



Methamphetamine Use by Adult and Juvenile Arrestees in 2004

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METHAMPHETAMINE USE BY ADULT AND JUVENILE ARRESTEES IN 2004

INTRODUCTION

Interviews with adult and juvenile arrestees regarding drug use and other risk behaviors have been conducted in San Diego since 1987. As part of SANDAG's Criminal Justice Clearinghouse, these data have been reported on an annual basis, providing useful and timely information to policymakers, as well as law enforcement, prevention, and treatment professionals alike.

This CJ Bulletin, with data collected from the Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program in calendar year 2004, includes information from the standardized interview, as well as a methamphetamine (meth) addendum that was administered to arrestees who reported any meth use in the past 30 days. SANDAG transitioned to this bulletin-reporting format in September 2004 with a series of three short reports that included SAM data collected in calendar year 2003. Because 2004 data were ready sooner than expected, this bulletin is being released even though a bulletin with 2003 meth results was not distributed. Trend data since 2000 (when a new sampling scheme was initiated), including 2003 data and responses from both adults and juveniles, are included here. Additional information about the arrestee sample and other methodological issues is included at the end of this report.

The California Border Alliance Group (CBAG) is gratefully acknowledged for funding this data collection effort in 2004. Additional bulletins with 2004 adult and juvenile data will be released in the coming months. If you have any questions about the SAM program or these data, please contact the Criminal Justice Research Division at (619) 699-6910, or visit our Web site at www.sandag.org/cj.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

- Juveniles were more likely than adults to begin using and continue using meth because their peers use it.
- Around two-thirds of adult and half of juvenile meth users reported using meth before going to work/school in the past year.
- Juveniles were more likely to report experiencing hallucinations, paranoia, and violent behavior after using meth.
- Half of adults and juveniles who used meth in the past 30 days reported participating in the distribution of meth in the past year.
- More adult arrestees said the price of meth was higher and that quality was lower in 2004 than 2003.
- Over three-quarters of adults who made meth said it had become more difficult to obtain precursor chemicals in the past year.
- Meth users differed from other arrestees in a number of ways, including demographic characteristics, prior justice system contact, and substance use history.

METH ADDENDUM RESPONSES

Arrestees who admitted using meth during the past 30 days on the regular SAM interview were asked to complete an addendum regarding their meth use. Their responses to the questions included on this addendum are presented here.

How Long Have Arrestees Been Using Meth?

On average, the adults who completed an addendum had been using meth for 11.18 years (range 0 to 37) and the juveniles had been using it for 1.54 years (range 0 to 5 years) (not shown).

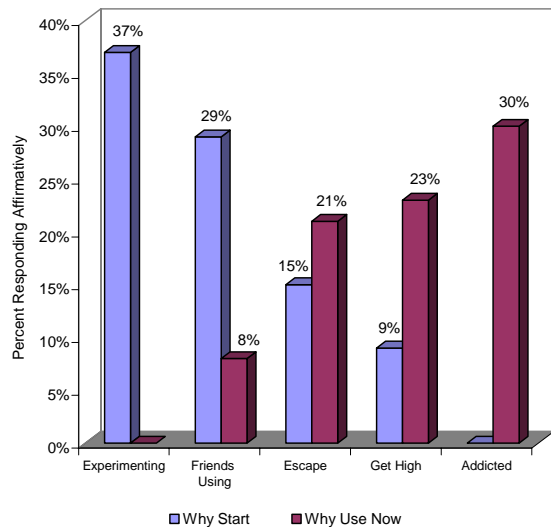
What Other Names Do Arrestees Use for Meth?

Both adult and juvenile arrestees were most likely to refer to meth as “shit” (44% and 63%, respectively) and “crystal” (31% and 40%). Other adults often referred to the drug as “dope” (23%) and juveniles often referred to it as “glass” (20%) (not shown).

Why Do Arrestees Use Meth?

When asked why they first tried meth, adult arrestees were most likely to say it was because they were experimenting (37%), their friends used the drug (29%), or they wanted to “escape” (15%) (Figure 1). When asked why they use it now, almost one-third (30%) admitted they were addicted, and a greater percentage (compared to initially) said they wanted to escape (21%) or get high (23%).

