

MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL COURT
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION
DONALD COCHRAN, COMMISSIONER



DRUGS & CRIMINALS: A DANGEROUS MIX

JUNE 1, 1989

CARMEN A. CICCHETTI
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

SANDRA L. ADAMS
RESEARCH ANALYST

JUDITH E. NIX
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

ANNE B. POWELL
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

10-17-89 MFI

118035

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Research and Planning Department of the Office of the Commissioner of Probation wishes to acknowledge the contributions made to this report by both the probation offices throughout the Commonwealth, and by the members of Probation Services Administration. Both were instrumental in enabling us to collect the information contained in this report.

We also wish to acknowledge the contribution of two former staff members, Lou Ann Enos and Rita Colucci, for the design, collection, and coding of the database.

118035

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by

Massachusetts Trial Court/Office
of the Commissioner of Probation
to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement	i
Table of Contents	ii
Executive Summary	iii
 PART I: PROBATIONERS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE	 1
Offense Characteristics	1
Crimes of Violence	2
Property Offenders	2
Criminal History	3
Gender	4
Socioeconomic Characteristic	4
 PART II: PROBATIONERS CONVICTED OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENSE	 6
Comparison of Controlled Substance Offenders and Other Offenders	6
Gender	9
Criminal History	9
Substance Abuse	10
Comparison of Controlled Substance Offenders by Class of Controlled Substance	11
Criminal History	11
Age	11
Gender	11
Substance Abuse	12
Socioeconomic Characteristics	12
 PART III: THE DRUG - CRIME CONNECTION	 15
The Causal Connection	15
Drug Type	15
Crime Type	16
 IMPLICATIONS FOR PROBATION PRACTICE	 17
 REFERENCES	 19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evidence has been growing that more and more offenders are being identified as substance abusers (controlled substances and/or alcohol), that they are using more addictive substances, and that substance abusing offenders are responsible for ever-increasing amounts of predatory, destructive, and dangerous crime. The provocative nature of this information is further demonstrated by the findings of this study, which focuses on the nature and extent of substance use and/or abuse among the Massachusetts probation population, and identifies the specific criminal activities with which it is associated.

Although the findings in this report are specific to the Massachusetts probation population, the results are consistent with the developing national drug-crime phenomenon, as shown in Part III at the end of this report. This study found that:

- * At least 67% of the probation population has been identified as having a serious substance abuse problem;
- * 25% of the substance abusers had a criminal record by the time they were 16; 60% by the time they were 19;
- * A changing trend is developing among substance abusers who commit crime - they are involved in crimes that are predatory, destructive, and dangerous; their criminal activity is no longer limited to simple property crimes;
- * Probationers identified as substance abusers also have significant socio-economic differences from their nonabusing counterparts. The abusers are more educationally disadvantaged, have employability problems, more family problems, and generally lack peer social support networks.
- * Substance abusers have more active criminal lifestyles than nonabusers; 36% of abusers vs. 17% of nonabusers had 3 or more known prior offenses in the past 5 years;
- * Gender differences exist in that females are typically associated with controlled substances, while males with both controlled substances and alcohol;
- * Offenders associated with the more addictive substances also had higher crime rates - almost one-third (32.8%) of Class A offenders had three or more known prior offenses within the past five years; as compared to 21.1% of Class D offenders and 18.6% of Class B offenders;
- * The average age of Class A (Heroin) and B (Cocaine) controlled substance offenders is higher than that of Class D (Marijuana) offenders, suggesting a persistent criminal lifestyle of those associated with the more addictive substances.

PART I: PROBATIONERS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Research and Planning Department (RPD) of OCP collected information on 7,326 adults placed on probation between July 1, 1987 and February 28, 1988, from the 12 Superior and 74 District Courts of the Commonwealth. Of these, 4,901 (66.9%) have been identified as having a serious substance abuse problem which, for purposes of this study, is defined as both controlled substance and/or alcohol abuse. Because substance abusers typically deny that they have a substance abuse problem, it is striking that upon initial assessment two-thirds of the probationers in this study were identified as substance abusers.

Offense Characteristics. Offenders identified as substance abusers do not specialize in the types of crime they commit; they are involved in a great variety of criminal activity. As Table 1 below shows, a considerable number of substance abusers committed property crimes, violent offenses, and such other offenses as disorderly conduct and motor vehicle offenses.

**TABLE 1: OFFENSE CATEGORIES
BY SUBSTANCE ABUSERS/NONABUSERS**

	SUBSTANCE ABUSERS N=4901	NON- ABUSERS N=2391
CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENSES	30.8%	14.0%
PROPERTY OFFENSES	30.2	37.8
PERSON OFFENSES	23.7	30.4
OTHER OFFENSES	15.3	17.8

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION,
BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Moreover, a closer analysis of the specific types of violent and property crime such offenders committed reveals that offenders who have a substance abuse problem are more predatory, more destructive, and more dangerous than those who do not have a substance abuse problem.

