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Matthew J Atha BSc MSc LLB (Principal Consultant)

Qualifications

2nd MB, ChB, 1st LRCP, MRCS	(Pre-clinical Medicine)	Sheffield University	1979/80
Bachelor of Science (Psychology)	2(1) Hons	Sheffield University	1983
Master of Science (Psychology)	Research Thesis	Birmingham University	1987
Bachelor of Letters (Law)	2 (2) Hons	Wolverhampton University	1999
Expert Witness Certificate		Cardiff University / Bond Solon	2012

Research & Publications

IDMU Drug User Surveys 1994-date – Data from over 30,000 respondents including consumption levels and prices. Ongoing research.

Quantitative Assessment of Illicit Substance Use (Birmingham University) 1987 First surveys of illicit drug consumption (1982-1984) total 847 respondents, assessing levels of use of cannabis and other drugs, demographic and other data. Validation of methodology.

Cannabis Use in Britain appendix in Henman, Malyon & Lewis (Eds) *Big Deal - The politics of the illicit drugs business*. Pluto Press 1985. A brief summary of the main findings of the 1982 and 1984 surveys

Patterns of Cannabis Use. Research papers presented to UK Postgraduate Psychology Conference of the British Psychological Society 1985, and Society for the Study of Addiction annual conference 1986

Drug use at Pop Festivals: Edited 1984 Survey findings presented in the Annual Report of Festival Welfare Services 1985

Indian Hemp and the Dope Fiends of Old England: a sociopolitical history of cannabis and the British Empire 1840-1928 * In Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Centennial Volume, (SF: Last Gasp Press 1994) co-authored with Sean Blanchard

Regular Users - Self-reported drug consumption patterns and attitudes to drugs among 1333 regular cannabis users * (©IDMU Publications 1997). £24.99 inc p&p. Co-authored with Sean Blanchard (research associate). ISBN - 0-9537182-0-4

Types of Cannabis Available in the UK (1996) - Ch. in *The Case for Change - Release Publications*.

Regular Users II - UK Drugs Market Analysis, purchasing patterns and prices.* Atha MJ. Blanchard S & Davis S (©IDMU Publications 1999) £16.99 inc p&p. 1997 survey results inc. further data on price & purchasing behaviour. ISBN - 0-9537182-1-2

IDMU Evidence to Parliamentary Enquiries - including House of Lords Science & Technology Committee enquiry on Cannabis, House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee (Misuse of Drugs Act, UK Cocaine Trade) Crown Copyright.

Taxing the UK Drugs Market (2004)*, Taxing the UK Cannabis Market (2010)* – Studies commissioned by the BBC and CLEAR

Legal Highs, Ethnobotanicals & Research Chemicals – incidence and usage 1997-2011* - Write-in survey data

Cannabis – an Introduction (2012) – Lecture notes for drugs workers at HIT conference, Liverpool

Internet publications: ** Denotes articles reproduced in full or part on the IDMU website at www.idmu.co.uk

25 Years Expert Witness Experience – Over 3000 cases

- Uniquely qualified to comment on illicit drug consumption and valuation via original survey research providing extensive & quantitative information on drug prices & consumption patterns, derived from the accounts of over 30,000 drug users in non-threatening situations. Valuations since 2010 include postcode-area price data
- Familiar with scientific, social science, political and subcultural literature and terminology concerning consumption and effects of cannabis and other illicit drugs, including reviews of most cannabis cultivation guides now available in the UK.
- Observed and interviewed informally drug users from all walks of life over the past 30 years, and is in regular contact with drugs squad officers, forensic scientists, Home Office and other drugs researchers.
- Provided written and/or oral evidence to parliamentary enquiries on Cannabis (House of Lords Science & Technology select cttee), the Misuse of Drugs Act and Cocaine trafficking in the UK (Both House of Commons Home Affairs select cttee)
- Has been visiting lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University on undergraduate Level III module 'Psychosocial Problems and Drug Use' and to postgraduate students on MSc in Addiction Studies courses.
- Contributor to numerous press articles and books, television and radio programmes as a drugs expert, regularly briefs journalists, politicians (all parties) and other researchers (including Drugscope referrals) on illicit drug issues, including UK reports for the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs & Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).
- Speaker/Participant at conferences including SCPS (HM Customs) on illicit drug trafficking, NAPO (Probation Officers), International Conference on Drug Policy Reform, Addictions Forum, other conferences of health/youth/drugs workers.
- Advised drugs squad officers and other professionals on good practice in evidence-gathering techniques in cases of alleged cannabis cultivation, investigation of drug driving offences, and drug valuation criteria.
- Over twenty five years experience as expert witness in criminal trials, providing evidence or advice on over 3000 cases, mainly Crown Court/Scottish Sheriff Court cases involving illicit drugs, including instructions from CPS & HM Customs. Databases of evidence in previous cases of yield data from over 2500 mature plants, street deal sizes for skunk cannabis, heroin, crack cocaine.
- Substantial experience of the issues involved in the supply of illicit drugs (e.g. paraphernalia, whether cannabis resin used or unused), and of the potential yields of cannabis plants grown in different situations.
- Experience of many forensic analysis techniques, including MS, NMR and IR spectroscopy, TLC, HPLC & GC chromatography, from work in a research laboratory with Fisons Pharmaceuticals Ltd, from subsequently reading chemistry as a first year degree option, and from experience in previous cases.
- Accredited by the Law Society, the UK Register of Expert Witnesses & Academy of Experts, founder member of the Expert Witness Institute, and of Independent Network of Drug Experts (INDEX), University of Cardiff accredited Expert Witness course.
- Specific experience and knowledge of scientific evidence concerning therapeutic uses of cannabis & cannabinoids, provided written evidence at invitation of House of Lords and House of Commons Cannabis enquiries, advisor to pharmaceutical company developing cannabinoid-derived medicinal products for clinical trials with a view to obtaining product licences.
- A deserved reputation for impartiality, a thorough analysis of the case and attention to detail, including reports with fully-referenced source material and based on inspection of exhibits where appropriate.
- **“One-Stop Shop”** Authoritative comment on most aspects of criminal drugs cases (consumption, forensic evidence, yield of plants, paraphernalia, valuations, effects etc) otherwise requiring instruction of several different experts.

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