

Victorian Youth Justice Centres - Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry 2017

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Thank for the opportunity of offering views to the Victorian Parliament's Legal & Social Issues Committee about particular approaches that may assist the rehabilitation of young offenders at Victorian Government corrective services justice centres.

I know there has been much research and progress made in taking account of the relationship between human biochemistry, the immune system and achieving optimal human health and wellbeing. This is heartening, especially in the area of rehabilitation options, when exploring ways and means of improving the health of those youth that have been brought before the courts for their deviant behaviour.

Are environmental and biochemical considerations, diet and nutrition, food intolerance and chemical toxicity being considered when approaching ways and means of improving the health and wellbeing of those in Victorian youth justice centres? If so what testing, if any, is being legally conducted in these areas by the medical people assisting the Victorian Justice Centre authorities?

I well recall the monograph of **Alexander Schauss M.A., the former Director, American Institute for BioSocial Research, titled "Diet, Crime and Delinquency" (Parker House, California. Revised 1981)**, with an introduction by Michael Lesser M.D. Schauss, an international criminologist, was at the forefront of research in the biochemical and environmental effects on deviant behaviour. Although it is a 1981 monograph I hope it may be of interest to this important Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry. Schauss documented the deleterious impacts of food allergies and chemical toxicity as important factors in youth deviant behaviour. He considered that such health impacts can foster violence and lead to behavioural disorders. He emphasised that junk foods and environmental pollutants can lead to criminal behaviour. He indicated that nutritional and vitamin therapy can help in overcoming alcoholism and drug addiction.

What account has been taken of the evidence and case studies presented by Schauss, and others who have worked, or are now working, in these fields, when considering the important role of medical, and other, teams seeking to assist the rehabilitation of youth detained in Victoria's Youth Justice Centres because of deviant, anti-social, behaviour?

Of course, as we would sensibly recognize, there is the important variable of "individual differences" in the human condition when considering behavioural influences and outcomes. Indeed there are several variables at work and it is a good reason, amongst the different factors at work, for including biochemical and environmental factors when seeking to improve future positive health outcomes for the youth offenders. There is a desirable need to ensure that there are different tests that analyse food and chemical intolerance, to assist the introduction of an improved diet, with good nutritional balance, to suit the individual. Compliance by an individual may well assist their future health, wellbeing & lifestyle, including employment opportunities when their term in a Youth Justice Centre is completed.

What might be the the protocols for, and the role of, the medical teams associated with youth detention centres in the rehabilitation of those detained in Victorian youth justice centres. I am of the view that a holistic approach to improving the health and wellbeing of those people detained in youth or adult corrective institutions. Is there any knowledge as to whether medical teams associated with youth justice centres are taking account of the matters I address in this submission?

Governments do not prescribe medical clinical interventions. Their prime role is to take the advice of its medical and health authorities, including medical accrediting bodies and the Therapeutic Goods Administration. There are issues about "evidence based medicine" and "efficacy" issues, and the rights of the person being detained, for whatever reason.

Are medical teams at Victorian youth detention centres permitted to perform a range of pathology, and other relevant, testing to assess any food and chemical intolerant reactions, and any historical factors within the home and residential environment of the youth detainees (e.g exposure to a high levels of chemical toxicity in the environment in which they have resided), that have created issues for their health and wellbeing and possibly becoming a factor in behavioural choices leading to criminal behaviour?

Note a case study, cited by Schauss in his monograph, of Tony (aged 21), in the chapter titled "Lead, Behaviour & Criminality" (p33), about the initiative of Tony's probation officer, that resulted in different forms of clinical pathology testing by a consulting physician. This action led to a diagnosis and assessment of factors relating to Tony's behavioural problems, that had been an issue since his "criminal record" started at 11 years of age! Tony had been held in a county gaol while the probation department prepared its recommendations to the court. A good outcome for Toyn's life due to the work of a probation officer and a consulting physician. Good lessons for those with responsibilities for wanting to encourage positive outcomes for those in Victorian youth justice centres? Hopefully yes!