Crimes Against the Person. Sixty-two percent (62%) of offenders placed on probation for a crime against the person have a substance abuse problem. Of those substance abusers placed on probation for crimes against the person, the overwhelming majority (72.7%) were implicated in an assaultive type of crime. Our findings are consistent with national studies that indicate that substance abusers are just as likely to commit violent crime as are their nonabusing counterparts, especially if alcohol is used in conjunction with an illicit substance (National Institute of Justice, 1981, 1987). As Table 2 below indicates, there are some significant differences in the pattern of violent crimes committed.

Adding further to the severity of their criminal activity, substance abusers were much more likely than the nonabusers to be involved in a robbery involving the use of a weapon (53% versus 45%). The very presence of a weapon increases the likelihood of more serious harm being inflicted on the victim (Rand, DeBerry, Klaus, & Taylor, 1986).

**TABLE 2: VIOLENT OFFENSES
BY SUBSTANCE ABUSERS/NONABUSERS**

	SUBSTANCE ABUSERS N=1163	NON- ABUSERS N= 727
ASSAULT	72.7%	63.1%
SEXUAL ASSAULT/RAPE	11.0	22.2
ROBBERY	10.9	9.9
OTHER	5.4	4.8

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Property Offenders. Among those placed on probation for committing only a property offense, nearly two-thirds (62.1%) have a substance abuse problem. When the general category of "property offense" is broken down, it becomes clear that there is a real difference in the types of property offenses committed by substance abusers and nonabusers (cf. Table 3 page 3). More abusers than nonabusers engaged in burglary and/or breaking and entering, an actively invasive property offense, as well as in destruction of property and/or vandalism, frequently associated with attempts to break and enter to commit burglary. In other words, substance abusers are

associated with aggressive types of property offenses that include a greater possibility of person victimization. It is not quite accurate, therefore, to portray such offenders as simply property offenders. The nature of their property offense is characteristically different - the probability of violent crime increases with these types of property offenses, and as such these offenders are inching closer on the spectrum of offenses towards person offenses.

**TABLE 3: PROPERTY CRIMES
BY SUBSTANCE ABUSERS/NONABUSERS**

	SUBSTANCE ABUSERS N=1480	NON- ABUSERS N= 904
LARCENY/FRAUD	37.3%	49.2%
BURGLARY/BREAKING AND ENTERING	33.7	20.6
DEST PROP/VANDALISM	13.8	9.6
REC/POSS STOLEN PROPERTY	6.9	11.3
FORGERY/UTTERING	3.3	3.3
ARSON	2.2	3.1
OTHER	2.8	2.9

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Criminal History. When comparing the criminal histories of substance abusers with those of nonabusers, two things become immediately clear. First, substance abusing offenders are more actively involved in criminal activity. Second, significantly more substance abusers became involved in criminal behavior at a relatively young age. Our findings are consistent with national research (Graham, 1987; Moore, 1988).

For example, as Table 4 below indicates, almost 75% of the substance abusers had been arraigned at least once within the past five years as compared to only 46.1% of the offenders who do not have a substance abuse problem. Over 1/3 of the substance abusers had three or more prior arraignments within the past five years - over twice as high a rate as the nonabusers (36.3% vs. 17.3%, respectively). Substance abusers, in other words, are also the most criminally active offenders.

**TABLE 4: PRIOR RECORD PAST FIVE YEARS
BY SUBSTANCE ABUSERS/NONABUSERS**

	SUBSTANCE ABUSERS N=4880	NON- ABUSERS N=2382
3 OR MORE	36.3%	17.3%
TWO	14.9	11.1
ONE	20.7	17.7
NONE	28.1	53.9

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Furthermore, as Table 5 below indicates, substance abusers tend to become involved in criminal behavior at a relatively early age. Nearly twice as high a rate of substance abusers (25%) than of nonabusers (14.6%) were already known to the courts by their sixteenth birthday. Indeed, 60% of the substance abusers had a court appearance by the time they were 19.

**TABLE 5: AGE OF FIRST OFFENSE
BY SUBSTANCE ABUSERS/NONABUSERS**

	SUBSTANCE ABUSERS N=4875	NON- ABUSERS N=2375
16 OR YOUNGER	25.1%	14.6%
17 - 19	34.2	32.4
20 - 23	18.7	18.7
24 OR OLDER	22.0	34.3

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Gender. Our research shows that roughly two-thirds of both the female and the male probationers are substance abusers. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the females and 67.7% of the males in our study have a substance abuse problem. Females, moreover, are typically associated with controlled substances, while males tend to abuse both alcohol and controlled substances. In other words, substance abuse is just as prevalent among female probationers as it is among male probationers. These findings are consistent with both previous research conducted by this office, as well as with national research (Chaiken & Johnson, 1988; Cicchetti, Archibald, & Adams, 1988; Moore, 1988).

Socioeconomic Characteristics. Probationers with a substance abuse problem significantly differ from their nonabusing counterparts in virtually every need category (cf. Table 6, on the following page). They are more educationally disadvantaged, have more of an employability problem, and have greater financial hardships. Particularly striking is that they seem to have more hardened attitudes; 81.4% initially presented themselves as having little, if any, desire to change. This lack of motivation on their part is accentuated by the fact that many of them also have problematic family and social environments; 34.6% report serious family difficulties, and 50.3% report having little and/or negative social support networks.

