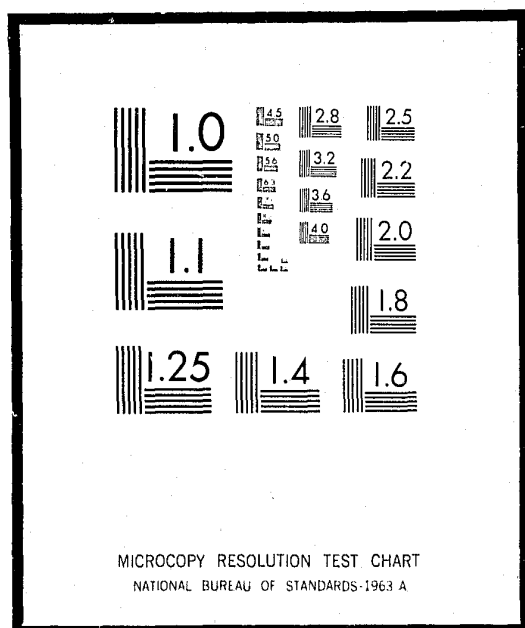


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National Swedish Police Board
Direction Nationale de la Police de Suède
Schwedisches Reichspolizeiamt
Dirección Nacional de Seguridad de Suecia



November 1970

The police point of view on the drugs problem in Sweden

How it started

As early as the 1940s small groups in Stockholm started using central stimulants as a means to euphoria. This practice gradually spread to wider circles to become a misuse graduating from the taking of pills to intravenous injections. Until about 1958 the police only occasionally had any reason to concern themselves with illegal actions on the part of drug misusers as regards methods of acquiring drugs. After that however there was an increase in criminal activity - primarily prescription forgeries and burglaries in pharmacies. Previously there had been no record of drugs motivating burglaries in pharmacies, but by 1958 it became apparent that we were faced with a wave of pharmacy burglaries motivated by craving for drugs. The majority of these burglars were not especially experienced as regards the range of pharmaceutical preparations to look for, but as the number of pharmacy burglaries increased it was possible to note an increased knowledge of the drugs of choice.

As regards getting what one wants with the least possible effort drug addicts are not different from their fellow men. They naturally use the method which will give the best results at the least cost and effort. Apart from prescription forgeries and pharmacy burglaries addicts thus turned to doctors and simulated diseases which are difficult to check in the hope of being able to trick doctors into writing out or phoning in prescriptions, preferably for as large a quantity as possible. Very often these methods were successful since in the late 1950s doctors had no particular knowledge of the pattern of abuse which had developed and the risk to health which it brought with it. During 1959 the physicians in Sweden issued prescriptions for a total of 30 million doses of

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central stimulants. Unfortunately we in Sweden were not alone in failing to grasp in time the seriousness of abusive use of central stimulants. Since addicts often used false names, the police now and then were notified, and could trace an addict's path from doctor to doctor because of the personal deviations in the modus operandi regarding their methods of obtaining drugs.

As early as the autumn of 1958 permanent co-operation was initiated between the police and the National Board of Health (now the National Board of Health and Welfare). In 1960 the National Board of Health issued a circular to all physicians in the country informing them of the disturbing developments during the past years and pointing out that the drugabuse and the number of addicts had increased. The circular brought the existing situation to the attention of doctors and pointed out that it was not particularly difficult for addicts to get prescriptions for certain drugs. The National Board of Health urged doctors to be more restrictive, especially regarding the issue of prescriptions by telephone. At this stage doctors were interested in sharing the police's experience regarding addicts' modus operandi when obtaining drugs. As a result policemen often gave lectures to medical associations on police experience regarding addicts' methods of procuring drugs.

