



2004 Adult Arrestee Drug Use in the San Diego Region

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INTRODUCTION

This SANDAG CJ Bulletin is the second in a series of three highlighting findings from data collected as part of the Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program in 2004¹. Comparable data formerly were collected as part of the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program, which was in place across the country until 2003. Since 2004, when federal funding was suspended, San Diego has been the only site to secure local support² and continue this important project. With funding from SANDAG's Criminal Justice Clearinghouse, these data have been reported on an annual basis, providing useful information to policy makers, as well as law enforcement, prevention, and treatment professionals.

As part of this project, arrestees are approached (using a random sampling method) by SANDAG's Criminal Justice Research Division staff within 48 hours of their arrest and booking into jail. If the arrestee is available and willing to participate in a confidential survey, s/he is asked a series of questions related to her/his drug use history and to provide a urine sample for drug testing. In 2004, interviews with male arrestees were conducted at the Vista and Central Jails and interviews with female arrestees were conducted at Las Colinas.

This bulletin, *2004 Adult Arrestee Drug Use in the San Diego Region*, provides information about drug use trends among San Diego adult arrestees, as well as details about arrestee characteristics and participation in

various risky behaviors. A final bulletin summarizing results from interviews with juvenile arrestees in local facilities will be released in September 2005.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

- Over two-thirds (69%) of male arrestees and almost three-quarters (72%) of female arrestees tested positive for some drug in 2004 – the highest percentages in the past five years.
- The percent of arrestees who tested positive for meth in 2004 (43% of males and 42% of females) was significantly higher than five years earlier.
- Around one in three arrestees reported using prescription drugs illegally, with those identifying as White non-Hispanic more likely to do so than other ethnicities.
- Adult arrestees with parents who used drugs were more likely to use drugs themselves.
- Both male and female arrestees reported trying marijuana at an earlier age (14 years old) than any other substance, including alcohol.
- Around one in three arrestees who injected drugs in the past year also reported sharing their needles or “works” with other drug users.
- Arrestees who experimented with alcohol and/or marijuana at a younger age were less likely to finish high school and more likely to have extensive drug use problems later on.

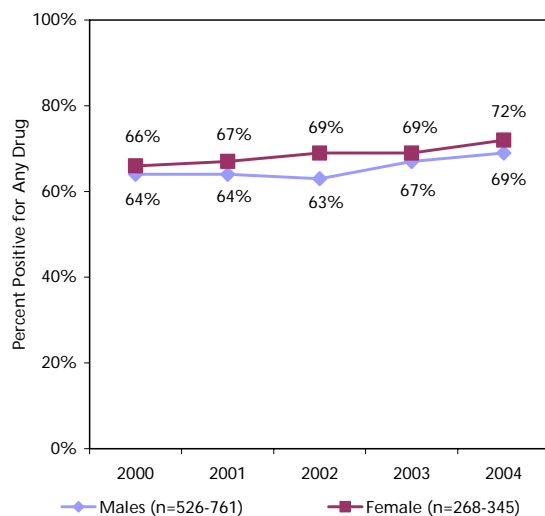
¹ The first bulletin in the 2004 series, “Methamphetamine Use by Adult and Juvenile Arrestees,” was released in May 2005.

² Funding in 2004 was generously provided by the California Border Alliance Group.

POSITIVE FOR ANY DRUG AND MULTIPLE DRUGS

In 2004, more than two-thirds of San Diego adult arrestees (69% of males and 72% of females) tested positive for at least one type of drug (marijuana, cocaine, PCP, opiates, or methamphetamine). This was a slight but non-significant increase from five years earlier when 64 percent of men and 66 percent of women tested positive for one or more drugs. In addition, slightly more than one-quarter (26%) of arrestees (both males and females) tested positive for more than one drug in 2004 (not shown).

**Figure 1
MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF ARRESTEES TESTED POSITIVE IN 2004**



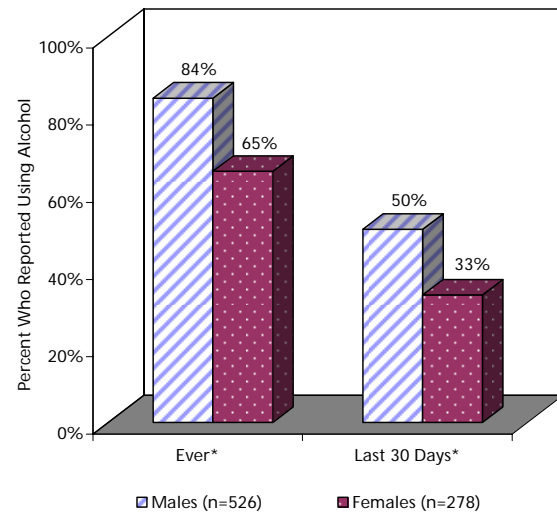
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

LIFETIME AND RECENT ALCOHOL USE

During the interview, arrestees are asked whether they *ever* have had five or more drinks of alcohol in one day and if they have done so in the past 30 days. Figure 2 shows the percent of arrestees in 2004 who responded affirmatively to each of these questions. Males were significantly more likely to report ever having consumed five or

more alcoholic drinks (84% versus 65%) and also to report doing so in the last 30 days (50% versus 33%) compared to females. Males, but not females, reported using alcohol in the last 30 days more often than any other substance.

