

Some thoughts and experiences of measures of supply reduction

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- “The field in general has been weighed down with conjecture, misinformation, and limited methodology” Browne (2003)
- “...confounded by the wide geographical arena involved and the various levels of drug markets” Dorn (2003)
- Amorphous and dynamic

Why develop indicators?

- Major focus of drug policy
- Continued massive investment
- Better assessment of effectiveness
- Need for continued theoretical development
- Informing approaches to law enforcement
- Informing drug policy

Defining supply reduction

- Minimize supply, increase the price and reduce availability to illicit markets
- Aim to achieve this via:
 - International/ foreign policy (source country control)
 - Interdiction
 - National and local enforcement
 - Most activity is focused on making drug transactions difficult

Defining supply reduction

- In order to assess the impact of supply reduction activity we need to understand the interaction between enforcement activity, price and availability (Moore 1990)

Enforcement

- Various agencies involved with different aims and approaches
- Seizures and arrests provide an overview of 'successful' enforcement activity
- Most activity is reactive – indicative of customs/police activity and reported crime?
- Most activity is directed at couriers/users – not supply reduction?

Enforcement

- Need to understand the context of specific operations – criteria for selection, resources used and outcome
- Reports of activity on their own are difficult to interpret – double counting, quantity/value definitions

Enforcement activity on cultivation

- Requested information for activity for 07/08
 - 50/58 forces ‘discovered’ cultivation
 - 5719 production offences were recorded (1,400 charged or convicted - no information on nationality)
 - 3032 farms were identified (94% in domestic premises)
 - 501,905 plants were seized – 20.1 tonnes

Enforcement activity on cultivation

- Offence = 1 or 2 plants to hundreds
- Many offences not 'crimed' therefore not recorded (no victim or offender)
- Unless plants are found can be recorded as another type of offence
- Crime reports 'poor'

SOME CONCLUSIONS

- Trends in use, supply and production appear to have little to do with local laws, enforcement or policing practices
- Imperfect measures; the key to improving measures is to spend more money on measurement
- Closer working between enforcement agencies and research/academic communities
- Increase usefulness of enforcement data with outside periodic auditing

SOME CONCLUSIONS

- Closer analysis of supply and distribution – network analysis with a ‘bottom up’ approach?
- Detailed longitudinal work on markets (established/ new markets/ adaptations)
- User panels/Expert panels
- Uncertain about individual sources – triangulation (drug treatment demand data can help?)
- Consider the role of harms associated with markets
- Basic research needed to inform how we monitor

Thoughts about SUPMAP

- Static measures of a dynamic and changing market – how might the indicators look in order to detect change?
- Look beyond criminal justice data?
- Access to (old) police intelligence data?
- Prisoner/ police informant interviews?
- Network analysis?
- Be selective and focus on case studies – develop typologies?