

When All Else Fails: Controlled Access To Heroin Makes Sense

This June, for the second time in three years, the people of Switzerland voted to make heroin available to addicts who have been unsuccessful in treatment and with methadone.

Why?

An independent review of the Swiss heroin program published by the World Health Organization* found:

- Participants in the heroin maintenance program reduced criminal activity by over 50%.
- The percentage of participants in the heroin maintenance program holding a job rose from 14% to 32%.
- The percentage of participants in the heroin maintenance program who were homeless dropped from 12% to 1%.
- There were significant drops in the use of illegal drugs reported, including heroin, cocaine, marijuana and benzodiazepines.
- There was no diversion of prescribed heroin to the illegal street market.
- There were no overdoses from heroin prescribed by the program.

**Less crime, less illegal drugs, improved health,
higher employment and less homelessness!
Prescription heroin makes sense when abstinence
and methadone treatment fail.**

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Robert Ali et al, "Report of the External Panel on the Evaluation of the Swiss Scientific Studies of Medically Prescribed Narcotics to Drug Addicts," The World Health Organization, April 1999.