

Increased occurrence of drug related cases

Over the last month or two, more and more cases of drug abuse are being referred to the Crisis Centre, including Tik (Methamphetamine). Although Tik-abuse is more commonly associated with drug addiction in the Western Cape, it has also increased in popularity in Gauteng. It is a fast-growing drug problem that is not restricted to race or income class. The effect of this drug on individuals, families, communities and even employers is extremely destructive.

According to Dr Naeemah Abrahms, a senior researcher at the Medical Research Institute (MRI), there are not as yet studies done on the link between Tik and rape, but that there is definitely a link between drugs and aggressive behaviour. Rape goes hand in hand with aggressive behaviour.

The predominant symptom of drug abuse is aggressive behaviour. Other classical symptoms are severe mood swings, even blood stained vomiting.

The Pretoria Academic Hospital's Trauma unit reports that most cases brought in are under aged. Parents are either unaware of their child's addiction or are frustrated and fed up as they do not know what to do. Depending on the diagnosis, a patient is either taken in for 72 hour observation in the Tswane District Clinic to monitor organ functioning or send for rehabilitation.

At Court proceedings, a person charged with drug abuse might be placed on "diversion", which pertain to a six week period in which they are weekly tested with a multi-screening drug test. In the case that they default on any of these tests, the court will proceed to prosecute them or they will be placed under rehabilitation depending the details of their age and offence.

If referred by the court or police to the Sinoville Crisis Centre, the centre can assist in administering the drug test. Parents are however responsible for the costs involved. The courts only accept the Multi Screening Test, which is available at chemists at approximately R200.

Alternatively the tests can also be done at Hatfield Court which is state-funded at R70. Contact details are as follows: Hatfield Court (opposite Girls High School). Contact person is Réhana Nel, Tel 012-342-0059; or the Pretoria Academic Out Patients, Drug, Trauma & Rehab. The contact person is Paula de Beer, Tel. 072-240-0340; or the Sinoville AA, 267 Zambesi Drive, Tel 083-442-1344; or you may contact the Sinoville Crisis Centre at 012-543-9000 and speak to the counsellor on duty.