In 1962 the National Board of Health issued a statement tightening up the rules regarding the requisition of preparations included under the drugs decree. After 1959 this also included preparations such as amphetamine and phenmetrazine. Since then it has not been possible - among other things - to phone in prescriptions for such large amounts as previously. The measures taken by the National Board of Health limited addicts' possibilities to acquire large amounts of drugs through doctors. The number of medical prescriptions for drugs decreased considerably, and when pharmacies installed burglar alarms, thereby creating greater risks for would-be burglars, addicts had to try different ways than previously of obtaining the preparations they wanted.

Drug abuse and crime

The expected smuggling increased which resulted in a more intense co-operation between the police and customs authorities than before. Smuggling had occurred previously but to nowhere near the extent

that started during the mid-sixties.

This was a brief account for how the development, initiated by small circles in Stockholm, has led to a widespread abuse which by 1968 had spread over more or less the whole country. Until 1965 central stimulants completely dominated the illicit drug market. Thereafter cannabis abuse has started and quickly spread.

As long as the illegal market was supplied by diversion of legal preparations to the illegal market, co-operation between various authorities in the country could be successful as regards combating the availability of illegal drugs. As early as 1958 the police were fully aware that continuous attention would have to be paid to drug offences. After the nationalization of the Swedish police on January 1, 1965 there has been a steady increase of personnel detailed to combat drug offences, and this can be illustrated by the figures below regarding personnel detailed for this kind of work within the country.

Year	1965	1966	1967	1968
Personnel	31	44	76	117

In order to form the basis of a strong central unit in the fight against illicit drug traffic, an agreement was reached, when the police were nationalized, between Stockholm Police District and the National Police Board concerning an amalgamation of these two drug squads to form one unit subordinate to the National Police Board's operative group, the National Criminal Investigation Unit. This unit is responsible for the investigation of drug cases in Stockholm and for co-ordination within the country.

Education on drug has occurred at all stages of regular police training since 1958. Thus at the police school there are between 4 and 9 hours education on drug questions depending on the type of course. 5-day drug seminars have been held twice a year since 1967 for police officers dealing with drug questions. In June 1967 the National Police Board published a special drugs manual for policemen. About 6,000 copies of the book were issued. Owing to the rapid development which has occurred since then the National Police Board in the autumn of 1970 has issued an augmented drugs manual

with a revision of the important points in order to give policemen up-to-date information on the drug problem in Sweden. In this connection the question may be asked why has the Swedish police devoted itself with such energy to combating drug offences? The answer is that at a very early stage it was apparent that drugs and crimes were closely connected. As a matter of fact many recidivists applied themselves to smuggling and pushing of drugs and the rehabilitation of many of these criminals was made even more difficult by the fact that they themselves lapsed into abuse of drugs. Other addicts could not hold a job because of their addiction and in order to obtain the desired preparations they saw no other way but to obtain the necessary money or exchangeable goods through crime. In this connection it has to be pointed out that drug abuse is not punishable in Sweden, while possession, sale, transfer and manufacture of drugs without compliance with the valid legal control acts on the subject is indictable. Addicts sentenced for drug offences thus have violated the rules concerning possession, transfer etc.

The disturbing development as to the increase of drug abuse among criminals is apparent from the investigations carried out at the central detention section in Stockholm among the men arrested for offences under the criminal code. The figures below refer to the second quarter of each respective year.

Year	1965	1966	1967	1968
Men with needle marks	19.2%	23.5%	36.1%	39.0%

Dangers to the physical health

Criminality is only one of many negative aspects of drug addiction. Since intravenous injections are generally given without any hygienic precautions whatsoever it is surprising that serious infections do not occur more often than they do. Occasionally, however, severe cases of sepsis do occur and several cases of this nature have demanded hospital treatment. Serious complications often occur too, sometimes leading to death.

In addition there are cases of jaundice (inoculation hepatitis) which addicts contract through lack of hygiene. The first cases

of hepatitis due to drug addiction were discovered in 1962 when two cases occurred. The further development can be illustrated by the following figures representing the number of cases in the whole country.

