

MFI

119223



119223

DRUG USE AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AMONG MIAMI YOUTH  
INVOLVED IN THE CRACK-COCAINE BUSINESS\*

James E. Rivers, Ph.D.  
Director  
Office of Substance Abuse Control  
Metro-Dade County

119223

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

Public Domain

National Institute on Drug Abuse

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

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

NCJRS

AUG 15 1989

July 1989

ACQUISITIONS

\* Based on data from research supported by HHS Grant # R01-DAO-1827 from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, James A. Inciardi, Principal Investigator.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	ii
Preface.....	v
Background.....	1
Description of the Sample.....	2
Other Drug Use.....	3
Age at Significant 'Firsts'.....	4
"Bad Highs" and Treatment.....	5
Sources and Means of Obtaining Crack.....	6
Criminal Activity in 12 Months Prior to Interview.....	7
"Crack Business Involvement".....	8
Arrests, Convictions and Incarcerations.....	11
Discussion.....	12
Appendix: Research Notes.....	17
Footnotes/References.....	20

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Drug use among youth is an increasingly serious problem. During the 1980's, evidence mounted that more youth were using illicit drugs, that the age at initiation is growing younger, and that drug-using youth are extensively involved in non-drug crimes.

Recent survey reports from high school seniors have been interpreted by some as indicative of declining illicit drug use among youth. Yet, knowledgeable observers have cautioned that national sample data such as these are not necessarily representative of patterns or trends in given cities or subpopulations.

Unfortunately, current, valid and reliable data from specific geographic areas and target populations is rare. Therefore, the author is indebted to James A. Inciardi, Professor and Director of the Division of Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware, for the data contained in this paper.

The data reported herein were collected on Miami streets during 1986-87, under research supported by Health and Human Services Grant # RO1-DAO-1827 from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, James A. Inciardi, Principal Investigator. However, all interpretations are the responsibility of the present author and do not necessarily represent the views or interpretations of Dr. Inciardi (unless directly quoted) or the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

It should be emphasized that these 254 youths are not, and were not intended to be, a random sample of Miami youth or even drug using Miami youth. The intent was not to estimate the incidence and prevalence of crack use on Miami streets, but rather to examine drug use patterns, involvement in the drug distribution business and other criminal behavior among youth known to be crack cocaine users. "The focus of the research was not crack per se, but rather the drug-taking and drug-seeking behaviors of Miami street youths who were heavily involved in both drug use and criminal behavior."(Inciardi, 1988).

Recruits were obtained via a standard "snowball sampling technique". This methodology basically involves beginning with referrals from a number of known users, dealers and/or treatment people and networking from initial interviewees to their referrals until the social network surrounding each user is exhausted. See the Appendix for notes on this technique and on measures taken to maximize the validity of self-reported drug use and criminal activity.

Of the 254 youths interviewed, 85% were males; 43% were white, 39% were black and 17% were Hispanic. They ranged in age from 12 to 17 (average age: 14.7); 78% were enrolled in school but 89% reported having been expelled/suspended at least once- 82% for drug use, 56% for drug dealing, and 35% for other crimes (average number of suspensions/expulsions: 2.8).

#### Drug Use

- o 87% were currently smoking marijuana daily.
- o 54% were currently using crack daily, 19% three plus times/week.
- o 28% were currently taking depressants daily, 23% 3+ times/week.
- o 7% were using alcohol daily, 36% three plus times per week.
- o 5% were snorting cocaine daily, 26% three plus times per week.
- o 3% were shooting heroin daily, 2% three plus times per week.
- o 90% had been using crack for more than one year, 63% two-plus.
- o The ages for a number of drug-using "firsts" range from "first tried alcohol" (7.1) to "first regular use of non-alcohol drug without an adult present" (11.0).
- o 40% reported having at least one "problematic" crack use episode and 8% had had three or more "bad highs"; 20% reported "overdose", 9% had gone to a hospital emergency room, but only 4% had entered drug abuse treatment.

#### Sources and Means of Obtaining Crack

- o Crack was obtained by these youth from a variety of sources and by various means. Dealer-sources often sold a number of other drugs, including heroin. The users also traded stolen goods, other drugs and sex for their crack as well as stealing it from dealers and others.

