peddling and smuggling in these correctional facilities raising the question what is the federal government doing in order to arrest the situation before it is too late. The consequences of these increased drug peddling in prisons and more so in United States Prisons have become one of America's major problem. This has posed a major challenge not only to the prison wardens who are frequently threatened, but also to the inmates themselves as cases of violence among them increase daily. The fact that the vice is thriving means that the rates of other vices such as corruption of guards and other employees are on the rise too. In effect this poses a major security threat not only to citizens but to the whole country as a whole.

After several years of denying the existence of such activities behind the doors, prison administrators and other scholars who are concerned have lobbied into the research and study to identify critically to what extent the whole issues of drug smuggling in prisons is spread and what can be done to solve the situation.

As more and more prisons are struggling to meet the governments set target performance, the drug abuse among the prisoners is a major drawback.

What has facilitated this trend up to now, many scholars argue that overcrowding offers a perfect breeding ground for the ill trade of drugs among the prisoners. According to a report released by the Prison Reform Trust showed that out of all the 18 key measures put in place to access the performance of the prisons seven of them were not met (Wexler, Melnick, Lowe & Peters, 1999, p 321). This in effect therefore means that there is a

looming problem if combating drug abuse is the main and principle thing that the federal government wants to address.

The fight to stop drugs like Cocaine, heroine and others from getting into the premises of the prisons has been the major war since the inception of the correctional facilities but up to now there is still evidence that these drugs have found their ways in the prisons. With this perspective in mind several people up to now do not believe that the prison will be free from such drugs neither now nor in the near future.

The drug war in the prison has become a greasy affair involving not only the prisoners themselves but also the wardens and other employees of relevance in the drug trade. Within the premises of the prisons the prisoners are likely to tell you that the drug trade is a boom and the amount of money made within the confines of the correctional facilities is more than that of a mere government worker. This is aching that most of the prison are likely to agree to the fact that stopping operations of drug dealers would not make any big difference in the prisons drug business.

Ralph Sowell argues that it would be naive to identify another trade that would change the drug trade in the prisons (Wexler, Melnick, Lowe & Peters, 1999, p 323). You have so many inmates incarcerated for drug-related crimes, which are involved in narcotics on the street and want to perpetuate that addiction while they're in jail, and if the demand is here, someone will find the supply. These are some of the sentiments expressed by various authorities.

This issue of drug abuse needs to be addressed as soon as possible or else

the moral and cultural stand of the society will be lost. The devastating effects of these drugs such as heroine, cocaine and marijuana have had a lot of effects not only on the individuals but also the country as a whole (Wexler et al, 1999, p 149). The increasing rates of crime associated with such drugs are an alarming and the socioeconomic aspects of these altogether puts the economy of a country at stake. For example, the government spending money on addressing issues of drug related crimes in prisons instead of focusing on creation of employment.

This has been the major preposition of some scholars and academicians and up to now they believe that the issue needs to be addressed much more important now than never before. Unless this is done the society will be retrograding and soon or later there will be nothing to be considered as the next generation and more so in America.

It is natural for human beings to pose blame and it is in line with this that the correction officials shift the blame to the visitors. The inmates vehemently agree that the women go as far as putting the drugs into their anus or vagina and no signs showed to any given warden that it can be found there. The fact that there are several ways of ensuring that the drugs are smuggled into the prisons is one thing that has been a headache in stopping such vices.

It is notable that several mechanisms have been put in place despite the fact that the problem has been existent for a long time. As far as some of the efforts have yielded positive results there is still much more to be done in order to appreciate the full effect of the law and the fight against drug trafficking and more so in prisons.

From the reports and interviews of the suspected smugglers it has been established that less than 10% of drugs come in through visits. The reports indicate that it is most of the guards who do most of the smuggling of drugs in the prisons. The major drug smuggling is as a result of a combined effort of the guards and the dealers. The mutual agreement built and that thrives on corruption facilitates the whole affair.

So as far as the guards would want to shift blame they themselves are also involved to a larger extent. October 27, 1995, was a time when four corrections officers who were posted at a federal prison in Atlanta were charged with trying to smuggle marijuana, cocaine and heroine into the prison (Mullen et al, 2003, p 26). This clearly showed the level in which the officials are involved.

The amount of money brought to the beneficiaries of the trade agree that is much more than any other business, this is what to a given extend has seen various employees of the prison service engage in this smuggling affair. The guards express that they are underpaid and may be is the time the federal government looked at the plea of this most important serving employees if the issues of drug smuggling in the prisons have to addressed effectively.