Year	1962	1965	1966	1967	1968
Number of cases of hepatitis due to drug addiction	2	78	131	288	470

In recent years there has been an unexpected and rapid increase in cases of infectious hepatitis at a number of Stockholm hospitals. Single cases have also been reported at other hospitals in the country. Both dialysis patients and personnel in dialysis and treatment wards as well as personnel in laboratories have been infected. Finally dialysis activity had to be suspended all together at one large Stockholm hospital and kidney transplantations had to be postponed. Transplantations and dialysis activity have since recommenced. The infectious hepatitis is believed to have been spread via blood transfusions. It is suspected that infected drug addicts were responsible. It will be generally agreed that inoculation hepatitis among addicts to central stimulants and opiates constitutes an important source of highly serious complications for personnel and patients in current medical care.

Narcotic Drugs Committee

In 1965 a group of experts was set up in Sweden with the task of investigating the drug problem. In 1966 this group was enlarged to form a "Committee on Treatment of Narcotic Addiction", here translated to Narcotic Drugs Committee. In 1967 the committee presented two sub-reports, the first of which covered survey studies and treatment. Among other things the committee expressed strong reasons for a rapid expansion of resources for treatment. The principles of treatment drawn up were taken into consideration by the government which pointed out that a network of treatment comprising search groups (looking for drug abusers at their hang-outs) - out-patient treatment - treatment in hospitals - after-care should be established. Unfortunately there is still a great difference between the treatment planned and that achieved in practice.

As has been pointed out earlier central stimulants completely dominated the scene up to 1965. Central stimulants may now be prescribed in Sweden only when a special licence has been granted from the National Board of Health and Welfare. In principle these substances may not be prescribed on the indication of drug addiction. Only a small number of especially trusted amphetamine addicts receive limited regular prescriptions nowadays.

Since the middle of the sixties cannabis, above all in the form of hashish, has rapidly become an increasingly popular drug of misuse especially among young people. Two investigations illustrating this fact were initiated by the Narcotic Drugs Committee during June 1966 and June 1968. The investigations were carried out among people taken in custody by the police all over the country. Processing of the material has given the following results regarding the percentual division of age of the drug abusers

June	No. of cases	-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-
1966	510	1.5	17.1	26.3	16.9	8.8	9.6	19.8
1968	658	6.7	33.1	22.0	13.8	6.8	4.6	12.5

The most important change proved to be on the cannabis side. While only 5.5% were abusing cannabis in 1966, the percentage figure for 1968 was 26.1. By 1968 cannabis had taken the lead the central stimulants had in the 15-19 age bracket in 1966.

The police campaign in 1969

Since the drug problem is not limited to the addiction but also makes its presence known in above all crimes against property, the activity related to the illegal drug traffic influences police work to such an extent that normal buildup of law enforcement in the autumn of 1968 no longer proved sufficient. As part of the attempts to diminish the availability of illegal drugs, and having some hope that it would lead to a reduction of new recruits to addiction, the police launched a major campaign against drug offences at the beginning of 1969. The possibility of tapping telephones - after a court decree - contributed to give the operation even greater effect even though this method was very restrictively employed

and only when general methods of investigation proved to be inefficient.

When the police campaign started, all police personnel were informed about the problems related to drug addiction and about the aim of the operation and the methods to be used. In due course of time the information activity was expanded to include various authorities and associations.

In the initial phase - i.e. the first half of 1969 - the commitment of more men resulted in many procurers being uncovered and a great number of confiscations taking place. Gradually the police have been able to work further and further up the distribution chains and uncover the top organisations - this being the case especially with regard to central stimulants.

During 1969 an average of 541 policemen were employed full-time in investigating narcotics crimes in Sweden. In this connection it may be interesting to study how the increasing drug offences and the law enforcement against it appear in the Swedish statistics during recent years.

