

Can crime associated with drug addiction be reduced with Acupuncture?

By [Tom Warburton](#) 7th October 2019 [Report](#)

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One of the UK's biggest problems relating to drug addiction is the crime associated with feeding a habit. This has led some people to suggest that up to half of all acquisitive crime is drug-related and that the market value of goods stolen involved could be between 2 to 2.5 billion pounds each year. (Drug scope)

When we look at the criminal behaviour of drug addicts we realise that when a person becomes addicted to drugs they very quick realise that as their habit grows they can no longer afford to pay for their drugs from their usual income so addicts have to find other means of feeding their habit, some clients turn to crime, others may turn to prostitution.

- Drug dealing to feed their own habit
- Shop lifting, burglary, mugging, street crime
- Theft from family and friends
- Serious crime

Each year, over 75,000 problem drug users enter the prison system, on average, 55% of prisoners are problem drug users. **Source: Home Office*

If we look at crime, a large majority of addicts will turn to crime to feed their habit but, most drug addicted clients are not career criminals and may have no criminal record until they became addicted. Addicts are forced to commit crime as their habit grows as a way of self medicating but, for clients who are not career criminals and who have very little experience with committing crime are quickly arrested and then caught up in the judicial system.

A drug addict not in treatment costs society an average £26,074 a year. *Source (NTA NHS)

The cost of drug-related crime in the UK was estimated at over £14bn, around three-quarters of heroin and crack users say they commit crime to fund their habit. *Source: Home Office



For female addicts this can be very difficult as again most are not career criminals, many have children at home and need to find a way to feed their habit and try to look after their children. For these reasons many females may start off with shoplifting or burglary but, very quickly realise they have no experience with this type of crime and then take to prostitution to feed their habit. This is by no means an easier way to earn money but, may allow females to fund their addiction and to keep the family together for a period of time. Prostitution is illegal and eventually they will come into contact with the police, judicial system, social services and may have their children taken into care.

No matter what crime a drug addict commits, it is all for one reason, to feed an addiction. The logical solution would be to remove the addiction therefore the client has no habit to feed and no reason to commit crime.

The problem regarding addiction in the UK is that there are not enough service providers that are equipped to deal with addicts becoming drug free, most often services will offer

clients a maintenance program prescribing methadone and counselling but, the clients may only be seen for one hour a week. Addiction is a full time job for clients and consumes them 24/7, if we think we can deal with addiction in an ad hoc way or on a part time basis we are very wrong.

With the millions of pounds spent every year in the UK on addiction and seemingly having little impact, coupled with the fact that there are now new synthetic cannabinoids drugs being used that are presenting new addiction problems, we need to look at different ways to treat addiction.

If we are serious about reducing crime associated with addiction we need to re-think the way we treat addiction. Addicts need a structured day program where they can receive regular treatment and support for their addiction and be offered the option of a more holistic treatment program to deal with withdrawal and mental health problems.

Some may argue that maintenance in addiction may help in reducing crime but, it does nothing for the client's long term health benefits. In Scotland drug related deaths are up to record levels and methadone is implicated in more drug deaths among addicts than heroin.

Methadone programs can be very helpful in addiction initially but, the problem is addicts will become addicted to methadone and will also poly use, which keeps them in the bubble of addiction and the associated criminal behaviour that goes with it.

A client maybe living a less hectic lifestyle on methadone than when they were addicted to heroin but, this is nothing compared to the life they can lead if they are withdrawn from methadone and are drug free. Clients, partners, children, family, the community, NHS, HMP prisons, the economy and the judicial system all benefit from clients being drug free.



How can Acu-detox help?

First we all need to be honest and with full transparency regarding treatment programs and addiction.

Most treatment agencies are not designed or equipped to deal with their client's addiction. Most agencies help manage clients addiction with counselling and medication. If you are fortunate or you can afford it you could attend a residential unit that will help you become drug free over a period of 3 months to 12 months.

You cannot help a client to become drug or alcohol free if you only see them for one or two hours a week. You need clients to attend treatment programs on a daily basis if you want them to become drug or alcohol free and most services are not designed to cope with such a large numbers of clients on their premises.



Acu-detox programs can help the client engage in the treatment program before fully committing to the program as a whole.

Acu-detox protocols use a program call “The Three Stages of Recovery” where we have daily acu-detox clinics running for one or two hours a day, Monday – Friday that are designed to work alongside existing treatment programs.

The program for a client would consist of a twelve week period, either in a drop in, residential or outpatient basis where clients receive acu-detox treatments 3 – 5 days a week. Clinic’s can be run by just two or three staff members with large numbers of clients being treated in a short period of time.