Figure 1
ADULTS MOST LIKELY TO FIRST TRY METH BECAUSE THEY WERE EXPERIMENTING



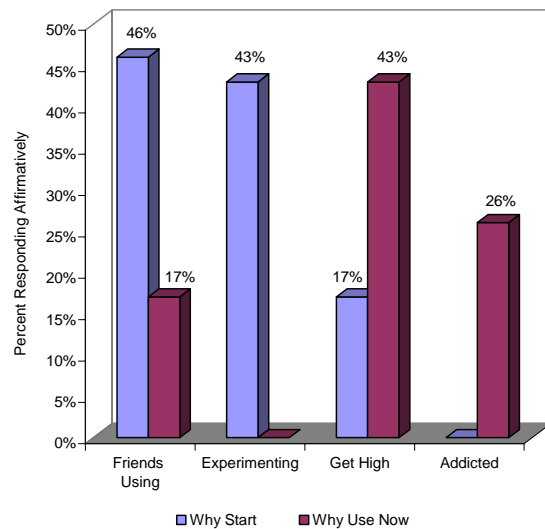
Total = 162-163

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

When juveniles were asked the same questions, they were more likely to say they began to use the drug and that they continued to use it because of their friends (46% and 17%, respectively) (Figure 2). Similar to adults, they also were more likely to continue to use the drug to get high (43%). About one in four (26%) felt that they were addicted to the drug.

Figure 2
JUVENILES MORE LIKELY TO FIRST TRY METH BECAUSE OF PEER INFLUENCE



Total = 35

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

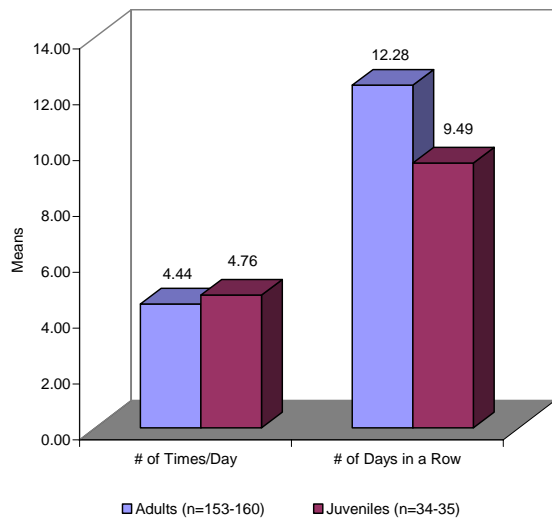
How Do Arrestees Use Meth?

The majority of arrestees reported they usually smoke meth (71% of adults and 94% of juveniles). Other modes of use included snorting (16% and 6%, respectively), injecting (12% of adults), and eating or drinking it (1% of adults).

How Often Do Arrestees Use Meth?

As part of the addendum, arrestees were asked how many times per day they use meth, as well as how many days they used meth in a row in the past 30 days. As Figure 3 shows, there was no difference in the frequency of use in a given day, with adult (both males and females) and juvenile arrestees averaging between 4.44 (range 1 to 40) and 4.76 times used (range 1 to 30) per day. In addition, the arrestees reported using the drug a similar number of days in a row, averaging from 9.49 (range 1 to 30) to 12.28 days (range 1 to 30) out of the last 30.

Figure 3
ARRESTEES FREQUENTLY USE METH SEVERAL TIMES A DAY



NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Do Arrestees Use Meth Before Going to Work/School?

Almost two-thirds (63%) of adults and over half (53%) of juveniles reported using meth before going to work or school in the past year. Some occupations of adults who

reported doing meth before work included barber, mechanic, home care provider, certified nurse's assistant, and construction worker (the most common) (not shown).

What Effect Does Meth Have on Arrestees' Lives?

Table 1 shows the most common self-reported side effects of meth use. Adults and juveniles differed somewhat on what effects they reported. Specifically, while the greatest percentage of both said sleeplessness was a side effect, a significantly greater percentage of juveniles reported being paranoid (60% versus 31%), having hallucinations (49% versus 26%), and experiencing violent behavior (43% versus 23%). Adults were significantly more likely to report financial, work, and legal problems.

Table 1
METH ASSOCIATED WITH NEGATIVE EFFECTS FOR USERS

	Adults	Juveniles
Sleeplessness	75%	83%
Legal Problems	72%	49%
Weight Loss	69%	80%
Family Problems	61%	69%
Financial Problems	45%	23%
Dental Problems	37%	34%
Work Problems	37%	9%
Skin Problems	34%	20%
Paranoia	31%	60%
Hallucinations	26%	49%
Violent Behavior	23%	43%
TOTAL	163	35

NOTE: Percentages based upon multiple responses.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

How and Where Do Arrestees Get Meth?