**TABLE 6: COMPARISON OF ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSERS
AND NONABUSERS**

OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS		SUBSTANCE ABUSERS N=4901	NON- ABUSERS N=2391
AVERAGE AGE		27 YRS	27 YRS
COURT DEPARTMENT			
DISTRICT/BMC	*	77.1	70.0
SUPERIOR	*	22.9	30.0
SEX			
MALE	*	87.1	85.1
FEMALE	*	12.9	14.9
RISK CHARACTERISTICS			
PRIOR RECORD PAST 5 YRS	*	71.8	46.1
PRIOR PERIOD OF PROBATION PAST 5 YRS	*	50.4	26.7
YOUNGER THAN 24 YRS AT TIME OF FIRST OFFENSE	*	78.0	65.7
TWO OR MORE RESIDENCE CHANGES IN PAST YEAR	*	19.0	10.4
EMPLOYED LESS THAN 9 MONTHS	*	54.8	43.5
FAMILY STRUCTURAL PROBLEM	*	32.6	26.7
ATTITUDINAL PROBLEM	*	29.9	13.0
NEED CHARACTERISTICS			
EDUCATION SKILLS PROBLEM	*	28.8	24.0
EMPLOYABILITY PROBLEM	*	6.5	4.0
FAMILY RELATIONS PROBLEM	*	34.6	20.2
SOCIAL RELATIONS PROBLEM	*	50.3	25.5
BEHAVIOR PROBLEM	*	53.3	19.4
CURRENT HEALTH PROBLEM	*	14.4	9.9
FINANCIAL PROBLEM	*	43.6	27.9
MOTIVATIONAL PROBLEM	*	81.4	66.9
PROBATION SUPERVISION			
AVERAGE LENGTH	*	20 MOS	21 MOS
LEVELS			
MAXIMUM	*	45.7%	36.0%
MODERATE	*	42.8	31.1
MINIMUM	*	11.5	32.9

* significance at $\leq .05$

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION,
BOSTON, MA, 1989.

PART II:

PROBATIONERS CONVICTED OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENSE

Of the 7,326 adults probationers studied during our sample period, 1,847 or 25.2% had committed a controlled substance offense. This section of the study analyzes these 1,847 probationers. This analysis is twofold. First, controlled substance offenders are compared to offenders in general to determine the similarities and differences between the two groups of offenders. Second, offenders associated with different types of controlled substances are studied.

Massachusetts State Law divides Controlled Substances into five classes:

Class A -Heroin and other named opiates and opium derivatives.

Class B -Drugs acting as stimulants upon the central nervous system including cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates, methadone, percodan, and morphine.

Class C -Hallucinogens and depressants including LSD, PCP, DMT, hashish, mescaline, peyote.

Class D -Marijuana and certain barbiturates not included in Class B.

Class E -Dilute mixtures of codeine, morphine, or opium. Prescriptions other than those falling in Classes A-D including darvon, valium, librium, and cough syrup with codeine, morphine, or opium bases.

Comparison of Controlled Substance Offenders and Other Offenders

Class of Controlled Substance. Among criminal offenders in the 1980's there seemed to be a movement from marijuana to cocaine as the controlled substance of choice (Graham, 1987; Kozel & Adams, 1986; National Institute of Justice, 1987). Our results indicate that the trends among the Massachusetts probation population seem to mirror the national picture because almost one-half (48.4%) of all controlled substance offenders were placed on probation for committing an offense involving a Class B substance, typically cocaine. While 19% were placed on probation for Class D substance offenses (typically marijuana), another 18.7% were placed on probation for Class A substance offenses (typically heroin). In other words, 67.1% of all controlled substance offenders placed on probation were involved with either a Class A or Class B substance. Figure 1, on the following page, visually represents the breakdown of controlled substance class involvement.

Type of Offense. In this study, 92.6% of all controlled substance offenders were convicted of either possession or sale of drugs. As Figure 2 on the following page shows, 45.5% were placed on probation for the possession of a controlled substance, 47.1% for sales, and 7.4% for such other offenses as possession of a hypodermic needle.