**Figure 2
MALE ARRESTEES MORE LIKELY TO USE ALCOHOL**



*Significant at $p < .05$.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

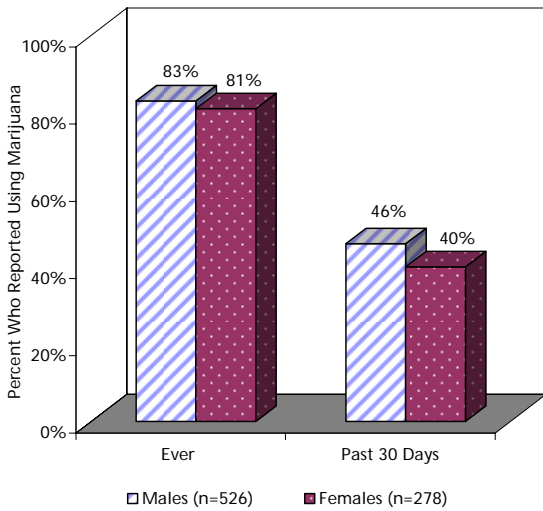
LIFETIME AND OTHER RECENT DRUG USE

Marijuana

According to findings from a recent national household survey, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the U.S., with a rate of 6.2 percent in 2003³. As Figure 3 shows, approximately four in every five arrestees (83% of males and 81% of females) reported having used marijuana sometime in their life. In addition, nearly one-half of males (46%) and 40 percent of females reported using marijuana in the last 30 days.

³ SAMHSA (2004). Overview of Findings from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (DHHS Publication # SAM 04-3963). Rockville, MD: Author.

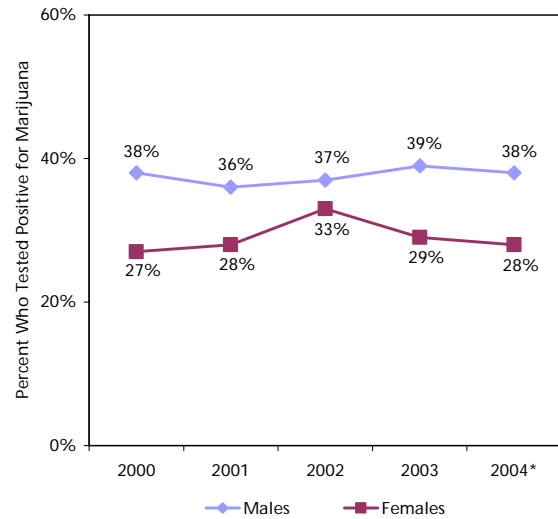
Figure 3
MARIJUANA IS THE MOST COMMONLY USED ILLICIT DRUG BY ARRESTEES



SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Between 2000 and 2004, the percentage of male arrestees who tested positive for marijuana remained fairly stable, ranging from a low of 36 percent in 2001 to a high of 39 percent in 2003 (Figure 4). During the same period, females were consistently less likely than their male counterparts to test positive for marijuana, with around one in three or less testing positive during any given year. In 2004, 38 percent of males and 28 percent of females tested positive for marijuana (which was a significant difference).

Figure 4
MALES CONSISTENTLY MORE LIKELY TO TEST POSITIVE FOR MARIJUANA



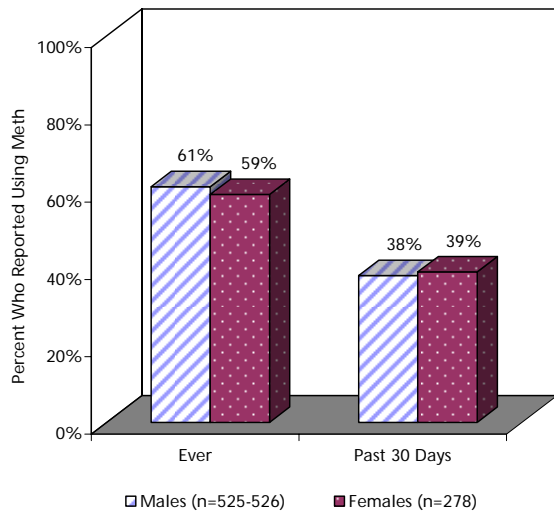
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Methamphetamine

Almost two in every three arrestees (61% of males and 59% of females) reported they had used meth at least once in their lifetime, making this substance the most commonly tried illicit drug after marijuana (Figure 5). In addition, more than one in three (38% and 39%, respectively) reported use in the past 30 days. Over two-thirds (70%) of these individuals reported their primary mode of administration was smoking meth (not shown).