### Criminal Activity

- o The 254 interviewed youth reported committing an average of 880 criminal acts per youth during the past twelve months; 538 were "drug business" criminal acts; 205 were petty property crimes; 101 were vice offenses; and 37 were major felonies.
- o These crimes totaled over 223,000 individual offenses; 136,546 violations of drug laws; 51,979 petty property crimes (stolen goods, shoplifting, etc.); 25,511 vice offenses (mainly acts of prostitution); and 9,403 major felonies (burglaries, robberies, motor vehicle thefts, assaults).
- o All but 50 (20%) had some degree of involvement in the "crack business". Twenty (8%) had "minor" involvement; they steered customers, acted as lookouts, etc. and sold crack only to friends. The largest group (138 or 55%) were classified as "dealers" who were directly involved in retail crack sales with a major motivation being profit. At the top of the hierarchy were 46 (18%) who were labeled "dealer+" because, in addition to dealing, they also were involved in manufacturing and/or importation of crack.
- o The degree of criminal activity was directly related to level of involvement in the "crack business", especially for "drug business" crimes and major felonies, somewhat less strongly for petty property crimes.
- o All youth interviewed reported having engaged in "regular criminal activity" (150+ criminal acts per year or three or more acts per week) with the average age when this level of crime began being 11.7 years.

### Arrests, Convictions, and Incarcerations

- o 92% reported having been arrested, 71% said they had been convicted, and 51% reported having been incarcerated. The average age for the first occurrence of these three milestones was 11.1, 11.3, and 12.8 years, respectively.
- o 87% reported having been arrested for a criminal act committed in the prior twelve months; 68% for "drug business" crimes, 39% for petty property offenses, 16% for major felonies, and 5% for vice offenses.
- o The proportion of offenses (reportedly committed in the prior twelve months) which reportedly resulted in an arrest was 0.18% or about 1 arrest for every 555 offenses.

These data indicate that, among youth actively engaged in the "crack business", there is heavy usage of other drugs. Expulsions or suspensions from school are common for these youth. Many report experiencing "bad highs", sometimes severe enough to require emergency room services, but few have entered treatment. Their involvement in crime is astonishingly high and many are arrested, but the risks of arrest are not high enough to serve as a deterrent.

## PREFACE

Youthful drug use has been a growing concern during the decade of the 1980's. Evidence continues to accumulate that the age of initiation for illicit drug use has been creeping ever younger and that youthful drug users are involved in non-drug crime. By mid-decade, prevention and early intervention had begun to receive serious consideration and even some funding for programs.

Recently, the results of national high school seniors surveys have been interpreted by some as indicating that illicit drug use might even be declining, and that prevention efforts are responsible. Others, who were familiar with the relatively new phenomenon of crack cocaine, are more skeptical that drug use is lessening among all youth.

Researchers who have been analyzing indicator data from around the country for years know that usage trends for specific drugs change fairly rapidly, that drug preferences and patterns differ significantly among areas, cities, and even between the inner city and suburbs within the same city. Thus, an overall trend in national sample data may not be representative at all of the patterns or trends in given cities or subpopulations.

For example, Rouse (1988) reported that national surveys have shown low recent crack use rates within the general population. O'Malley, Johnson, and Bachman (1988) reported similar findings within samples of high school seniors, college students and young adults. Yet, anecdotal reports and official records data would seem to indicate quite the contrary for many major cities and subpopulations.

Therefore, there is a critical need for current, valid, and reliable data from specific geographic areas and target populations. Unfortunately, politicization, polarization, research methodological issues, and scarcities of both funding and appropriately experienced researchers have made the availability of such data a rarity in most communities, including Miami.

Therefore, the author is indebted to James A. Inciardi, Professor and Director of the Division of Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware, for the data contained in this paper. The data reported herein were collected on Miami streets during 1986-87, under research supported by Health and Human Services Grant # R01-DAO-1827 from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, James A. Inciardi, Principal Investigator.

Dr. Inciardi was formerly at the University of Miami and has continued to conduct and collaborate in local federally-funded drug abuse research projects. Jim is not only an internationally respected and much-published drug abuse researcher, he is a scholar of unusual generosity. He himself is currently analyzing and publishing from the data reported in this paper (see Inciardi, 1990a, 1990b), yet he made them available to the author to "use as you see fit", i.e., for community benefit.

Within this paper, all the tables shown are constructions by the author from data supplied by Dr. Inciardi. All interpretations are the responsibility of the present author and do not necessarily represent the views or interpretations of Dr. Inciardi (unless specifically quoted) or the National Institute on Drug Abuse.



## BACKGROUND

In late-1985, Dr. James Inciardi was designing a data collection instrument for a new National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-funded study of drug abuse and delinquency.<sup>1</sup> Even at this point, prior to the infamous "crack summer of 1986", he was aware of the presence of crack in Miami and added it to the drug history section of the interview schedule. "The focus of the research was not crack per se, but rather the drug-taking and drug-seeking behaviors of Miami street youths who were heavily involved in both drug use and criminal behavior." (Inciardi, 1988).