When asked to describe in which of the County's major statistical areas (MSAs) they obtained meth, there were significant differences between adults and juveniles (Table 2). Specifically, adults were most likely to obtain meth in the central and east suburban areas, while juveniles were equally likely to obtain it in the central or northeast county regions. It is possible that this difference could be related to where the arrestees lived, a possibility that will be explored further in future analyses.

Table 2
ARRESTEES MOST LIKELY TO GET METH IN THE CENTRAL AREAS OF THE COUNTY

	Adults	Juveniles
Central	38%	27%
East Suburban	22%	10%
South	13%	10%
North City	12%	10%
North County East	6%	27%
North County West	7%	17%
East	2%	0%
TOTAL	154	30

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

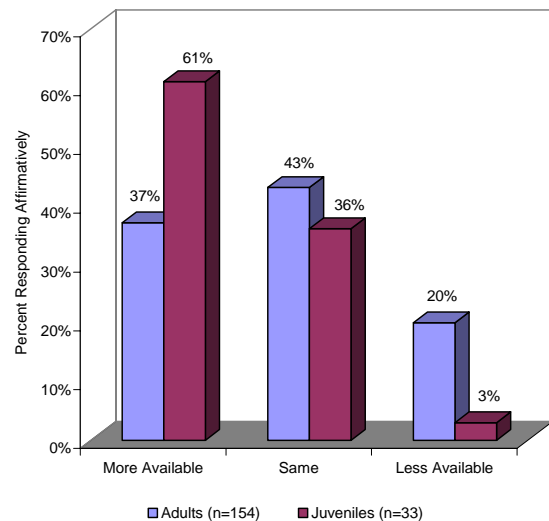
Other information regarding how the arrestees (with adults and juveniles combined because there were no significant differences) obtained meth included:

- 67 percent reported buying meth primarily indoors;
- 51 percent reported having a main source, and around one-quarter (28%) of these individuals said they also get other drugs from this person;

- 36 percent said that they have previously bought meth from someone they didn't know; and
- 30 percent reported carrying a weapon with them when they go to get meth.

When asked if they thought the availability of meth had changed in the last year, a significantly greater percentage of juveniles reported it was "more" available, compared to adults (61% versus 37%, respectively) (Figure 4).

Figure 4
JUVENILES MORE LIKELY TO REPORT METH WAS MORE AVAILABLE IN 2004



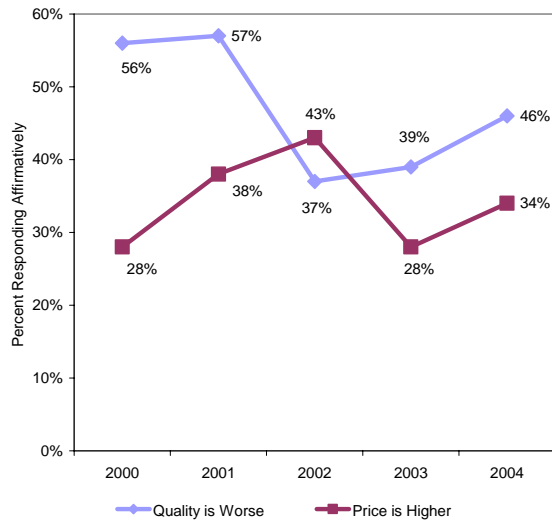
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

How Do Arrestees Perceive Meth Quality and Price Have Changed Over Time?

Over the years, arrestees have been asked if the quality of the meth they have recently used has changed (become worse, the same, or better) and if the price has changed (become lower, the same, or higher). From a supply point of view, one would want to see that the quality has gone down while the price has gone up. While this has not always

been the case, it was from 2003 to 2004, with a greater percentage of adult arrestees reporting the quality to be worse (39% to 46%) and the price to be higher (28% to 34%) (Figure 5). Twenty-six percent (26%) of juveniles reported the quality was worse in 2004 (from 28% in 2003) and 44 percent said the price was higher in 2004 (from 29% in 2003) (not shown).

