

## Methamphetamine Use and Crime

### Criminal involvement

Regular methamphetamine users have a high level of contact with police and most have committed some type of crime in their lifetime (other than illicit drug use). Based on a survey of regular methamphetamine users in Sydney:

- two in three have been arrested at some point in their life
- most are arrested for illicit drug offences and theft
- one third have been to prison
- almost half have committed a crime in the past month (besides using illicit drugs)

### Types of crime

Dealing drugs and theft are common crimes among regular methamphetamine users. Almost three-quarters have committed these types of crimes in their lifetime. Thirty per cent of methamphetamine users report dealing drugs in the past month, and almost one in five committed a property crime during that time.

Fraud and violent crime are less common among methamphetamine users than drug dealing and theft. Just under one-third of methamphetamine users have committed these types of crimes in their lifetime, and less than one in ten have committed them in the past month.

Violent crime is no more common among methamphetamine users than among other heavy drug users. Methamphetamine users who do commit violent crimes are likely to have a pre-existing tendency toward antisocial behaviour.

### Who commits crime?

Methamphetamine users who are most likely to be involved in crime:

- use methamphetamine heavily (i.e., at least several times a week)
- use the more pure forms of 'base' methamphetamine and crystalline methamphetamine, or 'ice'
- also use heroin and a range of other drugs
- are younger drug users (late teens or twenties)
- have a predisposition toward antisocial behaviour

### Reasons for crime

Crime among methamphetamine users can be due to a need to fund drug use, particularly in situations where the person is using a lot of methamphetamine (or other drugs) and they are on a low income.

A proportion of methamphetamine users also commit crimes because they have a predisposition to engage in crime, rather than because of their methamphetamine use.

Information based on the findings from: **McKetin, R., McLaren, J., and Kelly, E.** (2005). *The Sydney methamphetamine market: Patterns of supply, use, personal harms and social consequences*. National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund Monograph Series No. 13. Australasian Centre for Policing Research, Adelaide.

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