Since 1989, 13 staff members at the crowded, maximum-security state prison in Graterford, Pennsylvania have time and again been arrested on charges of trying to smuggle drugs. It is estimated that eleven prisoners have so far died of drug overdoses at Graterford. The results of the urine tests taken indicate that 20 percent of the tests carried out per month show signs of drug use while, many more prisoners have been found unconscious

as a result of drug overdose (Martin, Butzin, Saum & Inciardi, 1999, p 297). The increased establishment of relationship between street gangs and prisoners has seen the upward trends in the increased levels of drugs smuggled in the prisons. The transfer of drugs from one needy client to the other to a large extent has been brokered by the prisoners. Given that some of the important officials are also involved they are shielded from the full force of the law and in the process the business thrives at the expense of the moral beliefs of the citizens and the country as a whole.

In accordance with the reports of the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC), it estimates that gang membership in the United States has experienced a decrease of 6 percent from 780, 233 in 1998 to 731, 500 in 2002. This is a tremendous improvement though the drug smuggling trade has been indicated to be increasing in the prisons (Mullen et al, 2003, p 26)

The fact that among the drug smugglers and abusers in the prisons there are also potential users can not be ruled out. It is this that has enabled the rates of smuggling drugs in the prisons so high. The rehabilitation services have to be found in order to solve the looming problem early enough. Depending on the resources at the disposal of the institutions then initiatives such as education, vocational training, group counseling are part of well thought out actions to be carried out.

The inmates require to be incorporated into an education plan to educate them on the effects and consequences of the drug taking behaviors and more so drug related convicts. All educational efforts should be geared towards ensuring behavior change.

According to Martin et al (1999), group counseling has become the favored approach (295). Counseling strategies involve usual efforts at uncovering resistances and lending support to behavior change initiatives. In addition, group efforts may make substantial use of confrontational strategies, derived in part from the experience of the therapeutic community, while also employing the group to provide encouragement and assistance to correctional clients' efforts to modify their thinking and behaviors.

The treatment services provided by caseworkers, doctors and prison warders and the society as a whole is essential in addressing the psychosocial and medical issues related to the effects of the drugs. The complication of convicts of drug abuse and smugglers require a collective effort addressing this and other surrounding issues.

The government increasing budgetary allocation to expansion and building up of several prisons has been applauded. This would not only result to reduced cases of congestion at the correctional facilities which most of the time has been the major facilitator to the drug smuggling menace. This reduced congestion would therefore enhance increased supervision and increased interaction between the authorities and the inmates therefore identifying loop holes as soon as possible and address them effectively.

The Drug Education Program affected is a mandatory activity to all the inmates with drug abuse history this has gone along way in offering the way forward in solving drug smuggling in the prisons. They have to meet certain criteria which link at various aspects among others vital for rehabilitation of the inmates. It is within these criteria that all inmates shown to have had substance abuse contributed to the crime committed. The federal



government also has to increase the staffing of Psychology Department to facilitate the same.

Though the number of drug related homicide has reduced, the issue of drug smuggling in the prisons is still a big issue. Several steps have up to now been put in place including listening to conversations between the visitors and the prisoners, the prison officials still agree that they at times are not able to comprehend what the visitor and the prisoner talk about.

The increased use of symbolic language beyond the comprehension of the prison official gives them lee way to address their issues and facilitate the crime. Such recorded phone calls would lack their effectiveness if they can not be comprehended at any given point. Some of the officials interviewed quickly acknowledge and say if you listen as they talk you isolate the odd pronouns used in their conversation and might sound a bit weird.

The various ways in which these drugs enter the prison has become a major puzzle that the officials are left with to solve each and every day. The prisoners have been at all times ahead of the game trying out do the prison officials at their own game. The drugs have entered the prisons even by small holes on the walls of the prisons and other sophisticated methods put into place to ensure that the supply of these illicit drugs are replenished within the prison vicinity (Wexler, Falkin & Lipton, 1990, p 77).

In efforts geared towards solving these menace the community has taken an upper hand in offering both psychosocial and economic support to the individuals and inmates put behind bars as a result of drug abuse and other drug related crimes. This has encouraged the community acceptance and

tolerance of the said convicts back in the society and as well resulted to establishing the main connections of the trade that is the supply of such drugs.

Various organizations have also come on board and tried to assist by continuously carrying out assessment of the quality of lives the prisoners live and offer other necessary services all geared towards behavior change and giving such convicts a chance in society again. Through drug debates in the prisons the prisoners are able to air out their views and in the process assist the authorities identify where the loopholes are in addressing the drug abuse problem. These and other efforts of the well wishers have up to now helped solve various issues that act as underlying factors to this illicit trade that corrupts human morals.

As far as the various strategies have been put in place to solve the problem it will be appreciated that it requires more involvement of stakeholders to address this issue of great concern. As far much various psychologists would attribute the issues of drugs on psychological issues, the society as a whole need to be involved and appreciate the parts they play so as to solve the crimes and economic loses felt as a result of such actions of drugs be it at community or correctional facilities.

In conclusion as it would sound absurd that the correction officers are also involved there is need to look into the issues of their salary and other aspects to facilitate their smooth discharge of their duties. In addition it requires the efforts of all the citizens to reduce the crime rates and drug smuggling in the prisons and the society.

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