

What effect do **police crackdowns** have on the demand for treatment? Study ① found that closure in 1995 of the last open street dealing scene in Zurich coincided with a statistically significant peak in admissions to local methadone programmes, amounting to 68 more than the typical 457 admissions per quarter. The peak might have been far greater but for the facts that half the affected addicts were ineligible for treatment and half the remainder were already in treatment. There was no evidence that addicts entering treatment during this period were any more likely to leave early. It seems that the greater time, effort and risk involved in drug purchases led some addicts to stop or cut down their consumption via treatment.

Study ② was based on interviews with 511 heroin users in a part of Sydney known for its street dealing venues. Over 40% currently in methadone maintenance said avoiding more trouble with the law had been a very important motivation for treatment entry. Cited more often was cutting spending on heroin, itself perhaps a consequence of the price premium created by enforcement. Once other factors had been taken into account, heroin expenditure was the biggest single influence on ever having entered methadone treatment. Also significant were the drug-related imprisonment of a friend or relative and a longer addiction career, the latter probably because it was linked to increased personal experience of arrest and imprisonment. The pattern of results is consistent with a cumulative pressure to enter treatment arising directly or indirectly from enforcement.

Featured studies ① Falcato L., et al. "Closure of an open drug scene – a case register-based analysis of the impact on the demand for methadone maintenance." *Addiction*: 2001, 96, p. 623–628 ② Weatherburn D., et al. "Street-level drug law enforcement and entry into methadone maintenance." *Addiction*: 2001, 96, p. 577–587.