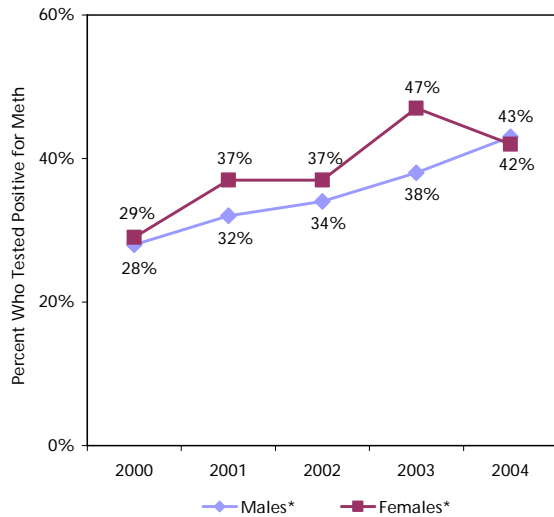
From 2000 to 2004, the percent of male and female arrestees testing positive for meth increased significantly (from 28% to 43% of males and from 29% to 42% of females) (Figure 6). Fewer females tested positive in 2004, compared to 2003, which marked the only decrease during the five-year period.

Figure 5
ALMOST TWO IN THREE ARRESTEES
HAVE TRIED METH



NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Figure 6
PERCENT OF ARRESTEES TESTING POSITIVE
FOR METH HAS INCREASED SINCE 2000

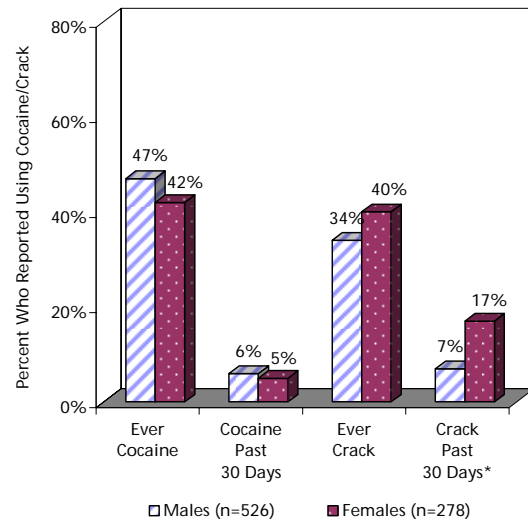


*Significant at $p < .05$.
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Cocaine/Crack

As shown in Figure 7, slightly more males and females reported having tried cocaine in powder form (47% and 42%, respectively), compared to the rock form or crack (34% and 40%, respectively). While there was no gender difference in those reporting cocaine use in the past 30 days, females were significantly more likely to report having used crack during the past 30 days compared to males (17% compared to 7%).

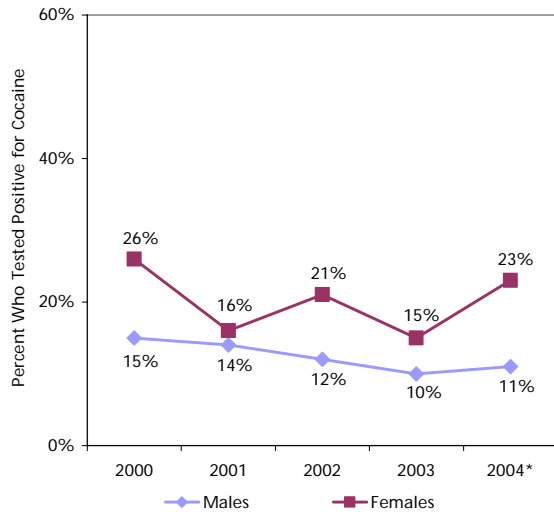
Figure 7
MORE SAN DIEGO ARRESTEES HAVE
USED POWDER COCAINE THAN CRACK



*Significant at $p < .05$.
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Figure 8 shows that the percent of males testing positive for cocaine has declined slightly over the past five years (15% to 11%), while the percent of females testing positive for cocaine has fluctuated. Between 2003 and 2004, there was an increase in the percent testing positive for both males and females, but females were significantly more likely to test positive compared to males.