**Figure 5
ADULT ARRESTEES REPORT METH QUALITY
DOWN AND PRICE UP FROM LAST YEAR**



SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

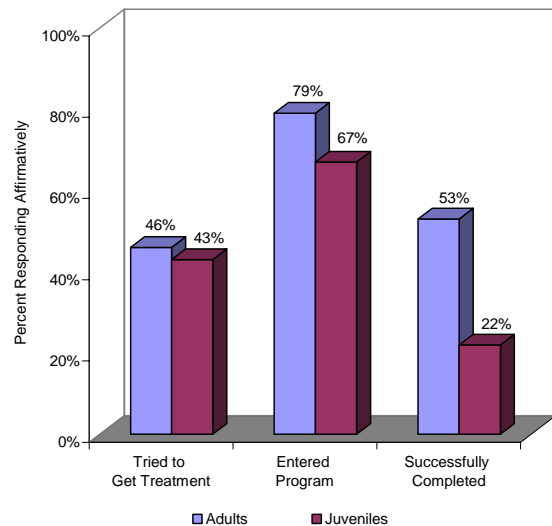
Do Arrestees Try to Get Treatment for Meth?

Overall, 46 percent of the adults and 43 percent of the juveniles reported that they have tried to get treatment at least once for meth (Figure 6). Those who did not seek treatment were most likely to say they didn't need it, couldn't afford it, or they wanted to but had not yet taken action to do so (not shown).

Of those who tried to get treatment (75 adults and 15 juveniles), over three-quarters (79%) of adults and two-thirds (67%) of the juveniles successfully entered a program (Figure 6). When asked what type of program they entered, adults were most likely to report in-patient (58%), followed by out-patient (32%). Juveniles, on the other hand, were most likely to report out-patient (40%) and Narcotics Anonymous/Alcoholics Anonymous (NA/AA) (40%). Among those who were unable to get into a program, the most common reason was that the waiting list was too long or that they had changed their mind (not shown).

Only around half (53%) of the 59 adults and less than one-quarter (22%) of the 9 juveniles reported that they had successfully completed treatment (Figure 6). When asked the reason for failure, the most common reasons included they wanted to use or they felt the program was too long (not shown).

**Figure 6
A GREATER PROPORTION OF
ADULT ARRESTEES ENTER
AND COMPLETE TREATMENT**



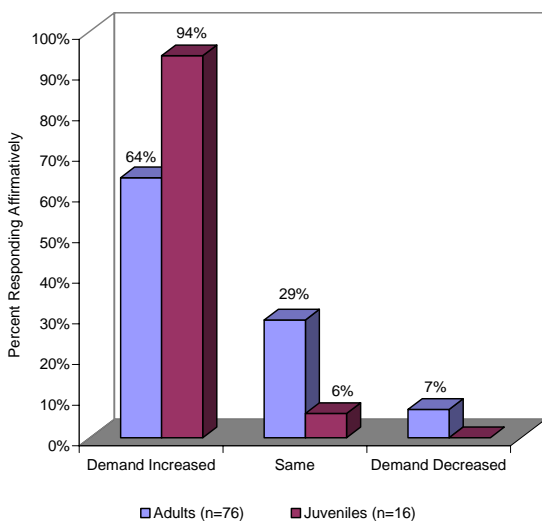
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

How Many Arrestees Are Involved in Dealing Meth?

Around half of the arrestees (49% of adults and juveniles) who completed the addendum also reported they sold meth or acted as a “middleman” at least once in the past year. Most of these individuals (81%) only sold meth in San Diego County, but 10 percent reported selling other places in California, 6 percent in other states, and 2 percent outside the U.S. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of adults and 88 percent of juveniles said the smallest amount of meth they would sell someone was less than a quarter gram (not shown).

As Figure 7 shows, both adults and juveniles who had sold meth in the past year felt that the demand for the drug had increased (64% and 94%).

Figure 7
ARRESTEES WHO SOLD METH IN PAST YEAR FEEL DEMAND HAS INCREASED



SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Most of the arrestees (78% of adults and 82% of juveniles) who reported playing a role in distributing meth in the past year also sold (or acted as a middleman) in the past 30 days.

However, a much smaller percentage (40% and 35%) reported that they were “currently selling.” When asked why they were no longer participating in these types of activities, the most common responses were that they were not “regular dealers,” they felt selling meth was too risky, they were tired of the lifestyle, or they were in jail (not shown).

