**SOC 3290 Deviance**

 **Overheads Lecture 25: Drug Use I: Effects & Social Dimensions:**

\* Today we begin looking at drug use. We will consider:

 - legal & illegal drugs & addiction

 - the effects of various drugs

 - the connection between drugs, AIDS & crime

 - the extent of illegal drug use

 **Drug use in perspective:**

\* Legal drugs are more prevalent & more harmful than illegal ones (e.g. alcohol & tobacco)

\* Prohibition of a drug does not necessarily show dangerousness, but mindset of the time & place

\* Common assumption that all who try illegal drugs will become addicted or compulsive users: most in fact do not

 **Illegal Drugs: Their effects & users:**

\* Most drugs can be divided into 3 categories:

 (1) Stimulants (e.g. cocaine, crack, caffeine & nicotine)

 (2) Depressants (e.g. heroin, PCP, morphine, alcohol & aspirin)

 (3) Hallucinogens (e.g. LSD & ecstasy)

\* Aside from the drug itself, factors impacting its effects involve dosage, purity, mixing, mode of ingestion, & tolerance

\* Marijuana: - most widely used illegal drug

 - in ancient times considered sacred/useful

 - demonized in early 20th century, despite evidence

 inhibits violence

 - some researchers claim health hazards / others deny

 - psychological dependence possible

 - impairment can impair judgement, short -term

 memory & motor skills

 - may be used for medical purposes (e.g. increasing

 appetite, controlling nausea)

 - not necessarily a “gateway” to harder drugs

\* Heroin: - first produced in 1898 (a derivative of morphine/ opium)

 - a powerful painkiller

 - ingested in various ways (e.g. smoking, mainlining)

 - new users learn to achieve sense of pleasure, despite

 initially unpleasant effects

 - extremely physically addictive/ terrible withdrawal

 - most addicts don’t simply avoid withdrawal or seek

 euphoria, but use heroin to seek feelings of normalcy

 - surprisingly, most users don’t become addicts

 - even addicts don’t necessarily suffer severe health

 problems from continued use (street addicts health

 problems come from poverty, stresses & strain

 associated with the life)

\* Cocaine: - before outlawed, commonly used as a local anesthetic, a stimulant to offset fatigue/depression, & for curing morphine addiction & stomach disorders

 - an early ingredient in Coca Cola & some wines

 - banned at turn of the century / became associated with

 stigmatized minorities using it for pleasure

 - became a status drug in the 1970's, but again

 associated with the poor/minorities after crack

 introduced in 1980's

 - effect intensely stimulating, but very physically

 addictive (crack even more so)

 - can be very dangerous in large doses or used

 frequently for a long time

\* Other drugs: - speed making a comeback in Western US & Canada

 (cheap, easily manufactured, intense, & addictive)

 - rohypnol: “the date rape drug”

 - ecstasy: a synthetic hallucinogen causing brain

 damage

 **Social Dimensions of Drug Use**

\* Drug use not an individual, but a social behavior

\* Use of illegal drugs quite common (1 in 4 Canadians, especially young adults & teenagers).

\* However, serious addictions & drug associated social problems largely confined to lower classes/ minorities

\* Levels of drug use relatively constant in Canada: mostly involve cannabis

 **Moral Panic: Societal Reaction to Drug Use**

\* Moral panics & inflammatory rhetoric often used in relation to drugs

\* This is despite fact that most users use drugs responsibly, occasionally or moderately

\* We shouldn’t buy into hysteria, but educate kids with valid information about responsible use (such has been done re: drinking)

  **Drugs & AIDS:**

\* IV drug use can spread HIV & AIDS (e.g. sharing needles)

\* This relationship particularly strong in the US when compared to other countries (like Canada)

\* Slowing transmission of AIDS among gays not showing up among IV drug users (e.g. addict lifestyle all about taking risks / social distance between many gays & economically destitute addicts)

  **Drugs & Crime:**

\* Research shows a strong link between illegal drug use & crime.

\* Two theories:

 (1) Drug enslavement theory: drug users forced into crime to pay

 for their expensive fix (more applicable to “deficit” vs.

 “leisure” users)

 (2) General deviance syndrome: most users commit crimes before

 using drugs. Drug use part of broader tendency toward

 deviance, but may later intensify criminal tendencies/behaviors

  **Conclusion:**

\* Today we have reviewed:

 - legal & illegal drugs & addiction

 - the effects of various drugs

 - the connection between drugs, AIDS & crime

 - the extent of illegal drug use

\* Next class:

 - characteristics of drug users

 - becoming a drug user

 - the so-called “war on drugs”

 - theories of drug use