Figure 8
MORE FEMALES THAN MALES
TEST POSITIVE FOR COCAINE

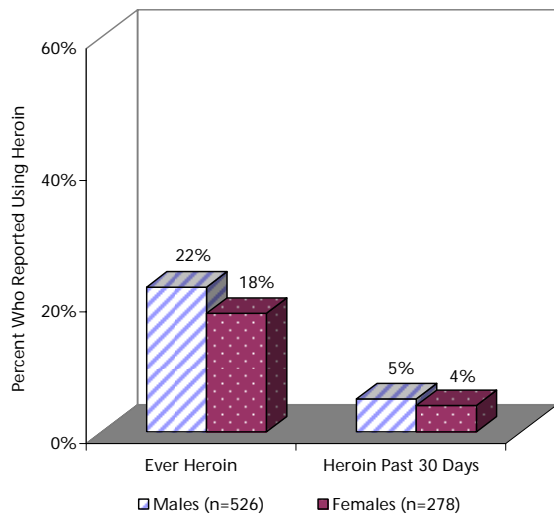


SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Heroin

About one in five arrestees (22% of males and 18% of females) reported they had used heroin at some time in their life and around five percent had used it in the last 30 days, the lowest figures of the illicit drug categories (Figure 9).

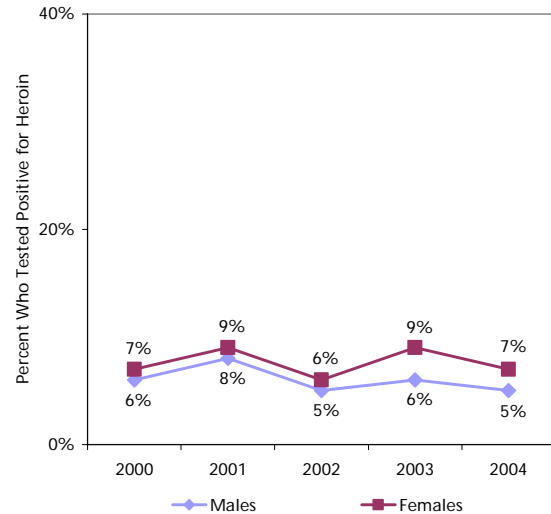
Figure 9
HEROIN IS THE LEAST COMMONLY
USED DRUG AMONG ARRESTEES



SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

As Figure 10 shows, the proportion of positive tests for heroin remained fairly stable over the past five years, with females only slightly more likely to test positive than males (7% of females in 2004 compared to 5% of males).

Figure 10
LESS THAN ONE IN TEN ARRESTEES
HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR HEROIN
IN LAST FIVE YEARS



SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Other Drugs

In addition to asking arrestees about their lifetime and recent experience with these four illicit substances, questions were included on the interview regarding lifetime illegal use of prescription drugs, as well as other less common substances that are not available legally in the U.S. As Table 1 shows, around one-half (51%) of the arrestees reported using some other type of drug illegally, with 36 percent reporting ever having used a prescription drug illegally and 40 percent using other illicit drugs. Painkillers and tranquilizers were among the types of prescription drugs most frequently used without a doctor's authorization and peyote/mescaline/mushrooms, LSD, and ecstasy were the most commonly used other illicit drugs.

**Table 1
ARRESTEES ALSO HAVE EXPERIMENTED
WITH OTHER TYPES OF DRUGS**

Any Other Drug	51%
Prescription Drug Illegally	36%
Painkillers	20%
Tranquilizers	19%
Amphetamines	10%
OxyContin	9%
Barbituates	8%
Anti-depressants	5%
Methadone	5%
Darvon/Darvocet	4%
Demerol/Fentanyl	4%
Other Illicit Drugs	40%
Peyote/Mescaline/Mushrooms	25%
LSD	23%
Ecstasy	17%
PCP	15%
Inhalants	12%
Ketamine/Special K	6%
GHB/G	4%
TOTAL	795 - 797

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Additional analyses also revealed that:

- While there was no significant difference between males' and females' illegal use of prescription drugs, males were significantly more likely to report having used at least one of the other illicit drugs (45%), compared to the female arrestees (31%).
- White non-Hispanic arrestees were significantly more likely to use both prescription drugs illegally (54% compared to 16% to 27% of other arrestees), as well as illicit substances (58% compared to 24% to 30% of other arrestees).

- Arrestees who previously reported using prescription drugs illegally were significantly more likely to test positive for marijuana (46% versus 28%), meth (52% versus 37%), and heroin (10% versus 4%) (not shown).

Tobacco

Nearly three-quarters (70%) of arrestees reported that they currently use tobacco in some form (68% of males and 75% of females). This figure is considerably higher than the 14.5 percent of the general adult population who reported they currently smoke as part of the California Tobacco Survey in 2002⁴.