To obtain youths for the study, recruits were obtained via a standard "snowball sampling technique". This methodology basically involves beginning with referrals from a number of known users, dealers and/or treatment people and networking from initial interviewees to their referrals until the social network surrounding each user is exhausted. (The technique is fully explained, with entertaining quotes 'from the street' in Inciardi, 1986, pp. 119-122. Excerpts from this reference are included in the Appendix; they include pertinent information regarding the validity of self-reported drug use and criminal activity.)

Upon reviewing the responses of the first 308 interviewees in 1986, it was noted that almost all (96%) reported having used crack at least once and 87% reported periods of "regular use". Consequently, additional funds were sought from and granted by NIDA to expand the data collection efforts with additional questions regarding crack cocaine use. Supplementary crack data eventually were collected on 254 youths from October 1986 through November 1987. The analytical focus of these data has been the nexus of crack use and involvement in crack distribution.

It should be emphasized that these 254 youths are not, and were not intended to be, a random sample of Miami youth or even drug using Miami youth. The intent was not to estimate the incidence and prevalence of crack use on Miami streets, but rather to examine drug use patterns, involvement in the drug distribution business and other criminal behavior among youth known to be crack cocaine users.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Of the 254 youths interviewed, an overwhelming majority (85%) were males. Blacks were over-represented and Hispanics under-represented compared to their proportions in the local population; 39% were black, 43% were white, and 17% were Hispanic. They ranged in age from 12 to 17 years with an average (mean) of 14.7 (See Table 1).

Contrary to what one might expect, 78% of these youths reported that they were currently in school while 22% said they had dropped out. Being 'in school' was not a constant situation for most of them, however. A great majority (89%) reported having been expelled at least once for one reason or another - 82% for drug use, 56% for drug dealing and 35% for other crimes. Multiple expulsions or suspensions were the rule - the mean number of such disciplinary actions was 2.8. (See Table 1).

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC AND EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE  
(N = 254)

<u>DEMOGRAPHICS</u>			<u>EDUCATIONAL</u>	
	MALE	FEMALE		
			DROPPED OUT:	22.0%
			IN SCHOOL, GRADE:	
			5-8	38.6%
			9-10	31.1%
			11-12	8.3%
			AVG. SCHOOL	
			YEARS COMPLETED	8.0
BLACK	30.0%	9.4%	EXPULLED OR	
12-13	8.7%	3.9%	SUSPENDED FOR...	
14-15	9.1%	5.5%	(percent "yes")	
16-17	12.2%			
WHITE	37.7%	5.5%	...ANYTHING	89.4%
12-13	15.7%	3.9%	...DRUG USE	82.3%
14-15	16.9%	1.6%	...DEALING	56.3%
16-17	5.1%		...OTHER CRIME	35.3%
HISPANIC	17.4%			
14-15	8.3%			
16-17	9.1%			
SUBTOTAL	85.1%	14.9%		
MEAN AGE = 14.7			MEAN # OF TIMES	
			EXPULLED/SUSPENDED	2.8

OTHER DRUG USE

As shown in Table 2, crack was not the exclusive drug being used by these youth. The first two columns in this table refer to those who reported having ever used a particular type of drug and the mean age when they first tried it. The second and third columns refer to any period of "regular use", defined as "use three or more times per week" or "3+/wk". Note particularly columns five and six which refer to levels of "current use" (in the past 90 days).

Almost all (98%) of the youth currently were smoking marijuana regularly (11%) to daily (87%).

Current alcohol use was reported as 36% regularly and 7% daily. Surprisingly, 23% currently used some prescription-type depressant regularly and 28% used them daily.

Over one-quarter (26%) also reported current regular use of cocaine in powder form (cocaine hydrochloride), but fewer than 5% did so daily.

Slightly over 5% also reported current regular use of heroin.

Speed and hallucinogens had been tried by one half or more of these youth, but few (5% and 6%, respectively) had ever used them regularly and none were currently using them regularly. Cocoa paste had been tried by a few (11%) but none ever had used it regularly.

Crack was currently being "smoked" daily by 55%, regularly by 19%, (1-2 times per week by 15%, less frequently by 8% and no current use by 5%).

Duration of use was of interest; direct questions regarding duration were not asked, but a rough estimate was calculated by comparing the age at interview with the age when s/he reported first use. Using this method, 90% were estimated to have been using crack for more than a year and 63% two or more years. This is quite contrary to the anecdotal accounts that all crack users rapidly become dysfunctional.