How Many Arrestees Are Involved in Making Meth?

Compared to selling meth, a much smaller percentage of arrestees reported that they had ever made or helped to make it. Specifically, only 10 percent of adults and 14 percent of juveniles reported ever cooking meth or helping someone to cook it. Of these 22 individuals (17 adults and 5 juveniles), 59 percent (9 adults and 4 juveniles) reported they had made it in the past year and only 23 percent (3 adults) had made it in the past month. When asked for more details regarding the cooking process, most of the respondents reported they learned how to cook meth from a friend, that they made it in a private residence, and that they made it less than once a month. Most of these individuals (10 of 14) reported that it had become harder to obtain the ingredients to make meth over the past year and, when asked how they dispose of the ingredients, the majority said they dump them outside (not shown).

COMPARISON OF METH USERS TO OTHER ARRESTEES

Of the 804 adult arrestees who completed a valid SAM interview and provided a urine sample¹, 493 did not report meth use in the past 30 days, 157 reported use and completed the addendum, and 154 reported use but did

¹ Thirty-nine individuals did not provide a valid urine sample and the SAM interview for four individuals was not available for analysis.

not complete the addendum. Table 3 shows how adult arrestees who reported recent meth use, regardless if they completed the addendum, significantly differed from those who did not use meth in terms of demographic characteristics, prior justice system contact, and substance use history. Specifically,

- Meth users were more likely to be White and unemployed and were less likely to be married, have a stable residence, or have a child. They also were younger, on average.
- Meth users were more likely to have been arrested previously and to have served time in jail. They also were more likely to have a current drug offense and less likely to have been arrested for a violent offense.
- Meth users were more likely to have tried alcohol, marijuana, crack, cocaine, and heroin and to have first tried alcohol and marijuana at an earlier age. They also were more likely to test positive for marijuana and less likely to test positive for cocaine.

For juveniles, the 133 youth who reported no recent use were compared to the 40 who did (including the 35 with an addendum and 5 without). The juvenile arrestees who used meth also were more likely to be White, to have had previous contact with the juvenile justice system, and to have experimented with drugs more extensively and at an earlier age. In addition, a greater proportion of meth users were Hispanic (60% versus 43%), not currently attending school (45% versus 15%), and had previously runaway from home (55% versus 33%). However, meth users were not significantly older or more likely to have been arrested for a drug offense (not shown).

**Table 3
ADULT METH USERS DIFFER FROM
NON-METH USERS IN A NUMBER OF WAYS**

	No Meth	Meth Use
<i>Demographic</i>		
White	34%	47%
Black	25%	13%
Unemployed	42%	51%
Married	26%	15%
Stable Residence	78%	68%
Average Age	33.47	30.90
Have a Child	40%	30%
<i>Previous Justice System Contact</i>		
Ever Arrested	72%	87%
Ever Jailed	63%	87%
Current Violent Offense	25%	17%
Current Drug Offense	36%	54%
<i>Substance Use History</i>		
Ever Alcohol	74%	83%
Age First Alcohol Use	17.84	15.74
Ever Marijuana	74%	95%
Age First Marijuana Use	14.97	14.22
Marijuana Past 30 Days	32%	63%
Positive Marijuana	74%	95%
Ever Meth	35%	100%
Positive Meth	16%	85%
Ever Crack	31%	44%
Ever Cocaine	35%	61%
Positive Cocaine	19%	10%
Ever Heroin	14%	32%
Heroin Past 30 Days	3%	8%
TOTAL	364-493	258-311

*NOTE: Percentages based upon multiples responses.
Cases with missing information not included.*

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

METHODOLOGY

- Eight hundred forty-seven (847) SAM interviews were completed with adult arrestees in 2004. Of these, 808 (95%) were able to provide a urine sample for analysis. One hundred eighty-two (182) SAM interviews were completed with juveniles in 2004. Of these, 173 (95%) provided a valid urine sample.
- In 2004, 198 meth addenda were completed. This number included 163 adults (93 males and 70 females), as well as 35 juveniles (25 males and 10 females).
- Half (50%) of the adults who admitted meth use in the past 30 days completed a meth addendum, with female arrestees (59%) more likely to comply than males (45%). There also was a difference by race, with 55 percent of Whites complying, compared to 44 percent of Hispanics. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of eligible juveniles completed an addendum.