FIGURE 1: CLASS OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE

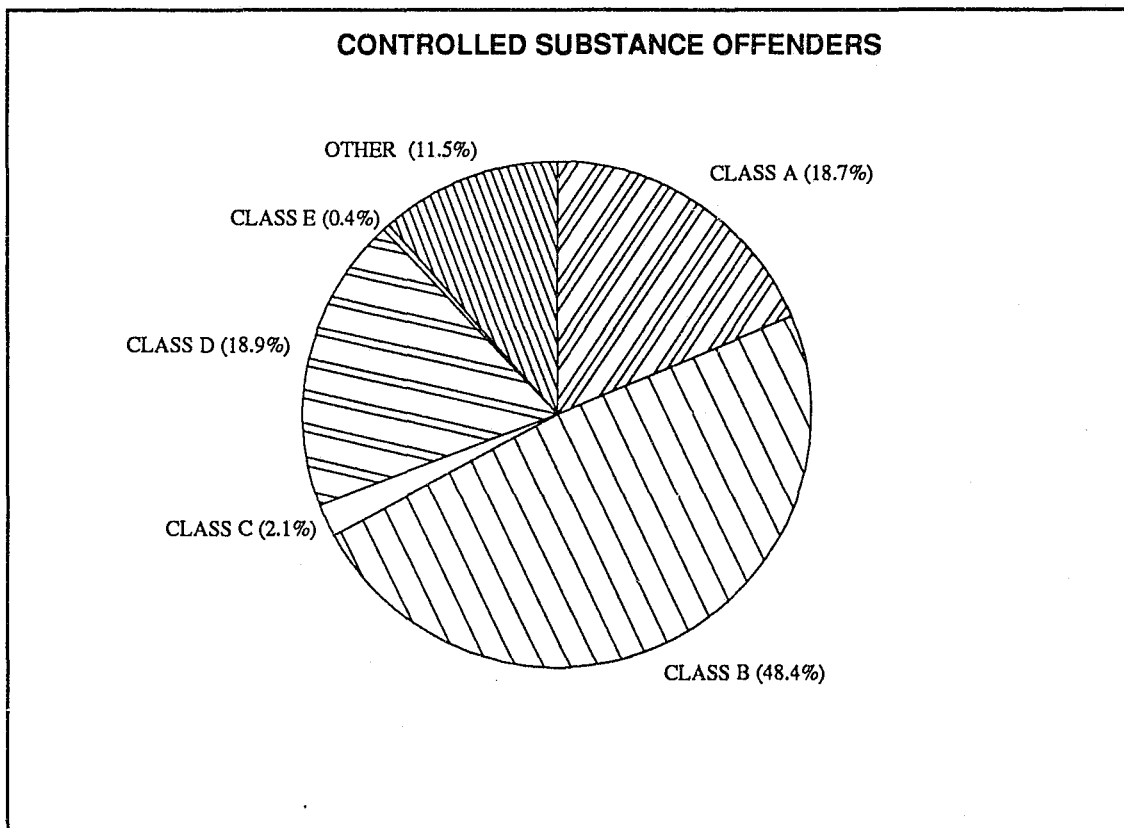
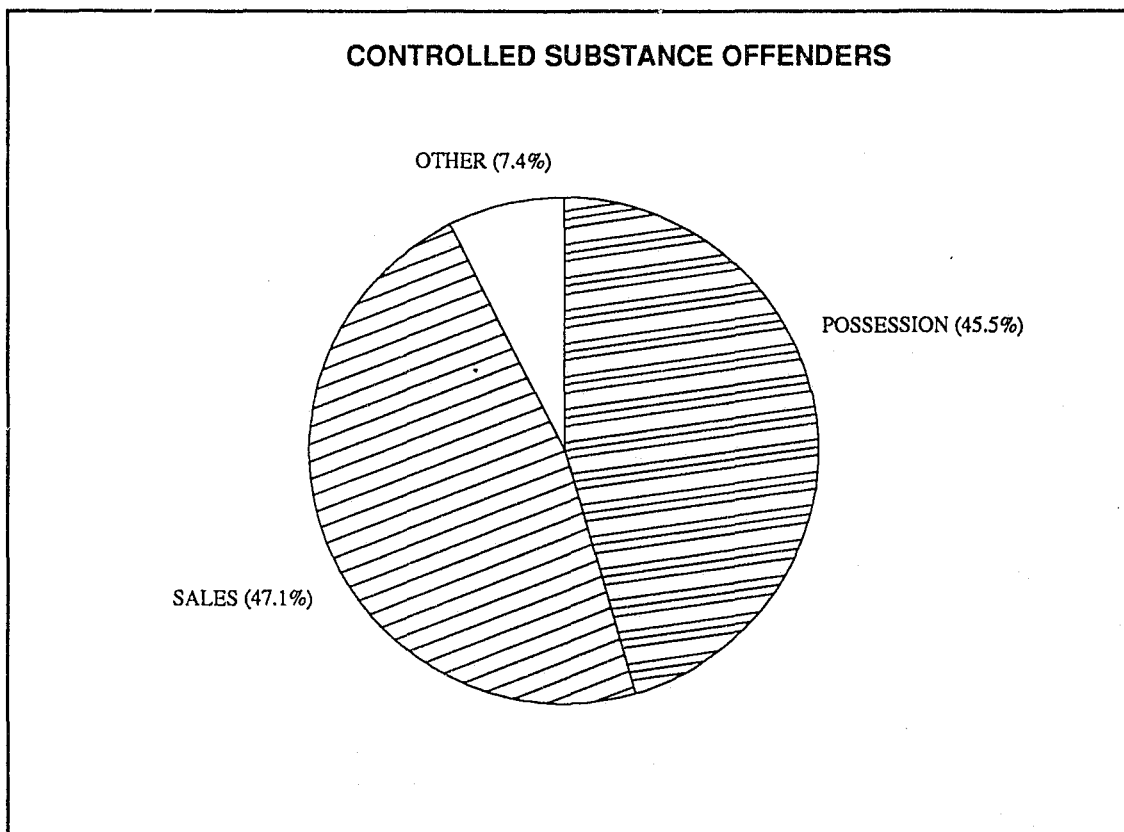