TABLE 2. HISTORY AND CURRENT\* USE OF NINE DRUG TYPES\*\* FOR THE SAMPLE  
(N = 254)

	Ever Used		Regular Use		Current Use	
	%	Mean Age 1st Tried	%	Mean Age Began	Daily %	3+/wk %
MARIJUANA	100.0%	9.9	100.0%	11.0	87.0%	11.0%
CRACK	96.9%	12.8	84.3%	13.3	54.7%	18.6%
DEPRESSANTS	86.2%	12.3	51.6%	12.8	27.6%	23.2%
ALCOHOL	98.8%	7.1	61.4%	8.9	6.7%	35.8%
COCAINE POWDER	98.4%	11.6	94.5%	12.4	4.7%	26.4%
HEROIN	58.7%	12.1	19.7%	11.9	2.8%	2.4%
HALLUC/INHAL	74.8%	11.3	6.3%	10.6	----	----
SPEED	50.0%	12.4	4.7%	12.7	----	----
COCA PASTE	10.6%	14.8	----	----	----	----

No. of 7 drug types\*\* ever tried: Mean = 5.7

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF YEARS\*\*\* SINCE FIRST CRACK USE

LESS THAN 1	10.2%
1 OR 2	23.6%
2 OR 3	29.5%
3 TO 5	33.5%

\* Current use = during the past 90 days.

\*\* Types referred to are: alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, hallucinogens/  
inhalants, speed, prescription-type depressants, and heroin.

\*\*\* Estimate is based on ages: age at interview minus age when first  
tried crack. Less than one means the two ages were the same.

AGE AT SIGNIFICANT 'FIRSTS'

The ages at which this sample of youth first reached significant  
milestones in their substance abusing 'careers' are shown in Table 3.  
These data are clearly indicative of the need to strengthen our  
prevention/intervention efforts in the K-6 school grade levels.

TABLE 3. SUMMARY CHRONOLOGY OF DRUG USE MILESTONES FOR SAMPLE

	(mean age)
First tried alcohol	7.1
First time drunk	8.0
First drank alcohol without adult present	8.9
First regular use (3+/wk) of alcohol	8.9
First tried drug other than alcohol	9.9
First reg use (any subs) w/o adult present	10.1
First reg use (non-alc) w/o adult present	11.0

"BAD HIGHS" AND TREATMENT

As shown in Table 4, 40% of the youth interviewed reported having at least one episode of problems with crack use, and 8% said they had three or more 'bad highs. The situations were described to the interviewers and only very clear "overdose" situations are included as OD's; "adverse reactions" may thus include additional overdoses. Overdoses resulting in emergency room (ER) visits are also reported conservatively, since all such information was volunteered rather than be asked for specifically.

TABLE 4. BAD CRACK HIGHS AND TREATMENT CONTACTS  
(for the 246 who had ever tried crack)

NEVER	59.8%
=====	
YES	40.2%
=====	
ONCE OR TWICE	32.5%
3+ TIMES	7.7%
=====	
OD: WENT TO ER	8.9%
OD: OTHER	10.6%
ADVERSE REACTION	20.7%
=====	
ADMITTED TO TREATMENT	3.9%



Despite the reports that these youth had been using alcohol and other drugs for a number of years (see tables 2 and 3), and 40% had suffered at least one 'bad high', only 4% reported ever having been admitted to drug abuse treatment.

#### SOURCES AND MEANS OF OBTAINING CRACK

These youthful substance abusers obtain their crack from a variety of sources and through various means. The predominant sources, of course; are dealers (most of whom sell other drugs, such as heroin, or cocaine in powder form as well). A high percentage of the youth acquire crack for their own use by dealing themselves and taking their payment in crack. Note that over one half of the youth reported having stolen some of their crack from their dealer-sources, thereby placing themselves in jeopardy of "street justice".

TABLE 5. WAYS OF GETTING CRACK  
(for the 242 current crack users)

SOURCE	GOT 6+ TIMES BY..?	GOT ANY BY...?
DEALER WHO SOLD POWDER TOO	89%	97%
DEALING (AS PAY)	71%	88%
DEALER WHO SOLD HEROIN TOO	70%	85%
DEALER WHO SOLD CRACK ONLY	62%	74%
STOLEN GOODS	42%	85%
BUY FROM FRIEND, RELATIVE	14%	62%
SEX FOR IT	7%	14%
TRADING DRUGS	5%	26%
MAKING IT	5%	12%
GIFT, SHARED, ETC.	4%	87%
THEFT FROM OTHERS	2%	19%
THEFT FROM DEALER	2%	55%

The high percentage of youth who reported getting their own drugs through dealing as well as in return for stolen goods leads us to the next section of the report. This section focuses on the youth's involvement in the crack business and other criminal activity.

### CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

All the interviewed youth obviously had admitted to violations of law in the last 90 days or year by virtue of reporting that they had possessed or sold illicit drugs. As shown in Table 6 these youth also reported an astounding number of a variety of other criminal acts in the previous twelve months.

The data in Table 6 (and subsequent tables) were compiled by probing interview and memory recall techniques explained in the Appendix. Nevertheless, they are unverified self-reports. As such, they should be interpreted as estimates that add to our understanding of criminal involvement by youthful crack users rather than official criminal reports (which are subject to their own errors of omission and commission).

To aid in the comprehension of the raw data, Table 6 has been constructed to break down the numbers to average number per week (division by 52); average number per juvenile (division by 254); and average number per day (division by 365).

The first column in Table 6 is a simple tally of the number of criminal acts reported for the previous twelve months by the 254 youths interviewed. The category "Drug Business" represents 61% of the reported offenses; "Petty Property" crimes are 23% of the total; "Vice Offenses" represent 11% of all reported offenses; and "Major Felonies" constitute 4% of the reported total.

Each reader will find one or more categories of offenses of particular interest, so no attempt will be made here to engage in an exhaustive discussion of Table 6. However, it is important to remember that those interviewed were all under the age of eighteen (mean = 14.7 years). Further, it is noteworthy that only 15% were females. Both these facts are particularly pertinent when one contemplates the almost 22,000 reported acts of prostitution, especially so when one considers these data from the perspective of AIDS transmission risk-behavior.

TABLE 6. CRIMINAL ACTS COMMITTED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS  
BY TYPE OF CRIME

TYPE OF CRIME	TOTAL CRIM. ACTS COMMITTED	AVERAGE NUMBER		
		@ WEEK	@ JUV.	@ DAY
MAJOR FELONIES	9,403	181	37	26
Burglaries	6,284	121	25	17
Robberies	1,983	38	8	5
Mot. Veh. Thefts	944	18	4	3
Assaults	192	4	0.8	1
VICE OFFENSES	25,511	491	101	70
Prostitution	21,913	421	86	60
Procuring	3,598	69	14	10
PETTY PROPERTY	51,979	1,000	205	142
Stolen goods	25,493	490	100	70
Shoplifting	20,106	387	79	55
Other crimes	3,702	71	15	10
Other larcenies	2,678	52	11	7
DRUG BUSINESS	136,546	2,626	538	374
TOTAL OFFENSES	223,439	4,297	880	612

"CRACK BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT"

One of the questions asked was "Do you deal in crack or help a crack dealer or anything like that?". Elaboration of responses revealed that all but 50 (20%) had some type of involvement in the crack business. (However 86% of those with "no crack business involvement" had sold some other drug in the past 12 months).

Another 20 (8%) subjects were classified as having "minor" involvement; they either (1) had only indirect involvement (no direct sales, e.g., steered customers to one of Miami's 700+ known crack houses, acted as a lookout for a dealer, or (2) sold crack only to friends.

The largest group (138 or 55%) was labeled "dealer" and contained all who were involved directly in crack retail sales. "Dealer+" was

reserved for those 46 (18%) who also manufactured or imported the drug.

It is interesting to note that being a "dealer" or "dealer+" was not necessarily related to age; as shown in Table 7, in 4 of 7 cases where older-younger comparisons can be made, the younger youth had higher percentages who were "dealers" or "dealers+" than the next older group.

Also, there did not seem to be an unambiguous relationship between racial/ethnic status and being a "dealer" or "dealer+".

TABLE 7. CRACK BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT AS "DEALER"/"DEALER+"  
WITHIN DEMOGRAPHIC SUBSAMPLES,  
(% of each Age/Sex/Race Category)

SEX/AGE	" DEALER" OR "DEALER+"		
	BLACK % (n)	WHITE % (n)	HISPAN % (n)
M / 12-13	100% (22)	73% (40)	---
M / 14-15	87% (23)	61% (43)	62% (21)
M / 16-17	68% (31)	85% (13)	78% (23)
F / 12-13	60% (10)	60% (10)	---
F / 14-15	79% (14)	25% ( 4)	---
F / 16-17	---	---	---

Table 8, which is shown on the following page, represents the same data as Table 6, but provides some additional perspectives.

First, the data are presented separately by level of involvement in the crack business (None, Minor, Dealer and Dealer+). The "# DONE" rows show the reported criminal acts committed by each category of "crack business involvement" and the last column shows the totals (as reported in Table 6).

Second, the "INVOLVED N" and "INVOLVED %" rows show the number and percentage of each category and the total sample which reported committing any such acts in the previous twelve months.