Has there been consultation with Australian mental health research & medical organizations (e.g. Florey Institute of Neuroscience & Mental Health; Australasian College of Nutrition & Environmental Medicine; Deakin University Food & Mood Centre) and Australian medical people who have knowledge of the environmental factors affecting behaviour (e.g. Professor Ian Brichthope; Robert Buist PhD; Dr Colin Little et al). I'm aware that Associate Prof. Felice Jacka, Principal Research Fellow, School of Medicine, Deakin University, and Research Fellow, Department of Psychiatry, Melbourne University, has been researching the potential for the role of dietary matters in the prevention and treatment of mental illness symptom. She may be willing to assist the Parliamentary Inquiry.

The work of William Walsh PhD (<http://www.walshinstitute.org>) may be of interest to the Parliamentary Committee. Walsh was formerly associated with the USA Carl Pfeiffer Institute. He has been working with Australian medical practitioners about complementary approaches to treating mental health symptoms. Information may also be provided by the Bio-Balance Health Association (www.biobalance.org.au), based in Queensland, about its association with the Walsh Institute.

International literature in the area includes the monographs of the late Scot psychiatrist, Richard Mackarness, who highlighted the risks to human health and behaviour of chemical toxicity. Dr Theron Randolph & Ralph Moss PhD co-authored a

wonderful book "Allergies:Your Hidden Enemy" in 1984: Randolph, an American, was a pioneer in the field. *Inter alia*, the work of Linus Pauling, Abram Hoffer, Melvyn Werbach & Marshall Mandell is significantly relevant to the relationship between environmental factors and optimal human health and wellbeing.

Government plays an important role in medical science research e.g. approval of clinical trials for testing of drugs, including psychiatric drugs, at psychiatric hospitals, Think of the clinical trials undertaken for the testing of the psychiatric drug, clozapine, several years ago, that included psychiatric hospitals.

I would expect the Parliamentary Inquiry would wish to assess whether there are legal issues requiring attention in the matter that I have brought to the attention of Legal & Social Issues Committee in this submission.

Any provisions within the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights & UN Conventions and Resolutions, Federal & Victorian health, mental health and corrective services regulations, and in the protocols of medical accreditation organizations, that may prevent any of the suggestions mentioned in this submission? If so, can they be addressed to enable the favourable outcomes envisaged for youth health and youth and community wellbeing? With a holistic approach, that includes different clinical pathology testing, and dietary and nutritional factors, there could be many positives for the future health and wellbeing of youth detained in Victorian Youth Justice Centres ? With "add ons" for the Victorian families and communities!

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And, may I indulge by adding the following points suggested by my wife, Janice McIver BSc (Melbourne University1963, with majors in Bacteriology & Biochemistry) & other qualifications:

Punishment/ prison is a bit like a band aid over a serious injury – not very effective. What could we do better? Treating causes not results BUT what are the possible causes?

a) Poverty. Well known that poverty means children do less well at school. And can be associated with poor care as parents become overwhelmed by the problem of getting food for children, their own lack of education and the temptation of drugs, alcohol and gambling.

b) What children eat and drink. We know that a high sugar intake, and low fruit and vegetable consumption, have a considerable health consequence. Do we consider the effects of this on brain function – how children perform at school and how they behave at school and as they get older. There is also experimental data that suggests food intolerance (e.g. wheat) and heavy metals in the environment may be detrimental to mental health and, therefore, behaviour.

c) Educational level. It's difficult for children in extreme poverty, consuming a poor diet where parents cannot afford a better diet and know little about dietary regimes, and where the parents may be also consuming dugs and/or alcohol to deal with frustrations related to poverty. Children with low education have difficulty getting jobs, lack knowledge about the importance of a good diet, become frustrated and angry and therefore tend to blame others, and blame parents with little good parenting skills as a result.

d) Social environment. Difficult family situation. Gangs. Bullying at school and elsewhere.

e) Mental health. Depression; anxiety; learning difficulties. These may be influenced by diet e.g. excess sugar, wheat & other food intolerance, heavy metals (Pb,Hg, Cd). Diets may be deficient in essential nutrients and thus centering on excessive sugar/CHO ?

f) Drugs. Teens may be getting access to illegal drugs and alcohol with disastrous consequences e.g. methamphetamines (“ice”) and its effects on behaviour and mental health.

If we are serious about dealing with the problems reported in the media about juveniles in detention and behaviour in schools, we must consider ways to deal with CAUSES.

Jan McIver

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Thank you for the opportunity provided in enabling this submission to be, hopefully, considered by the Legal & Social Issues Committee in its Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres matters.

Kind regards,

Doug McIver



3rd March 2017