No. of people	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
apprehended	189	217	641	1,546	2,930
arrested	63	106	268	743	1,072

The illegal drug traffic is now completely dominated by preparations which have been smuggled in, and the smugglers' methods vary unceasingly. Since strict customs control cannot be effected, smuggling cannot be combated solely by the customs authorities themselves.

It is estimated that about 30 million people (entering aliens as well as returning Swedes) annually arrive in Sweden from other countries. The large flow of travellers means that customs examinations of passengers and their luggage can be carried out only on a random basis.

Through their investigations and knowledge of addicts and drug traffickers, the narcotics police have a different starting point

to the customs authorities as regards the combat of smuggling. Information from the police concerning the expected arrival of a suspected drug smuggler has often offered valuable law enforcement benefits to the customs to utilise their resources effectively by concentrating on one particular and limited objective. On the other hand outside information to the customs has often led to narcotics police being on hand when the smuggler arrived.

As was mentioned above, co-operation between authorities led to a certain success as regards stemming the diversion to the illegal market of drugs which were available on the legal market in Sweden.

When smuggling increased the Swedish authorities suddenly found themselves in a much worse position since on the whole it is only the other Nordic countries which have had a legislation equivalent to the Swedish regarding central stimulants. It is our hope that, through international agreement, it will be possible to achieve as effective a control over these and other drugs causing dependency as over drugs within the framework of the "Single convention". The work being carried out in this regard within ECOSOC and the UN Narcotics Commission will by now be fairly well known. A conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of the protocol on psychotropic substances convened in accordance with a resolution of the Economic and Social Council will be held in Vienna on January 11th - February 19th, 1971.

The question then arises: how widespread is the smuggling of drugs into Sweden? We must here differentiate between central stimulants and the other substances, cannabis being the dominant one of the other drugs.

The number of convictions in drug cases and the distribution as to kind of narcotics/drugs involved with reference to the period of 1966 - 1969 may give certain hints of the development.

Year	1966	1967	1968	1969
Convictions	279	540	1,427	3,156
Narcotics/drugs frequency ^{xx)}				
Central stimulants	295	439	1,120	1,851
Cannabis	77	219	801	2,120
Opiates	16	25	60	107
Thereof heroin	x)	x)	14	4
" raw opium	x)	x)	x)	51
LSD	1	14	56	77

x) No information available

xx) The numbers comprise each preparation counted on its own, that is, as to central stimulants for example, each kind of preparation is counted separately.

Central stimulants

Seizures of central stimulants in Sweden in 1969 covered a quantity equivalent to 4,196,100 pills and during the period January 1st to September 30th, 1970 central stimulants equivalent to 1.748.800 pills were seized. Smuggling however does not generally cover pills but rather the active substances in powder form packed in capsules. As far as we have been able to find out the substances appear to have been bought in legal factories in Italy. Buyers seem to be settled in West Germany, the Netherlands or Belgium. Packing of the capsules is probably carried out in one of these countries and this is also where the main suppliers to the Swedish illegal market are to be found. The top men in the illicit drug traffic use couriers to transport the preparations to Sweden. Sometimes the drugs are collected abroad by members of the widespread Swedish smuggling and pushing organizations. Such a delivery generally consists of 20 - 30,000 capsules, each - depending on the contents - equivalent to 240,000 - 360,000 phemmetrazine pills or 1.2 - 1.8 million amphetamine pills. The addict generally has to pay Skr 10:- à 30:- for one capsule depending on how good his connections are with pushers and peddlers. When successful police seizures periodically have created shortages, prices temporarily have more than doubled. The purchase price of one kilo of amphetamine sulphate in Italy has been about Skr 100:-. The "retail price" per kilo that the Swedish addict has to count on is about Skr 100,000:-. An investigation carried out in Sweden showed, for

example, that a German national has organized the delivery of large quantities of central stimulants to Sweden. That activity has from just one of his sales organizations alone given him an income of approx. Skr. 928,000:- during the period March - October 1969.