While recent/current use of tobacco products was not significantly related to an arrestee's gender or age, it was related to ethnicity and current use of other drugs. Specifically, Whites (75%) and Blacks (72%) reported using tobacco significantly more often than Hispanics (65%) and individuals who identified with other ethnicities (63%). In addition, individuals who reported currently using tobacco were significantly more likely to test positive for marijuana (39%) and meth (49%) compared to those who did not use tobacco currently (24% and 27%, respectively) (not shown).

PREDICTORS OF CURRENT DRUG USE

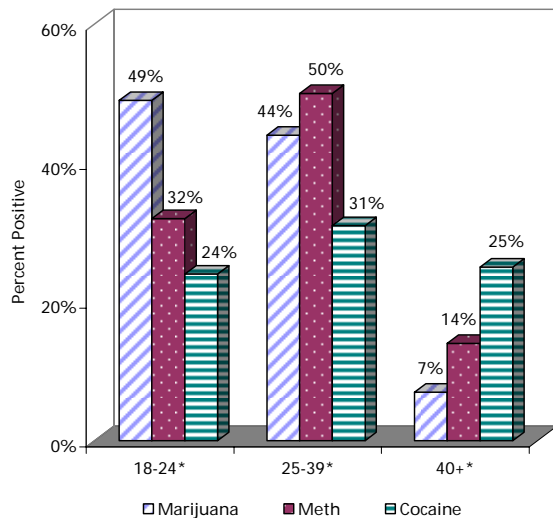
Additional analyses showed that certain arrestee characteristics, including age, ethnicity, current work status, arrest history, reporting parental drug use, and current arrest charges were significantly related to results of drug testing, as the following set of figures show.

⁴ Gilpin et al. (2003). Tobacco Control Successes in California: A Focus on Young People, Results from the California Tobacco Surveys, 1990-2002. La Jolla, CA: UCSD.

Age

As Figure 11 shows, arrestees between the ages of 18 and 24 were most likely to test positive for marijuana, those between 25 and 39 were most likely to test positive for meth, and those who were 40 years of age and older were most likely to test positive for cocaine. There were no differences in heroin use or multiple drug use by age.

Figure 11
POSITIVE DRUG TEST RESULTS
VARY BY ARRESTEE AGE



TOTAL = 749

*Significant at $p < .05$.

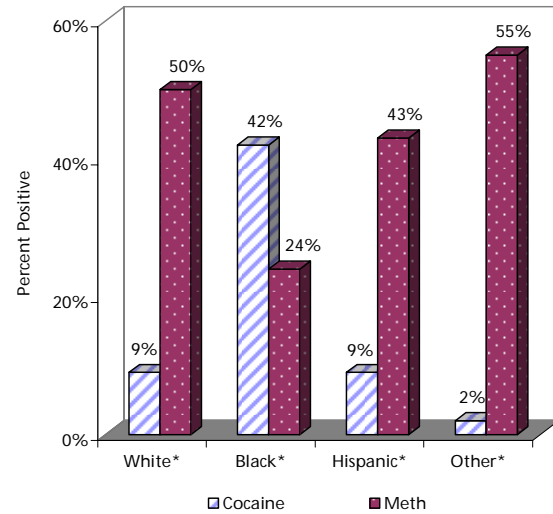
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Ethnicity

As Figure 12 shows, arrestee ethnicity also was a significant predictor of having a positive drug test result for meth and cocaine (but not marijuana⁵ or heroin). Specifically, individuals who identified as Black were significantly more likely to test positive for

cocaine, while arrestees in other ethnic groups in San Diego were more likely to test positive for meth.

Figure 12
POSITIVE DRUG TEST RESULTS
VARY BY ARRESTEE ETHNICITY



TOTAL = 804

*Significant at $p < .05$.

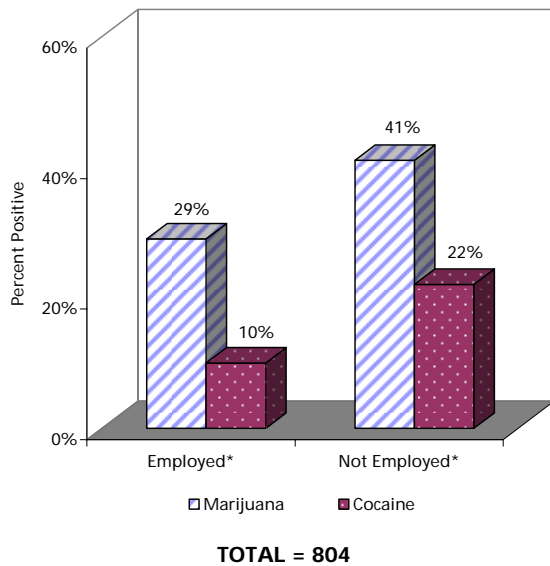
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Current Employment Status

Individuals who were currently unemployed were significantly *more* likely to test positive for marijuana (41% versus 29%) and cocaine (22% versus 10%) (Figure 13), as well as for multiple drugs (33% versus 21%) (not shown), compared to those who had a job at the time of arrest. A positive relationship between illicit drug use and unemployment status also has been found in national surveys with the general population.

