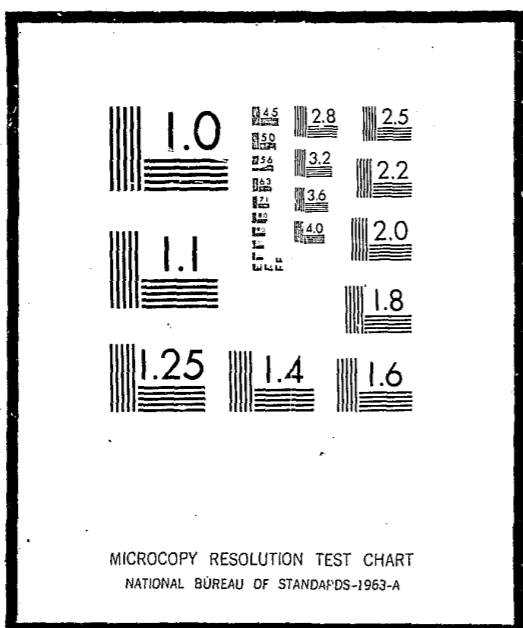


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A Discussion Paper by the Task Force on Drug Availability



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## AVAILABILITY AND COST OF ILLICIT DRUGS IN 1972

October 30, 1972

Summarized by

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Drug abuse may result when a person having a propensity to misuse drugs is presented with the opportunity of obtaining drugs. This report, intended to provide information useful to CDAC in updating the comprehensive drug abuse prevention program, addresses three questions concerning the availability of illicit drugs:

1. How readily available are different drug types and from what sources?
2. How much do illegally sold drugs cost in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and how much does the price vary?
3. What causes the price of illegally sold drugs to change?

The data and conclusions contained herein are based upon estimates made by persons familiar with illicit drug trafficking in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Among these are law enforcement officers, staff members in drug abuse treatment and prevention agencies, and former heroin addicts. The reader is encouraged to approach this paper critically and to share with the Committee any additional information that he may have about illicit drug trafficking.

#### Availability of Drugs

Except for cocaine, the drugs included in this study can be easily obtained by either the experimenter or the frequent drug user, although some drugs can be more easily obtained in some parts of the county than in other parts. The supply of cocaine is not steady, and obtainability ranges during the year from very difficult to not too easily obtainable. Table 1 summarizes the sources from which the experimental and frequent users are most likely to obtain drugs. Frequent users are likely to buy all drug types from pushers and dealers.\* They are also likely to get

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\* The terms, "pusher" and "dealer" have different meanings for different people. As used here, a pusher is a drug seller who is not also a user and a dealer is a drug seller who is a user as well.

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amphetamines and barbiturates through a physician's prescription, from the home medicine cabinet, and by stealing them, especially from drug warehouses and pharmacies. Frequent users are also likely to steal cocaine; to get heroin, LSD, and marijuana from friends; and to use home grown marijuana. Experimental users, in contrast, are likely to get all drug types from friends; are unlikely to buy amphetamines and barbiturates from pushers or dealers; and are unlikely to get LSD from a pusher.

Table 1

SOURCES OF DRUGS USED ILLEGALLY BY  
THE EXPERIMENTER (X) AND THE  
FREQUENT USER (0)

## SOURCE

Drug Type	pusher	dealer	physician's prescription	stolen	friend*	homegrown	home medicine cabinet
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Amphetamine	0	0	X 0	X 0	X		X 0
Barbiturate	0	0	X 0	X 0	X		X 0
Cocaine	X 0	X 0		X 0	X		
Heroin	X 0	X 0			X 0		
LSD	0	X 0			X 0		
Marijuana	X 0	X 0			X 0	X 0	

\*who is neither a dealer nor a pusher

Price of Illegally Sold Drugs

The current price of drugs sold in the illicit market is estimated as follows:

<u>Drug</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Price (October, 1972)</u>
Amphetamine	1 capsule	\$1 <sup>a</sup>
Barbiturate	1 capsule	\$1 - \$1.25
Cocaine	1 bag	\$10 <sup>b</sup>
Heroin	1 bag	\$12 <sup>c</sup>
LSD	1 tablet	\$3 - \$5
Marijuana	1 ounce	\$20 <sup>d</sup>

Prices for none of the drugs are stable. Estimated amounts by which the prices for each drug have changed during the past twelve months were obtained for each estimator by subtracting the lowest price during the past year that he could recall from the highest price that he could recall.

The range of these estimated variations are listed below:

Amphetamine	-	\$ .25 to \$1.25
Barbiturate	-	\$ .50 to \$ .75
Cocaine	-	\$4 to \$10
Heroin	-	\$2 to \$7
LSD	-	\$1.50 to \$7
Marijuana	-	\$5 to \$12

- 
- a In some parts of the county, \$3 to \$5.  
 b In some parts of the county, \$15.  
 c In some parts of the county, \$15.  
 d In some parts of the county, \$25.

### Why Prices Changed

The most important causes attributed to the change in prices during the past year are listed in Table 2. Reasons given for all the drugs were (1) an increase in the risk to the local drug seller of being arrested, (2) greater demand resulting from more people wanting to buy drugs and having the money to buy drugs, and (3) inflation. Two additional reasons were given for amphetamines and barbiturates: (1) reducing the supply of drugs nationally by imposing production quotas and reducing the chances for illegal diversion and (2) increasing the risk to the physician that he will be censured for prescribing drugs indiscriminantly. Confiscating heroin and cocaine at the national level and growing marijuana were also given as reasons for price changes.

Table 2  
Possible Reasons for Changes in Prices During the Last 12 Months

	DRUG					
	Amphetamine	Barbiturate	Cocaine	Heroin	LSD	Marijuana
1. Increasing the risk to the local dealer-user of being arrested.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Increasing the risk to the local pusher (nonuser) of being arrested.	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Reducing the amount of drugs available nationally by confiscating illegal drugs.			X	X		
4. Reducing the amount of drugs available nationally by imposing production quotas upon legal manufacture of drugs and reducing chances for illegal diversion.	X	X				
5. Greater demand resulting from an increase in the number of people who want to buy the drug.	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Greater demand resulting from an increase in the number of people who have the money to buy the drug.	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Increasing the risk to the physician that he will be censured for prescribing drugs indiscriminantly.	X	X				
8. Inflation.	X	X	X	X	X	X
9. Increasing the supply by growing marijuana.						X

**END**