Third, by knowing how many youth actually reported involvement in given criminal activity, the average number of criminal acts for those who

TABLE 8. SUMMARY OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY BY CRACK BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

		NONE (50)	MINOR (20)	DEALER (138)	DEALER+ (46)	TOTAL (254)
MAJOR FELONIES	INVOLVED N	22	13	121	44	200
	INVOLVED %	44.0	65.0	87.7	95.7	78.7
	# DONE	444	164	5,857	2,938	9,403
	AVG/YR INV	20	13	48	67	47
	AVG/YR CAT	9	8	42	64	37
=====						
BURGLARIES	INVOLVED N	12	5	97	42	156
	INVOLVED %	24.0	25.0	70.3	91.3	61.4
	# DONE	296	109	3,952	1,927	6,284
	AVG/YR INV	25	22	41	46	40
	AVG/YR CAT	6	5	29	42	25
ROBBERIES	INVOLVED N	6	8	92	34	140
	INVOLVED %	12.0	40.0	66.7	73.9	55.1
	# DONE	41	45	1,278	619	1,983
	AVG/YR INV	7	6	14	18	14
	AVG/YR CAT	1	2	9	13	8
ASSAULTS	INVOLVED N	2	0	11	8	21
	INVOLVED %	4.0	0.0	8.0	17.4	8.3
	# DONE	24	0	61	107	192
	AVG/YR INV	12	0	6	13	9
	AVG/YR CAT	0	0	0	2	1
MOT. VEH. THEFTS	INVOLVED N	15	7	79	34	135
	INVOLVED %	30.0	35.0	57.2	73.9	53.1
	# DONE	83	10	566	285	944
	AVG/YR INV	6	1	7	8	7
	AVG/YR CAT	2	1	4	6	4
=====						
PETTY PROPERTY	INVOLVED N	47	19	138	46	250
	INVOLVED %	94.0	95.0	100.0	100.0	98.4
	# DONE	5,479	3,937	32,360	10,203	51,979
	AVG/YR INV	117	207	234	222	208
	AVG/YR CAT	110	197	234	222	205
=====						
VICE OFFENSES	INVOLVED N	9	1	46	8	64
	INVOLVED %	18.0	5.0	33.3	17.4	25.2
	# DONE	3,115	2,020	18,006	2,370	25,511
	AVG/YR INV	346	2,020	395	296	401
	AVG/YR CAT	62	101	130	52	100
=====						
DRUG BUSINESS	INVOLVED N	43	20	138	46	247
	INVOLVED %	86.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.2
	# DONE	9,785	6,630	70,365	49,766	136,546
	AVG/YR INV	228	332	510	1,082	553
	AVG/YR CAT	196	332	510	1,082	538



committed any such acts were calculated and reported in the row entitled "AVG/YR INV". The comparison row, "AVG/YR CAT", shows the average number of given criminal acts for the entire crack business involvement category.

Note the direct positive relationship between the level of crack business involvement and the commission of major felonies.

#### ARRESTS, CONVICTIONS AND INCARCERATIONS

As shown in Tables 6 and 8, these crack-involved youth reported extensive involvement in both drug and non-drug crime. Had they ever been apprehended, convicted, or incarcerated? for their crimes? For most, the answer was "yes".

As shown in Table 9 below, 92% reported having been arrested at some point in their young lives and 71% reported having been convicted at least once. Just over one-half (51%) reported that they also had been incarcerated for criminal acts.

The reader is reminded that these youths average 14.7 years of age. As shown in Table 9, the average age when they committed their first criminal act was 10.3 years and they were engaged regularly in criminal activity before the age of twelve. By age thirteen, over one-half had been behind bars.

TABLE 9. CRIMINAL HISTORY MILESTONES FOR THE SAMPLE

	MEAN AGE	% INVOLVED
FIRST... *		
CRIME	10.3	100.0%
ARREST	11.1	91.7%
CONVICTION	11.3	70.5%
REG CRIM ACTY*	11.7	100.0%
INCARCERATION	12.8	50.8%

\* REG CRIM ACTY (regular criminal activity) = 3+ times per week or 150+ times per year

On the other hand, the odds against criminal justice consequences must seem pretty good to these youth. As shown in Table 10 (next page), the percentage who reported having been arrested for particular types of crime

ranged from 5% for vice offenses to 68% for drug law violations. But the chances of being apprehended for the commission of a given criminal act are calculated to be 1 in 555 or 0.18%, based upon the reports of these youth.