FIGURE 2: TYPE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENSE



SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

**TABLE 7: COMPARISON OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENDERS
AND OTHER OFFENDERS**

OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS		CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENDERS N=1847	OTHER OFFENDERS N=5479
AVERAGE AGE	*	29 YRS	27 YRS
SEX			
MALE	*	79.8%	88.7%
FEMALE	*	20.2	11.3
RISK CHARACTERISTICS			
PRIOR RECORD PAST 5 YRS	*	56.3	65.8
PRIOR PERIOD OF PROBATION PAST 5 YRS	*	36.8	44.6
YOUNGER THAN 24 YRS AT TIME OF FIRST OFFENSE	*	64.0	77.3
TWO OR MORE RESIDENCE CHANGES IN PAST YEAR		14.7	16.6
EMPLOYED LESS THAN 9 MONTHS	*	53.3	50.4
FAMILY STRUCTURAL PROBLEM		30.4	30.8
ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM	*	79.7	60.3
ATTITUDINAL PROBLEM	*	22.4	25.0
NEED CHARACTERISTICS			
EDUCATION SKILLS PROBLEM	*	24.9	28.0
EMPLOYABILITY PROBLEM		6.5	5.5
FAMILY RELATIONS PROBLEM	*	25.7	31.2
SOCIAL RELATIONS PROBLEM		42.0	42.2
ALCOHOL ABUSE PROBLEM	*	27.7	40.8
OTHER DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM	*	63.1	24.8
BEHAVIOR PROBLEM		42.8	41.8
CURRENT HEALTH PROBLEM	*	15.4	12.1
FINANCIAL PROBLEM		36.8	38.9
MOTIVATIONAL PROBLEM		76.5	76.6
PROBATION SUPERVISION			
AVERAGE LENGTH	*	21 MOS	20 MOS
LEVELS			
MAXIMUM	*	18.8%	50.5%
MODERATE	*	54.3	33.7
MINIMUM	*	26.9	15.8

* significance at $\leq .05$

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION,
BOSTON, MA, 1989

Gender. When comparing probationers who committed a controlled substance offense with those who committed other offenses, it becomes clear that females are more frequently associated with controlled substance offenses, as Table 7 on the preceding page indicates. This is consistent with earlier research conducted by this office (Cicchetti, Archibald, & Adams, 1988). Females account for 20.2% of all controlled substance offenders, but only 11.3% of other types of offenders. Among themselves, however, 37.6% of all females placed on probation were convicted of a controlled substance offense.

Criminal History. At first glance, it would seem that those who committed controlled substance offenses are less criminally active than those who committed other types of crime, and that they tended to be older when they committed their present offense. For example, Table 8 below shows that comparatively fewer controlled substance offenders had criminal records, and even those that did were less criminally active than the offenders who committed such other offenses as person or property crimes. These results are influenced by two factors. First, women are overrepresented among controlled substance offenders. Female offenders are generally older than their male counterparts. In this particular case, 60.5% of the female controlled substance offenders were first time offenders, and 72.8% of these were 24 or older (Cicchetti, Archibald, & Adams, 1988). This heavy weighting of older, first time female offenders would skew the results. But a second factor is also influencing the results. Nearly 40% of the males placed on probation for a controlled substance offense were also first time offenders, and 71.5% of these were 24 or older. In other words, both the age and criminal history data may be skewed not only because of the overrepresentation of older female, first time offenders, but also by the nature of the controlled substance offenders' crime. It may be that s(he) can elude apprehension and public prosecution longer, especially if understaffed and financially strapped police departments must focus on such publicly recognizable crimes as violent and/or property offenses. In short, then, while it is entirely possible that at least a subset of drug offenders are relatively "new" criminals lured by easy money, one must be cautious about downplaying the extent of their criminal involvement until additional research on controlled substance becomes available.

**TABLE 8: PRIOR RECORD PAST FIVE YEARS
BY OFFENDER TYPE**

	DRUG OFFENDERS N=1838	OTHER OFFENDERS N=5456
3 OR MORE	22.7%	32.6%
TWO	14.0	13.5
ONE	19.6	19.7
NONE	43.7	34.2

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Substance Abuse. While the overwhelming majority of all offenders have been identified as having a substance abuse problem, the problem is worse among controlled substance offenders. Eighty percent (80%) of controlled substance offenders have a substance abuse problem. In other words, according to our data, 8-out-of-10 controlled substance offenders are also substance abusers. Of the 20% of controlled substance offenders who were identified as not having a substance abuse problem, a significant number (56.8%) were involved in sales.

Comparison of Controlled Substance Offenders by Class of Controlled Substance

Criminal History. The offenders who were the most criminally active and who were the most likely to have a criminal history were those associated with Class A substances. Nearly half (46.8%) of those convicted of a Class A substance offense had two or more prior arraignments within the past five years (cf. Table 9 below). Only 32.3% of Class B and 37.8% of Class D substance offenders had two or more arraignments.

