



GUELPH MERCURY

The rich get... taller?

Economics and height focus of study by U of G profs

By BRIAN WHITWHAM
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

Interest, inflation and unemployment rates have long been used as indicators of how an economy is doing.

Two professors at the University of Guelph are looking at height.

Kris Inwood, an economics professor, and John Cranfield, an associate professor in agricultural economics and business, have been tracking the changes in stature of Canadians through the 19th and 20th centuries.

They say stature might be an indicator of the standard of living prior to the 20th century.

So far, they have found the average height of adult males dropped steadily through the 1800s when rapid industrialization had people working long hours in poor conditions and food was relatively expensive.

"I was quite surprised," Cranfield said. "Everything we're told as we're growing up is we've gotten taller as civilization has progressed."

Inwood said economists and historians have become increasingly interested in height and the decline in stature through the 1800s follows a trend seen in other developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

Inwood and Cranfield went through enlistment records of Canadians who served in the Union Army during the U.S. Civil War, the Boer War troops in South Africa, and soldiers who served in the First World War. They also looked at federal penitentiary records and found that, at certain periods, the average height appeared to decline by as much as an inch over 20 years, Inwood said.

"It's a big change," he said. "This phenomenon is so provocative and so new, there are some people who don't believe it."

"But in many ways, you don't need to see a decline for it to be significant."

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Mike Vince has been battling an addiction to crack cocaine for more than 11 years. It has cost him his children, his best friend and led to a four-year stint in the penitentiary. 'I don't like the person I am when I am on the drug,' he says. 'I want to get off of it, but it follows you.'

An addict struggles to break free from the drug

By DEIRDRE HEALEY
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

Mike Vince remembers the inside of his body begin to burn with rage only moments before pummeling his best friend in the head.

Vince was coming down off a three-day crack-cocaine binge, and was in a desperate search for the next hit when he beat the man to the ground with his bare fists.

"When you are on the drug, there is a rage inside of you that slowly grows," Vince said. "Then your mind cracks. I just snapped."

He spent four years in a penitentiary for that beating. It happened almost a decade ago, but the Guelph man still carries the guilt.

To look at the frail 51-year-old now, you would never think he was capable of such a brutal attack.

He has five children, who are in the custody of their mother, and he says he loves them dearly.

His blue eyes sparkle when he laughs and he is quick to show his toothless grin.

But the real Vince disappears when he picks up the crack pipe.

"I am violent and not nice," he said, staring down at the cigarette resting between his stained fingers. "I don't like the person I am when I am on the drug. I want to get off of it, but it follows you."

Vince has been a crack addict for the past 11 years.

He has struggled to tear himself away from the drug, but it keeps calling him back.

The powerful high from smoking crack cocaine makes it extremely addictive, said Heather Kerr, executive director of the local Stonehenge Therapeutic Community.

"The high is very physical-

TAKING THE HIT
A five-part series on Guelph's crack scourge

- Tuesday: The Deal
- Today: Addiction
- Thursday: The Cops
- Friday: The Community
- Saturday: Prostitution

Crack cases in court
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ly intense and so are the cravings," Kerr said.

Crack is a condensed version of cocaine, giving the user a stronger high. The rock-like drug is made by mixing the cocaine powder with ammonia and cooking it down.

There were about 321,000 Canadians addicted to crack and cocaine in 2002, the latest information from Statistics Canada shows.

In Guelph, the number of users currently hovers around 2,000, city police say.

The drug gives Vince a euphoric feeling that takes effect the moment he inhales the smoke from the pipe, he said. First, his heart starts to beat faster, then his energy level spikes and he feels an overwhelming sense of confidence.

He becomes wrapped up in the brief burst of power and forgets about how he lost his nine-year-old daughter to a brain tumour just over a year ago, or how he never had the chance to say goodbye to his alcoholic brother who drowned in the Grand River while Vince was in jail.

Then he crashes, and feelings of paranoia and aggression take over until he gets his hands on another hit.

HIGHS AND LOWS
Facts on costs, mental effects of common illegal drugs available in Guelph

 <p>Drug: Ecstasy Cost for a hit: \$10-15 Use: Ingestion High: Euphoria, empathy, sociability Low: Hallucinations with high dosages; dehydration and overheating (raves/dances) can kill Duration: 3 hours</p>	 <p>Drug: Crack Cost for a hit: \$15-20 Use: Smoked High: Immediate effect, euphoria, high energy, alertness Low: Large doses can lead to paranoid thinking; highly addictive Duration: 20 minutes</p>
 <p>Drug: Crystal Meth Cost for a hit: \$20 Use: Smoked, injected, snorted High: Alertness, sense of well-being, feeling of power Low: High dosages lead to hallucinations, highly addictive Duration: 3-18 hours</p>	 <p>Drug: Mushrooms Cost for a hit: \$15 Use: Ingested High: Relaxation, separation from surroundings Low: Perceptual distortions and abdominal discomfort in high quantities Duration: 2-3 hours</p>
 <p>Drug: Marijuana Cost for a hit: \$2-3 Use: Smoked, ingested High: Calmness, relaxation and talkativeness Low: Drowsiness, short-term memory loss and concentration impairment Duration: 2-4 hours</p>	 <p>Drug: Heroin Cost for a hit: \$30 Use: Ingested, smoked, snorted High: Euphoria, mental clouding, sense of well-being, relaxation Low: Highly addictive, potentially fatal Duration: 2 hours</p>

Source: Health Canada, Guelph Police

Drugs are Vince's way of coping with the tragedies in his life.

"It's an escape from the real world," he said. "It's my crutch."

As a young adult, he started experimenting with marijuana. He eventually moved on to speed and then graduated to crack cocaine.

He would still be on speed if crack wasn't so cheap and available, he said.

"It's just what's around now and what everyone is doing."

One hit costs about \$10 and lasts about 20 minutes.

While it's a cheap street drug, a user needs several hits throughout the day to maintain the high, Stonehenge's Kerr said.

At his worst, Vince was doing 15 hits of crack a day.

"I would spend \$20 to get three hoots and five minutes after those three hoots were

gone, I would want more," he said. "The high is like an explosion. You get so high and then you shoot right down."

All his money went towards the drug.

Once he was hooked, he couldn't hold down a job. He found himself relying on his friends to give him the odd scrap of food throughout the day and he slept in downtown bank lobbies at night.

SEE CRACK: PAGE A3



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