TABLE 10. APPREHENSION RATES (PER OFFENDER AND CRIMINAL OFFENSES)  
BY TYPE OF CRIME

	% DOING ANY	% ARRESTED FOR	OFFENSES RESULTING IN ARREST	
			%	N
MAJOR FELONIES	78.7%	16.1%	0.50%	47
PETTY PROPERTY	98.4%	39.0%	0.20%	105
VICE OFFENSES	25.2%	5.1%	0.08%	21
DRUG BUSINESS	97.2%	68.1%	0.17%	232
45+ OFFENSES	100.0%			
ANY OFFENSE		87.4%		
ALL OFFENSES			0.18%	405

Clearly, law enforcement efforts alone cannot be considered an effective deterrent to either drug use, drug law violations or other crime among these "crack business" youth on the streets of Miami.

#### DISCUSSION

There will be some who will discount these data simply as the exaggerations of street wise youth. Obviously, some of the respondents will have over-reported, but others undoubtedly under-reported; these errors typically "average out" when the sample size is sufficiently large. Further, numerous studies have shown that most respondents, given the appropriate safeguards against negative consequences, tend to tell the truth to the best of their ability. The interviewers in this study used such safeguards and employed tested techniques to help the respondents recall activities as accurately as they could. (The issue of the validity of self-reports of drug use and criminal activity are discussed in the Appendix.)

Others will focus on the sampling technique and protest that these youth are not representative of crack-using young people in the Miami area. As explained, by design, most of the youth were identified by current crack users themselves. The intent was not to conduct an incidence/prevalence study, but to examine 'crack business' and other drug and crime involvement among youth who were crack users.

Inciardi (1990a) concludes "Recent media reports appear to be correct in assessing youthful involvement in the crack business as a significant crime trend in some locales. If anything, media reports may underestimate its importance since (1) the crack trade is related to not only heavier crack use but also more use of other drugs, (2) young crack dealers commonly violate not merely drug laws but also those protecting persons and property, and (3) the crack business appears criminogenic in ways that go beyond any potential it may have as a lure into crime."

..."That is, one major problem with the crack trade is that it facilitates crack addiction. Every single youth interviewed for this study who was involved in the crack business to even a minor degree was a crack user; of the crack dealers, over 70% used crack every day while under 15% used it less than regularly. Furthermore, even though greater crack trade participation meant more crack earned directly, as payment for drug sales, it also meant heavier use patterns, so that crack dealers were paying an average of over \$8,000 a year to purchase crack for personal use. The fit to the classic crime-drug interactive cycle seems clear: crack dealing finances crack use, crack use encourages more crack use, and more crack use requires more profit-making crime of all sorts to support an ever growing addictive use pattern."

The data clearly show that the nature of crack use is highly associated with involvement in the 'crack cocaine business'. This, in itself, makes the distinction between 'users' and 'dealers' a most difficult task for those in the juvenile/criminal justice system must classify offenders for the purpose of imposing sanctions.

The data also show that crack cocaine use and involvement in the 'crack business' are not phenomena associated with one particular racial/ethnic group (when comparisons are made within age and gender groups).

Many will be surprised to see that 78% of these crack-using/dealing youth were nominally enrolled in school. Their reports of extensive expulsions/suspensions for drug use, dealing and other crimes point out the degree to which schools must be integrally involved in solutions.

Crack cocaine was the focus of the research, but the results graphically depict the extent and variety of other serious drug use. This presents additional problems when one considers the multiple effects of speed, heroin, alcohol, marijuana and depressants on the youths' behavior and health.

It is not directly apparent from the data, but the use of multiple drugs could be a factor in the high (40%) proportion of youth who reported 'bad crack highs'. Given this proportion in a group averaging under fifteen years of age, it is obvious that these youth are putting themselves in extreme danger of damaging their health. As they grow older, they will become increasingly 'at risk' themselves as well as risks to other citizens through their impaired driving and their involvement in crimes against persons.

Health risks are particularly a concern given the females in this study who reported such high levels of prostitution. Inciardi (1990b) reports that 27 of the 38 females in this study admitted to frequently trading sex for crack in the prior twelve months. Eleven reported doing so infrequently (fewer than 6 occasions in the past year), but still reported 6,850 acts of prostitution. Others among the 27 reported trading sex for crack on hundreds of occasions.

Inciardi (1990b) states "...from a public health point of view, it appears that the potential risk for infection with HIV within this population is extremely high. These 27 youths had engaged in some 19,055 acts of prostitution in the 1-year period prior to interview.

Moreover, they had been prostitutes an average of 5 years. If their sexual behaviors are similar to those of other drug users studied in Miami and elsewhere, it is unlikely that the use of condoms was common. Moreover, ethnographic observations and interviews suggested that many of these sex partners were intravenous cocaine and/or heroin users. And too, more than half of these females were IV heroin users. As such, they were at multiple risk for HIV infection."