**TABLE 9: PRIOR RECORD PAST FIVE YEARS
BY CLASS OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

	CLASS A OFFENDERS N= 344	CLASS B OFFENDERS N= 888	CLASS D OFFENDERS N= 347
THREE OR MORE	32.8%	18.6%	21.1%
TWO	14.0	13.7	16.7
ONE	19.8	19.7	21.3
NONE	33.4	48.0	40.9

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Age. Offenders convicted of an offense involving a Class A or Class B substance were, on average, older than those involved with a Class D substance. The average age for the Class A offender was 30, for the Class B offender it was 29, but for the Class D offender it was 26. Moreover, while only 8% of both Class A and Class B offenders were under 20 years of age, 20% of Class D offenders were under 20.

Gender. In The New Female Offender (Cicchetti, Archibald, & Adams, 1988) it was reported that females tend to be overrepresented among controlled substance offenders. What is even more alarming is that this overrepresentation varies by the class of the controlled substance (cf. Table 10 on the following page). While females made up only 9.5% of the Class D substance offenders, they accounted for 18.3% of the Class B and 26.1% of the Class A substance offenders placed on probation. Put differently, almost three times as many women were placed on probation for a Class A substance offense than for a Class D substance offense. As Table 10 on page 12 shows, while men typically committed Class B substance offenses followed by Class D substance offenses, women committed Class B substance offenses followed by Class A substance offenses. Women, in other words, are not only disproportionately involved in controlled substance offenses in general, but more specifically with Class A substances. Collectively, however, 8-out-of-10 men and 9-out-of-10 women convicted of a controlled substance offense were involved with either Class A or Class B substances.

**TABLE 10: CLASS OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE
BY GENDER**

	MALE OFFENDERS N= 1301	FEMALE OFFENDERS N= 287
CLASS A OFFENDERS	19.6%	31.4%
CLASS B OFFENDERS	56.2	57.1
CLASS D OFFENDERS	24.2	11.5

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Substance Abuse. Of those identified as frequent abusers, a much greater number were involved with Class A related controlled substance offenses.

**TABLE 11: SUBSTANCE ABUSE
BY CLASS OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

	CLASS A OFFENDERS N= 345	CLASS B OFFENDERS N= 893	CLASS D OFFENDERS N= 348
FREQUENT ABUSE	18.3%	7.1%	6.9%
IN TREATMENT	22.0	14.8	14.9
OCCASIONAL ABUSE	19.4	33.1	38.5
PRIOR PROBLEM	23.2	25.0	17.0
NO APPARENT PROBLEM	17.1	20.0	22.7

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION, BOSTON, MA, 1989.

Socioeconomic Characteristics. Class A substance offenders are apparently very different from Class B and Class D substance offenders with regard to educational, employment and financial problem characteristics (cf. Table 13 on page 14). Given the fact that 83% of Class A substance offenders also have a substance abuse problem, it is not terribly surprising that 73.5% of them were employed for less than 9 months, or that 51.2% of them reported serious financial problems. Moreover, Class A substance offenders appear to be more educationally disadvantaged than either Class B or Class D substance offenders. As Table 12 on the following page shows, only about one-fifth (22.1%) of Class A offenders had a high school level of education, and nearly 40% of them were viewed as low or minimally skilled individuals. Only 20.2% of Class B and 24% of Class D substance offenders were identified as low-to-minimally skilled.

**TABLE 12: EDUCATIONAL SKILL LEVEL
BY CLASS OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

	CLASS A OFFENDERS N= 340	CLASS B OFFENDERS N= 881	CLASS D OFFENDERS N= 342
MINIMAL SKILLS	4.7%	1.9%	3.5%
LOW SKILLS- ABILITY	33.5	18.3	20.5
ADEQUATE SKILLS	39.7	41.8	41.2
HS OR ABOVE	22.1	38.0	34.8

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION,
BOSTON, MA, 1989.

**TABLE 13: COMPARISON OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENDERS
BY CLASS OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS	CLASS A OFFENDERS N= 345	CLASS B OFFENDERS N= 894	CLASS D OFFENDERS N= 349
AVERAGE AGE	30 YRS	29 YRS	26 YRS
SEX			
MALE	73.9%	81.7%	90.5%
FEMALE	26.1	18.3	9.5
RISK CHARACTERISTICS			
PRIOR RECORD PAST 5 YRS	66.6	52.0	59.1
PRIOR PERIOD OF PROBATION PAST 5 YRS	44.6	32.5	40.6
YOUNGER THAN 24 YRS AT TIME OF FIRST OFFENSE	64.2	61.8	76.1
TWO OR MORE RESIDENCE CHANGES IN PAST YEAR	19.7	13.6	10.4
EMPLOYED LESS THAN 9 MONTHS	73.5	49.0	42.0
FAMILY STRUCTURAL PROBLEM	40.0	27.1	26.1
ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM	82.9	80.0	77.3
ATTITUDINAL PROBLEM	29.1	20.6	21.3
NEED CHARACTERISTICS			
EDUCATION SKILLS PROBLEM	38.2	20.2	24.0
EMPLOYABILITY PROBLEM	10.3	5.7	3.2
FAMILY RELATIONS PROBLEM	34.2	22.8	19.0
SOCIAL RELATIONS PROBLEM	50.1	39.2	39.3
ALCOHOL ABUSE PROBLEM	22.3	27.9	30.4
OTHER DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM	67.6	60.5	66.9
BEHAVIOR PROBLEM	53.1	39.3	37.1
CURRENT HEALTH PROBLEM	22.3	11.5	11.1
FINANCIAL PROBLEM	51.2	34.0	25.7
MOTIVATIONAL PROBLEM	83.3	74.9	70.3
PROBATION SUPERVISION			
AVERAGE LENGTH	23 MOS	22 MOS	16 MOS
LEVELS			
MAXIMUM	30.0%	14.6%	16.7%
MODERATE	55.5	55.9	51.6
MINIMUM	14.5	29.5	31.7

