

CESAR FAX: March 6, 2006 (Vol. 15, Issue 9)

Using Urine Specimens from Parolees/Probationers to Create a Statewide Drug Monitoring System

Trends in the drugs detected in urinalysis from offenders have been found to provide advance warning of drug epidemics in the greater community. DEWS staff worked with the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) to pilot an innovative program of expanded testing of urine specimens that DPP staff routinely collect from probationers and parolees. DEWS staff over-sampled drug positive specimens that the DPP Guilford Laboratory had tested for a panel of five drugs (benzodiazepines, cocaine, marijuana, opiates, and PCP). The study specimens were then sent to an independent, private laboratory that tested them for the presence of more than 30 drugs. Key findings from the pilot study include:

- Almost all (97%) of the probationers/parolees who tested positive for at least one of the drugs in the expanded screen had already tested positive for at least one of the five more common drugs tested for by the DPP. However, the use of some less common drugs, notably buprenorphine, methadone, and oxycodone, would have gone undetected by the DPP's drug screen.
- Sixteen specimens contained oxycodone and 15 specimens contained buprenorphine. About one half of the specimens that contained buprenorphine or oxycodone also contained two or more other drugs, raising the possibility of abuse of these prescription drugs in Maryland.
- Methamphetamine does not appear to be used by this population in the six jurisdictions sampled in Maryland. Only one specimen tested positive for amphetamine and confirmatory testing did not detect methamphetamine.
- The pattern of positive test results for cocaine, PCP, marijuana, and opiates was consistent with the types of drugs for which the general population in the sampled localities sought treatment.
- It was remarkably quick and inexpensive for the researchers to sample 299 specimens and send them to 30 drugs.

*While about 20% of all specimens screened by DPP tested positive in 2004, 75% of the 299 specimens selected for this study had tested positive in the DPP panel. The number of drugs detected by the expanded testing is therefore higher than would be expected in a random sample of all DPP specimens.

The Guilford Laboratory is a centralized urinalysis testing facility for 15 DPP collection facilities located in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Howard, Prince George's Charles, and Washington counties.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), CESAR. "Using Urine Specimens from Parolees/Probationers to Create a Statewide Drug Monitoring System," *DEWS Investigates*, February 2006. Available online at <http://www.cesar.umd.edu>. Print copies may be obtained by emailing cesar@cesar.umd.edu. For more information, contact Dr. Eric Wish at ewish@cesar.umd.edu.

CESAR FAX: March 13, 2006 (Vol. 15, Issue 10)

College Students Who Were Prescribed Pain Medication in Elementary School Most Likely to Illicitly Use Pain Medications

College students who were previously prescribed pain medications were more likely to report illicit use of such medications, according to a web-based survey of a random sample of undergraduate students attending a Midwestern university. Furthermore, those who reported the earliest initiation of prescribed pain medication had the highest rates of illicit use.

- Nearly one-third of male and female college students who had been prescribed pain medications in elementary school reported lifetime illicit use of pain medications, compared to 24% of those who had been prescribed them in secondary school and 8% to 10% of students who had never been prescribed pain medications.

This relationship remained after controlling for other variables, including race, class year, and living arrangement, and also held for past year illicit use. The authors note that “based on qualitative responses, it was clear that some students used prescription pain medication that was previously prescribed for legitimate medical reasons for later illicit use. However, it is unknown whether this later illicit use represents a form of self-treatment due to the inadequate treatment of pain or the illicit use is for non-medical purposes.”

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from McCabe, S.E.; Teter, C.J.; and Boyd, C.J. “Illicit Use of Prescription Pain Medication Among College Students,” *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 77(1):37-47, 2005. For more information, contact Sean Esteban McCabe at plius@umich.edu.

CESAR FAX: March 20, 2006 (Vol. 15, Issue 11)

***Female Youths in U.S. More Likely Than Males to Initiate Alcohol,
Cigarette, or Marijuana Use in 2004***

Girls ages 12 to 17 are more likely than their male counterparts to initiate alcohol, cigarettes, or marijuana use, according to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. In 2004, nearly 1.5 million female youths were estimated to have used alcohol for the first time in the past year, compared to slightly more than 1.2 million male youths. Similar differences were found for cigarette and marijuana initiation. These findings are of concern because rates of substance use among young girls already rival those of young boys. Girls ages 12 to 17 are just as likely as boys to report past month alcohol (18.0% vs. 17.2%), cigarette (12.5% vs. 11.3%), and marijuana (7.1% vs. 8.1%) use.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*, 2005. Available online at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k4nsduh/2k4tabs/toc.htm>.