⁵ Marijuana use and multiple drug use actually varied significantly by ethnicity for males, but not for females. White and Black males were significantly more likely to test positive for marijuana and multiple drugs, but this difference did not reach significance for female arrestees.

Figure 13
POSITIVE DRUG TEST RESULTS
VARY BY ARRESTEE CURRENT
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



*Significant at $p < .05$.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Previous Arrest History

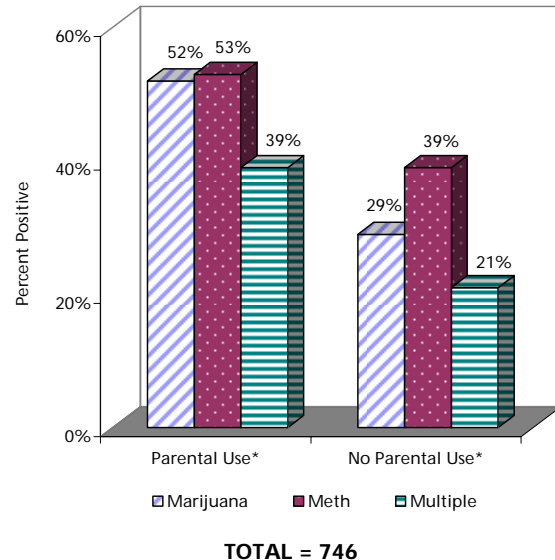
Being previously arrested was significantly related to testing positive for multiple drugs. Specifically, 29 percent of arrestees who reported this was *not* their first arrest tested positive for more than one substance, compared to 14 percent of those being arrested for the first time (not shown).

Parental Drug Use

Overall, about one-quarter (24%) of the arrestees reported that they knew that at least one of their parents had previously used illegal drugs. As Figure 14 shows, having a parent who also used illegal drugs was a significant predictor of current marijuana and meth use, as well as use of multiple substances. In fact, parental substance use was one of the most consistent predictors of negative behaviors, being associated with "other" substance use, as well as involvement in other risk behaviors, such as going to work

drunk or high or driving a vehicle under the influence (not shown). These results, which were previously reported with juvenile data, reiterate the special need for intervention in the lives of drug abusers with children.

Figure 14
POSITIVE DRUG TEST RESULTS
VARY BY ARRESTEE KNOWLEDGE
OF PARENTAL DRUG USE



*Significant at $p < .05$.

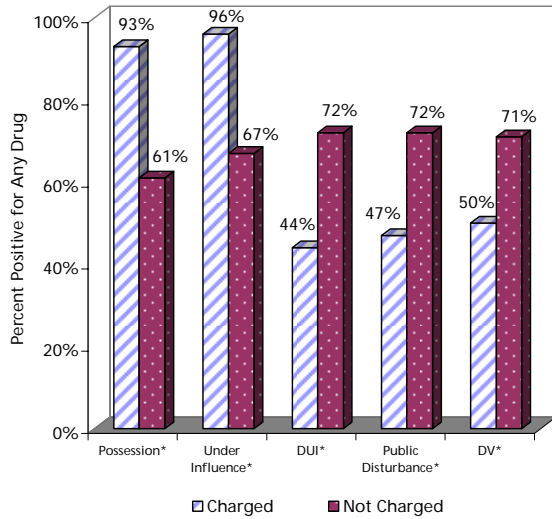
NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Current Charges

As Figure 15 shows, individuals who were arrested for specific types of charges were more likely to test positive for any type of drug, while others were less likely to test positive. Specifically, those arrested for drug possession and being under the influence were significantly *more* likely to test positive and those arrested for driving under the influence, disturbing the peace, or domestic violence were *less* likely. There were no other significant differences overall by arrest charge type.

Figure 15
POSITIVE DRUG TEST RESULTS VARY BY
ARRESTEE CURRENT ARREST CHARGE



TOTAL = 804

*Significant at $p < .05$.

