

## **F. Drug policy and race issues**

### **Reference**

G. Reid, C. Aitken, L. Beyer and N. Crofts, 'Ethnic communities' vulnerability to involvement with illicit drugs, in *Drugs: education, prevention and policy*, 2001, 8 (4), p. 359 – 374.

### **Commentary**

Gary Reid, Campbell Aitken, Lorraine Beyer and Nick Crofts are members of the Centre for Harm Reduction, Macfarlane Burnet Centre for Medical Research in Fairfield, Victoria in Australia.

This article was written based on a research project on drugs in a multicultural community that was completed in May 2000. This research project was conducted for the Australian Department of Human Services by the Macfarlane Burnet Centre for Medical Research (MBCMR) and the North Richmond Community Health Centre (NRCHC).

The research report, containing an extensive bibliography, makes an important contribution to understanding the impact of illicit drugs on culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The entire research report can be found on the internet: Public Health Division, *Drugs in a Multicultural Community, An assessment of Involvement*, Public Health Division, Victorian Government of Human Services, Melbourne Victoria, 2000, 410 p; URL: [dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/0008087/](http://dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/0008087/).

### **Abstract**

In the article, it becomes clear that ethnic minority communities are disproportionately vulnerable to involvement with illicit drugs. This is caused by several factors, namely: high unemployment, poor proficiency in English, poor access to education and lower educational attainment, inter-generational conflict, acculturation issues and peer pressure. These factors can be distilled into a more general underlying problem, which is that ethnic minority communities are socially and economically disadvantaged.

The evidence indicates that *these* factors put ethnic minority communities at heightened risk of involvement with illicit drugs, and not ethnicity or minority status *as such*. Furthermore, the vulnerability of ethnic communities is aggravated by a lack of knowledge about drug treatment facilities and barriers to enter into treatment, while the stigma associated with illicit drug problems makes it hard for many ethnic communities to acknowledge their existence.