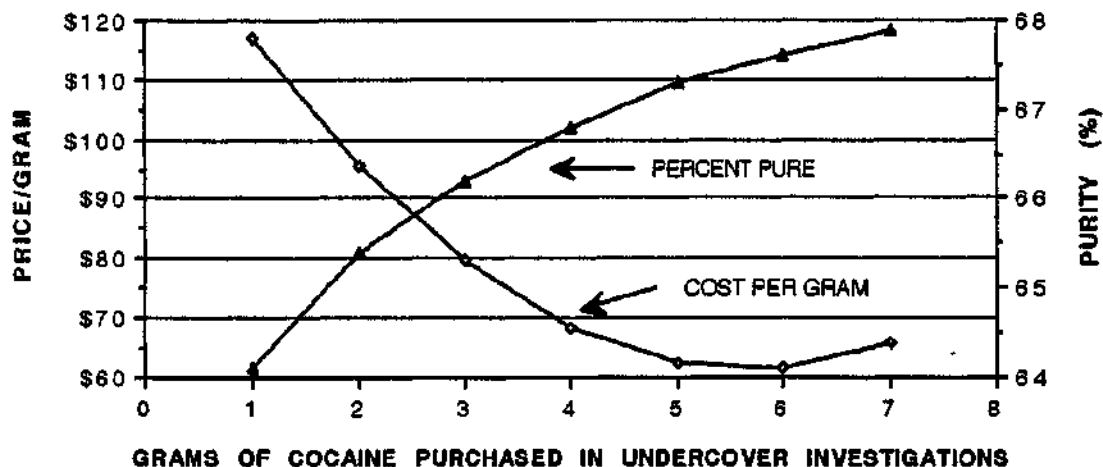


## *The Economics of Cocaine in Maryland*

A recent report released by the Maryland State Police Criminal Intelligence Division which details the price and purity of marijuana, crack, and cocaine reveals that the illegal drug market in Maryland responds to basic economic principles which effect the price and quality of goods. Based upon undercover drug purchases by Maryland law enforcement agencies and laboratory tests of the drugs purchased/seized by police, information regarding price and purity of these substances was summarized. For the time period studied, the chart below indicates that the purity of cocaine increases and the price/gram decreases when larger amounts of cocaine are purchased. The average cost per gram for cocaine in the state was \$104.49 and the average purity was 69.2%. The Criminal Intelligence Division (CID) report also provides regional differences in the price and purity of illegal substances and their relationship to supply, demand and trafficking patterns. CID is currently preparing an updated price/purity report that incorporates data from the DEA.

### AVERAGE COST AND PURITY OF COCAINE IN MARYLAND, 1991

(Price data collected 7/90 thru 9/91. Purity data from 1/91 thru 9/91.)



Source: Adapted from *Price/Purity: A Forensic Assessment of the Illegal Drug Market in Maryland*, Maryland State Police, Criminal Intelligence Division (1992). Reference W-97-00521

### CORRECTION

The concluding sentence in Dr. Inciardi's editorial "Revisiting the Great Drug Debate" which appeared as the Invited Perspective section of the Spring 1992 issue of CESAR Reports should have read: "Our energies should be focused on more pragmatic and workable ideas: developing the criminal justice system to have more humane applications for those arrested for drug use; lobbying against the draconian laws that prosecute pregnant addicts; opposing mandatory state prison sentences for possession of small amounts of drugs; and, most importantly, shifting the emphasis of the great drug war from supply reduction and interdiction to increased treatment and prevention." CESAR apologizes for the error and any inconvenience that resulted.

For further information about today's topic or to be placed on the distribution list, please call CESAR at 301-403-8329.

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