SOURCE: RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION,
BOSTON, MA, 1989.

PART III: THE DRUG - CRIME CONNECTION

What is the drug - crime connection? Do drugs cause crime, or do offenders start to use drugs after they begin their criminal activities? What kind of drugs are offenders using - marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine, heroin? Moreover, what types of crime are associated with drug use and/or abuse? Do offenders who use drugs primarily commit property crimes to raise money to support their habit or do they tend to be violent and hurt and kill people? And, what is happening in Massachusetts; is it similar to or different from what is happening in the rest of the country? These are a few of the significant questions dealt with in this present probation profile study.

Everyone should be concerned about the drug - crime connection. Offenders who use drugs commit a considerable amount and variety of crime. The crimes they commit are becoming more violent. The crimes they commit are not victimless crimes. Because so many offenders who commit serious crime use drugs and because such offenders recidivate relatively quickly, drug use is one of the best indicators of a serious criminal career (National Institute of Justice, 1987).

The Causal Connection. Unfortunately, at this point in time, the criminal justice research literature is divided on this issue. Some studies suggest that drug use causes crime, some suggest that criminal behavior precedes drug use, some say that drug use and criminal behavior develop simultaneously, and still others suggest that criminal activity is associated with only "heightened" drug use, not "normal" drug use (Anglin & Hser, 1987; Carpenter, 1988; Faupel & Klockars, 1987; Inciardi & Potreger, 1986; Kandel, Simcha-Fagen, & Davies, 1986). Even though the causal connection is not established, the types of drugs currently being used by the general offender population almost make this question irrelevant. It appears that, in today's world, significant crime reduction cannot occur unless serious inroads are made in reducing substance use and/or abuse among offenders.

Drug Type. Cocaine and heroin use is rapidly increasing among the offender population, with many becoming polydrug users. By 1986, some studies indicated that over 80% of those tested for drug use tested positive for cocaine. In New York, 25% of those tested had used heroin. The situation is the same in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Detroit, San Diego, Portland, and Los Angeles. Female offenders appear more likely to use heroin than men, and a significant number of women offenders appear to use drugs intravenously, possibly facilitating the AIDS epidemic (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1988; National Institute of Justice, 1987, 1988). While these national results are largely based on pre-trial populations, the remarkably similar

results from this study are based on data from a post-trial population. In other words, regardless of when offenders' substance use and/or abuse habits are studied the findings are the same. They are primarily associated with addictive substances that in time will control the user regardless of the initial causal connection between the use of drugs and criminal behavior. Moreover, there is some evidence that polydrug use is correlated with violent type crimes (National Institute of Justice, 1987). If these early results prove true, then as polydrug use increases among offenders, so should violent crime.

Crime Type. Some studies show that between 50% - 92% of offenders arrested for burglary, grand larceny, robbery, and assault tested positive for drug use. Other studies indicated that over 50% of those charged with murder and manslaughter used illicit drugs just prior to their offense. Moreover, a significant number of offenders who committed aggravated assault, weapons offenses, and rapes were drug users. Polydrug users, especially those who also have a problem with alcohol, appear to commit an unusually high number of violent crimes. In some parts of the country street gangs have organized around controlling the cocaine trade, and many of these have become increasingly violent. In some regions, one-quarter of the homicides are directly related to drug trafficking (Gropper, 1985; Moore, 1988; National Institute of Justice, 1987, 1988). Offenders who use drugs, then, commit a wide variety of very serious and dangerous crime.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROBATION PRACTICE

RONALD P. CORBETT, JR.
DIRECTOR
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Drugs and crime are a deadly combination, each feeding on the other in an escalating spiral of violence. This study on Massachusetts probationers confirms that the drug-crime link in this state is both substantial and ominous. The findings reported here constitute both a grim confirmation of a national trend as well as a call for further, concerted action to address this crisis.

Among the clear implications of this study are:

- **The need for continuing emphasis through training on understanding the nature and dynamics of substance abuse.** It is imperative that all probation officers develop a solid expertise in this area. Over the last five years, over 200 hours of training on substance abuse have been made available to the probation service. No other topic has received more coverage. This priority must be reinforced and the concept of certification of probation officers in substance abuse assessment and treatment should be explored.