This man is not the only supplier to the Swedish market as regards central stimulants. The last few months the police has been able to uncover a similar organization and to seize considerable amounts of drugs. The top men carefully follow the development of the cases and make use of the opportunities there are in Sweden of getting good legal aid for their henchmen and requesting the courts for copies of the minutes of the preliminary hearings set up by the police. In that way they can follow what information members of the organization have given during police interrogations. Too talkative a member is threatened while everything is done to help deserving members escape from criminal institutions. Thus well planned prison breaks have been uncovered. The modus operandi of those working at the top of the illicit drug traffic organizations has certain things in common regarding the methods used within illegal intelligence activity. These men check whether they are being tailed, tap police radio communications, use cover words and different forms of code etc.

Cannabis

Sweden has not escaped these sub-cultures where the cannabis smoking is one of the conditions for being accepted in the groups. A thesis concerning the activity of such a sub-culture was presented at Uppsala University in December 1969. The thesis was based on a seven months' survey. The author was of the opinion that the drug scene in Stockholm, from the point of view of the community, was an extremely useful entity, as it provided an outlet for some people to lead more or less satisfactory and non-injurious lives. He considered the scene as an excellent solution as to what should be done to channel "anti-social" aggressions into non-destructive outlets.

It is well known that opinions differ as regards judging the degree of danger of cannabis use. In this case it may be best illustrated

by presenting the police opinion concerning this group. About twenty of the groups members have apparently been arrested and later sentenced for smuggling and pushing sometimes up to tens of kilos of hashish with a "retail price" of Skr 100,000:- for the user.

Only in exceptional cases the smuggling of cannabis products seems to be as well organized as the smuggling of central stimulants, but here the foreign contribution is more marked. The centre for hashish smuggling in Sweden seems to be in Copenhagen, but the big quantities are mostly smuggled directly from the Near East.

Cannabis misuse has been a prelude to an increasing misuse of opium and LSD, and this development is regarded with concern in Sweden. Seizures have hitherto not occurred in such a number that we have been able to form a clear opinion on the smuggling routes. It is known however that some LSD is coming directly from the US.

The present situation

The drug abusers' demand for narcotics is still so great and the profits so high that Sweden still constitutes an attractive market for illicit drug traffic on a large scale. This can also be seen from the increasing number of aliens who are subject to police intervention. In spite of repeated requests from Sweden, international agreements regarding among other things central stimulants are taking time. This has compelled the National Police Board to get into direct contact with the authorities in the countries from which illegal drugs are distributed to Sweden. This does not mean that there are shortcomings in the police co-operation. Owing to differences in the legislations policemen in different countries cannot effectively co-operate to prevent the illegal traffic in all kinds of dependence producing drugs - however much they may wish to do so. This also means that the main suppliers of central stimulants to Sweden can remain abroad undisturbed and send couriers to Sweden. When a courier is seized and rendered inoperative the head of the organization uses other couriers and other transport means and routes. A long-term perspective of this means that the Swedish police as yet is constrained to use its re-

sources alone against the illegal traffic and this can only be done when the central stimulants have reached or are on their way to the country.

Experience gained in operations against drug offences have been utilised during a planned expansion of police surveillance. Thus decisions have been taken regarding the setting up of surveillance groups (flying squads) in all the large and medium-sized police districts in Sweden. The criminal investigation section of police division II of the National Police Board is the co-ordinating authority. This section also contains the National Police Board's operative group, which, through the National criminal investigation unit, co-ordinates and when necessary directs nationwide investigations regarding among other things drug offences. At the criminal investigation unit there are, for example, narcotics records covering the whole country - i.e. a work register where all cases and all information received regarding drug affairs are registered.

The aim of the investigation and surveillance activities in narcotics cases is among other things not only to direct investigations but also by means of "search-groups" to run a visiting programme in co-operation with various social welfare authorities in order to be able to clean up the environments which constitute a breeding ground for criminality and drug addiction.

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