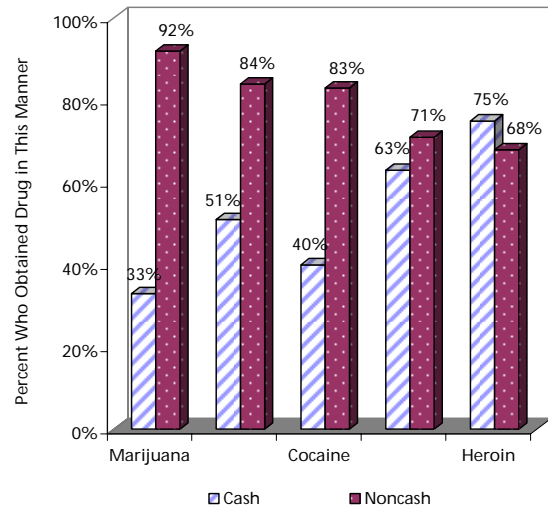
SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

DRUG MARKET DYNAMICS

Arrestees who reported they obtained drugs in the past 30 days were asked a series of questions regarding how, where, and from whom they obtained these substances, as well as to rate the difficulty of locating available dealers.

Arrestees interviewed in 2004 reported obtaining drugs both by paying cash and by getting them for free (either as a gift, a trade, or in exchange for participating in the drug trade). As Figure 16 shows, respondents were *least* likely to report paying cash for marijuana (33% compared to 40% to 75% for other drugs) and *most* likely to report getting it through a non-cash transaction (92% versus 68% to 84%). In comparison, individuals who obtained heroin were more likely to pay cash (75%), than get it through other means (68%).

Figure 16
ARRESTEES OBTAIN DIFFERENT DRUGS
IN DIFFERENT WAYS



TOTAL = 40 - 368

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

When asked from whom they got the drugs, most of the arrestees reported obtaining the drugs directly themselves from a dealer (from 76% of those who obtained powder cocaine to 91% of those who obtained crack) and about one-half (from 44% of those who obtained crack to 55% of those who obtained heroin) reported having a regular source they obtained their drugs from (not shown).

When asked from what type of place they obtained their drugs, there was considerable variability in regard to the percent who said they did so from some type of private residence. Specifically, less than one-quarter of those who obtained crack (16%) and heroin (24%) reported obtaining the drugs from someone's home or apartment, compared to 51 percent for meth, 55 percent for marijuana, and 57 percent for powder cocaine (not shown).

Overall, about one-third of those who obtained marijuana (37%) and crack (35%) reported that they did so in the same Major Statistical Area (MSA)⁶ as the one in which they lived. These percentages were somewhat higher for those who obtained powder cocaine (41%), heroin (48%), and meth (49%) (not shown).

Table 2 shows what percent of arrestees reported obtaining drugs in each of the eight MSAs, as well as out of San Diego County. The Central MSA of the County was the most common area for obtaining each of the illegal substances, but crack (79%) and heroin (52%) users were more likely to report obtaining these substances here than other drug users (24% to 34%). For comparison purposes, 40 percent of arrestees reported living in the Central MSA (not shown).

**Table 2
MOST ARRESTEES REPORTED OBTAINING DRUGS IN THE CENTRAL MSA**

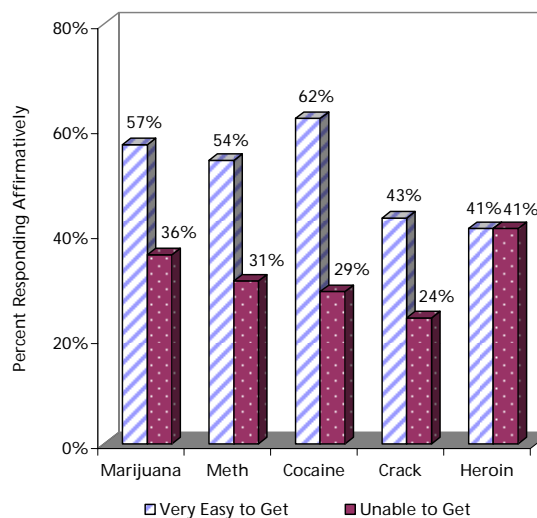
	MARJ	METH	COKE	CRACK	HER
Central	34%	34%	24%	79%	52%
N. City	13%	12%	14%	2%	7%
South	16%	11%	5%	4%	3%
East Sub.	12%	19%	24%	2%	3%
N. West	9%	9%	14%	6%	10%
N. East	8%	4%	0%	0%	10%
East	3%	5%	5%	4%	3%
Out of County	7%	4%	14%	4%	10%
TOTAL	120	161	21	53	29

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

⁶ MSAs are groups of subregional areas (SRAs) which, in turn, are groups of census tracts. The seven MSAs encompass the entire San Diego region, with boundaries remaining static over time. For a map of the MSAs, please see: <http://cart.sandag.org/dw/msas.htm>.