Acu-detox clinics help the client to start thinking of recovery. Fearful, paranoid, anxious clients can experience acu-detox treatments without fully committing to the program, this allows clients to feel comfortable and have trust in the service. Once a client realises that acu-detox treatments help immensely with their withdrawal, mental health and physical wellbeing, clients will attend acu-detox session without further incentives. Once a client has been attending the acu-detox program and is more relaxed about recovery, the client can then be introduced to the rest of the program and the counselling process. After a period of time clients can start to think about reducing drugs/medication.

Acu-detox can be used alongside a tapering reduction of drugs/detox medication to support the client through their withdrawal, reduction and help them to become drug free.

How can Acu-detox treatments help a client to become drug free?

Acu-detox treatments are very valuable because they help addicts prepare for the future, not merely cope with the past.

Biochemically:

Helps with the body's endorphin productions, the increase in endorphin production allows the clients to sit still for over one hour with little or no discomfort. Helps clients realise they can be calm and that calmness comes from with-in.



Physically:

Calms the mind and helps adjust the autonomic nervous system, clients move from being stuck in the agitated sympathetic mode to move into a much calmer Para-sympathetic mode. Acu-detox helps with stress, pain, tension, anxiety, depression, insomnia, restlessness, and excessive sensitivity.

Psychological:

Helps clients strengthen their acceptance of the potential to stay clean. Clients internal resources are strengthened for enhanced sense of vitality and well being. Helps clients experience internal relief from cravings without external factors.

Reduction of cravings and Withdrawal symptoms:

Symptoms show an 80 to 90% relief of cravings and withdrawal. Clients with larger habits will require more treatments to find complete relief. This effect is not substance specific and can also be used for addiction to prescription medication and nicotine addiction, this effect is not tied to the resolution of personal problems.

Socially:

Helps clients engage in treatment in a non-threatening way with few verbal commands. Helpful in early treatment when the client may not be receptive to interventions. While acu-detox creates vitality and strength, peer support allows nurturing. Easy re-entry for relapses.

Supports the counselling and administrative process:

Produces cheerful and co-operative atmosphere and reduces violence. Clients are more focused for participation in the counselling process. Confrontation or corroboration of information often not needed to begin with. Rapid, inexpensive, barrier free and fits well into existing treatment facilities, no waiting lists. Very cost effective.

Calmer mind and better sleep pattern:

Acu-detox helps with sleep disturbance in short term withdrawal and helps support a deeper more refreshing sleep in later withdrawal. Clients report less drug fuelled dreams. As clients sleep improves their motivation will improve.

Acu-detox is a non-verbal process:



Treatment works regardless if a client lies or is ashamed to speak about certain issues. Acu-detox can help clients calm the mind and find the quiet space they think does not exist anymore. Clients with low self esteem, paranoia or lack of hope can start their treatment at a realistic level.

Clients can be treated before assessment and diagnosis are complete, clients can be calmer and more co-operative for a more useful diagnosis to be made. Confrontation about drug use not needed because a client can still be helped even while they are in denial. The client can relax without losing control.

Acu-detox in a group setting:

Group settings create an environment which is re-assuring, validating and supporting. Clients become comfortable with their own physical process. Group setting help the client detach from co-dependency. Group setting help the client to see the progress others have made and can inspire the client. Group settings help the client adjust to the counselling process.

Would Acu-detox help reduce criminal behaviour in addiction, I would argue YES and a lot more besides.

Acu-detox treatments help the client engage in the program at their own pace and help with the potential to become drug free. If the client can reduce their drug intake and then become drug free they have no habit to feed and no reason to commit crime.

Addiction services would benefit greatly if NADA acu-detox programs were made part of a new drug strategy for the UK. We hear MP's constantly talking of a more "**holistic approach**" to the drug and methadone problem in the UK but, very quickly revert back to methadone prescribing and the millions of pounds spent every year.

If we are serious about reducing crime associated with addiction we need to look at different ways to treat addiction very quickly, with current treatment programs already over stretched, NADA acu-detox treatment programs would work alongside existing treatment programs and would help immensely.

Implementing NADA acu-detox in the government's drug strategy programs would be very easy and very cheap to install as it is already being used in most of the larger and small recovery agencies. NADA acu-detox programs could save the government millions of pounds every year.

It costs around £30 a day to treat 50 people with NADA Acu-detox programs.

As an example, Glasgow alone has more than 200 active NADA acu-detox practitioners working in Turning Point, Phoenix Futures, New Horizons, Apex Scotland, HMP Prisons, NHS Scotland and many more.

Because NADA acu-detox treatment programs are not part of the Government's drug strategy program, NADA acu-detox programs are only used as an adjunct to the program or at a manager's discretion or once or twice a week.

This is not the correct way to implement NADA acu-detox programs. NADA acu-detox programs need to be part of an overall strategy and offered on a daily basis.

NADA acu-detox programs are being used in over 40 international countries around the world as a legitimate tool for addiction. The question must be asked "Why is the UK so reluctant to use a more holistic approach when communities are being devastated by addiction and crime is on the increase.