- **New approaches for responding to the substance abuser on probation must be developed.** In this connection, and in collaboration with the Division of Substance Abuse Services of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), a specially-designed, pilot project focusing on probationers who are drug abusers will commence in Dorchester District Court in June, 1989. With resources provided by DPH, those who enter the project will be given priority access to assessment and treatment, including both drug-free approaches and methadone maintenance. Each referral will receive an initial assessment by a drug treatment program within 1-2 days of being placed on probation. Follow-up services will include regular urine screening and a rapid court response to noncompliance. Those participating in the program will be followed for a minimum of 12 months and compared with a control-group of offenders with similar traits but who could not be accepted into the project because of a limit on capacity. A minimum of 100 probationers will be included in the study.

In the immediate future, additional options will be sought for joining with DPH and other state agencies to undertake experiments aimed at identifying more effective means of intervening with substance abusers on probation.

- **Further research must be undertaken on the effectiveness of probation interventions with substance abusers.** The recent computerization of offender information - both criminal record and risk/need profile data - will allow OCP, in concert again with DPH and related agencies, to undertake sophisticated follow-up analysis on those offenders placed on probation

who have identified problems involving substance abuse. By tracking both subsequent criminal offenses and treatment histories, we hope to discover key elements of successful interventions.

Finally, collateral pilot programs are now under way in selected probation departments involving literacy assessment and intervention as well as early intervention with high-risk juvenile offenders. Knowing that for many offenders substance abuse is inextricably connected with a range of related social problems, we hope that these initiatives in literacy and early intervention can indirectly impact the number of probationers who go on to develop serious drug and alcohol problems.

We hope that the readers of this report - and, especially, our colleagues in probation-find this report useful and illuminating. We would be grateful for any feedback and invite suggestions for future topics for research.

REFERENCES

- Anglin, M. D., & Hser, Y. 1987. "Addicted women and crime." Criminology, 25, 359-397.
- Appel, C., Burnett, A., & Saizow, H. 1986. "Directory of criminal justice issues: the states." Washington, D.C.: Criminal Justice Statistics Association, Inc.
- Camp, G. M., & Camp, C. G. 1988. The corrections yearbook. South Salem, N.Y.: Criminal Justice Institute.
- Cappel, H., LeBlanc, A. E., & Rosenberg, M. 1985. "Alcohol, drugs, and assaultive crime: pharmacological considerations." In M. H. Ben-Aron, S. J. Hucker, & C. D. Webster (Eds.), Clinical criminology: the assessment and treatment of clinical behavior. Toronto, CAN: M & M Graphics.
- Carpenter, C. 1988. Kids, drugs, and crime. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Chaiken, M. R., & Johnson, B. A. 1988. Characteristics of different types of drug-involved offenses. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.
- Cicchetti, C. A., Archibald, M., & Adams, S. 1988. The new female offender. Boston, MA: Office of the Commissioner of Probation.
- Collins, J. J. 1986. "Relationships of problem drinking to individual offending sequences." In A. Blumstein (Ed.), Criminal careers and career criminals, vol. 2. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Faupel, C. E., & Klockars, C. B. 1987. "Drugs-crime corrections: elaborations from the life histories of hard-core addicts." Social problems, 34, 54-68.
- Graham, M. G. 1987. "Controlling drug abuse and crime." Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.
- Groper, B. A. 1985. Probing the links between drugs and crime. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.
- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. 1988. "Tracking arrestees' drug use." The compiler, 8, 1.
- Inciardi, J. A., & Potreger, A. E. 1986. "Drug use and crime among two cohorts of women narcotics users: an empirical assessment." Journal of drug issues, 16, 91-106.

- Kandel, D., Simcha-Fagen, O., & Davies, M. 1986. "Risk factors for delinquency and illicit drug use from adolescence to young adulthood." Journal of drug issues, 16, 67-90.
- Kozel, N., Adams, H. E. 1986. "Epidemiology of drug abuse: an overview." Science, 234.
- Massachusetts Department of Corrections. 1988a. "Court commitments to Massachusetts county facilities during 1987." Boston, MA: Publication No. 15529.
- Massachusetts Department of Corrections. 1988b. "1987 court commitments to the Massachusetts department of corrections." Boston, MA: Publication No. 15604.
- Miller, B. A., & Welte, J. W. 1986. "Comparisons of incarcerated offenders according to the use of alcohol and/or drugs prior to offense." Criminal justice and behavior, 13.
- Moore, M. 1988. Drug trafficking. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.
- National Institute of Justice. 1988. "Drug use forecasting." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.
- National Institute of Justice. 1987. "Drugs and crime." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.
- National Institute of Justice. 1981. Alcohol use and criminal behavior. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Office of the Commissioner of Probation. 1988. "Monthly report of probation activity." Boston, MA.
- Rand, M., DeBerry, M., Klaus, P., & Taylor, B. 1986. "The use of weapons in committing crimes." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Toborg, M. A., & Kirby, M. P. 1984. Drug use and pretrial crime in the District of Columbia. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.