In another set of questions, arrestees were asked “how easy is it usually” to obtain a particular substance, as well as if “there was a time in the past 30 days when you tried to buy the drug but you were unable to.” As Figure 17 shows, crack and heroin users were *least* likely and powder cocaine users were *most* likely to say it was “very easy” to usually get these substances. However, heroin users were more likely than crack users to say there was a time when they were unable to obtain the drug.

**Figure 17
ARRESTEES MOST LIKELY TO REPORT COCAINE WAS VERY EASY TO OBTAIN**



TOTAL = 21 - 162

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

OTHER ANALYSES REGARDING RISK

Age of First Drug Use

According to SAMHSA, the younger an individual starts using “gateway drugs” (such as alcohol and marijuana), the greater the probability s/he will continue with other illicit drug use in her/his lifetime⁷. As Table 3 shows, male arrestees were significantly

⁷ SAMHSA (2004). *Initiation of Marijuana Use: Trends, Patterns, and Implications*. Rockville, MD: Author.

younger, on average, at the time they first tried alcohol (16.5 years old), compared to female arrestees (18.2 years old). Also worth noting, arrestees first tried marijuana at a younger age (14.5 for males and 14.9 for females) than any other drug, including alcohol. Other illicit drug use began after the age of 18, on average. Additional analyses also revealed that experimenting with alcohol and/or marijuana at a younger age was significantly related to not having a high school degree, having a diagnosed mental health problem, recently injecting drugs, testing positive for meth, and testing positive for multiple drugs at the time of this arrest (not shown).

Table 3
MALE ARRESTEES YOUNGER ON AVERAGE AT TIME OF FIRST SUBSTANCE USE

	Male	Female
Alcohol*	16.5	18.2
Marijuana	14.5	14.9
Powder Cocaine	22.5	24.3
Rock/Crack Cocaine	19.0	19.3
Heroin	22.6	23.1
Meth	20.6	21.5
TOTAL	118 - 443	51 - 225

*Significant at $p < .05$.

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

Injection Drug Use

In 2004, 13 percent of arrestees reported they had injected at least once in the past 12 months⁸. Of these 100 individuals, 75 percent had injected meth, 35 percent heroin, and 15 percent cocaine. A follow-up question pertained to whether or not these individuals

⁸ While national household survey results show that males in the general population are twice as likely to report they inject, there was no gender difference in injection behavior with this population.

had shared their needles or works, with 37 percent responding affirmatively. Additional analyses revealed that arrestees who reported injecting heroin were significantly more likely to share their needles/works, compared to those who did not (51% versus 29%) (not shown).

Participation in Risky Behaviors

For the first time, arrestees in 2004 were asked about a variety of risky behaviors they participated in after consuming alcohol or other drugs in the past year. Table 4 shows the percent of male and female arrestees reporting they engaged at least once in that particular risky behavior. Males were significantly *more* likely to participate in each behavior, with the exceptions of riding in a car with an intoxicated driver and physically abusing a partner or child. Interestingly, these risk behaviors were not related to an arrestee's age.

Table 4
ARRESTEES REPORTED PARTICIPATING IN A NUMBER OF RISKY BEHAVIORS AFTER DRINKING OR USING DRUGS

	Males	Females
Rode with intoxicated driver	55%	50%
Participated in sex acts*	54%	44%
Drove a car*	44%	26%
Went to work*	30%	16%
Missed work*	22%	11%
Pushed/shoved/hit a partner or child	8%	6%
TOTAL	519 - 521	274 - 275

*Significant at $p < .05$.

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2004

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

A total of 843 adult arrestees were interviewed as part of the SAM Program in 2004. Of those interviewed, 804 also provided a viable urine sample at the conclusion of the interview and these individuals are described here. Five hundred twenty-six (526) of these arrestees were male and 278 were female. Other characteristics include:

- 39 percent were White non-Hispanic, 35 percent Hispanic, 20 percent Black, and 6 percent identified with "other" in terms of ethnicity;
- 92 percent completed the interview in English and 8 percent in Spanish;
- 32.9 years was the average age of respondents;
- 28 percent did not have a high school degree;
- 37 percent worked full-time;
- 58 percent were single and 22 percent were married;
- 36 percent reported living with at least one child under the age of 18 and 5 percent of the female arrestees reported they were pregnant;
- 15 percent were homeless;
- 20 percent reported previously being diagnosed with a mental or psychiatric disorder;
- 36 percent currently had some type of health insurance;
- 32 percent previously had received some type of drug treatment and 18 percent said they had tried to get treatment but it was unavailable; and
- 78 percent previously had been arrested and 73 percent previously had spent time in jail.