The average ages at which substances were first used (7.1 years) and first used regularly (10.1 years) provide stark evidence for the critical need to begin our prevention efforts at the elementary school level. Keeping in mind that the average age at interview was 14.7 years, it also underscores the need for active interventions at the middle or junior high school level.

The data from this study also paints an alarming picture of the extent of involvement by crack users in non-drug crime. Even if one allows for some exaggeration, it is clear that a tremendous amount of felony, vice and petty property crime is committed by crack using youth. While it is un-arguable that these youth would have committed some of these criminal acts in the absence of crack, it is equally undeniable that non-drug crime is increased by crack cocaine use.

These youth report that they are not untouched by the criminal justice system; 92% reported having been arrested at some point (87% in the prior twelve months). This is a much higher percentage than that typical of young adult heroin users in street studies ten or twenty years ago. Further, 71% said they had been convicted, 51% incarcerated. Clearly, these drug-using youths are being located, but forced intervention to break the cycle of this addiction pattern is not occurring: only 4% reported ever having received drug abuse treatment.

"But an additional criminogenic aspect of the crack business-- and another reason why compulsory intervention is required-- is the crack trade's strong attractiveness as a lifestyle to the youths involved in it. This fascination is reminiscent of descriptions applied some years



ago to the heroin-user subculture: the joys of hustling and "taking care of business", the thrills of a "cops and robbers" street life.

But interviews with young crack dealers give the impression that the crack trade is, for them, not only all this but much more. Demand for crack makes dealing it remarkably easy and profitable--apparently much more so than selling heroin used to be. Further, crack business networks permit upward mobility and therefore a feeling of achievement; movement up the ranks is rare for heroin dealers. A likely additional factor is that the rewards for crack dealing include a drug that makes its users feel not merely unworried but omnipotent. Finally, the sheer youth of these young crack dealers means that dangers--street violence, arrest, overdose and potential death--are perceived with particularly giddy enthusiasm as challenges to be outwitted and overcome. Participation in the crack trade, in short, provides its own kind of intoxication for the youths entangled in it." (Inciardi, 1990a).

In summary, this study suggests that:

- a) criminal acts by drug using youthful offenders are far more extensive than official records will indicate;
- b) efforts to identify substance abuse among arrested juveniles should be intensified;
- c) fear of arrest/conviction/incarceration is not a strong deterrent for crack using/dealing youth;
- d) communications between schools and juvenile courts should be increased;
- e) innovative interventions targeting youthful offenders, including substance abuse treatment services, must be implemented and/or expanded.

These steps are needed because the 254 youth in this study are only a sample...

## APPENDIX

RESEARCH NOTES"Snowball" Sampling Technique

Locating and interviewing people on the street who are active in the worlds of both drug use and crime is not as difficult as it might seem for those who have built up rapport, credibility and trust with users, dealers, and treatment people who can be used as contacts. Dr. Inciardi, an investigator who was conducted drug studies in both Miami and New York for a period of years, had developed a number of such contacts. These individuals represent "starting points" for research interviewers who went to the street with their contacts who were familiar with the local street scene and introduced them to an active drug user.

During or after each interview, at a time when the rapport between interviewer and respondent was felt to be at its highest level, each respondent was asked to identify other drug users with whom he or she was acquainted. These individuals, in turn, were located and interviewed, and the process was repeated until the social network surrounding each user was exhausted. As described, the method restricted the pool of users interviewed to those who were currently active in the street subculture. In addition, it eliminated former users as well as those who were only peripheral to the mainstream community of street drug users. Although the plan did not guarantee a totally unbiased sample, the use of several "starting points" within the same locale eliminated the problem of drawing all respondents from only one social network.

Safeguards

It was explained to each user that it was a research project, that names would not be collected, that the identity of the respondents would be

kept confidential, and that none of the information would be turned over to law-enforcement authorities. The "street-wise" contact making the introduction emphasized to the user/interviewee that harassment, game-playing or harm to the interviewer would be frowned upon.

There were added safeguards. First, in research of this type, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the National Institute on Drug Abuse provide investigators with a grant of confidentiality. The grant is a signed document that guarantees that the investigator cannot be forced to divulge the identity of this or other informants to any law-enforcement authority, court, or grand jury. All informants were made aware of the grant and were given copies if they requested it. Second, to eliminate any hesitation by informants, questions about their criminal activities were asked in a way that would be deemed no more than "hearsay" in a court of law. Rather, it was a matter of asking how many burglaries or how many robberies the informant had committed during the last year. Third, questions about any rapes or homicides committed were simply not asked or recorded (although a number of the informants volunteered such information).

#### Validity of Self-Reports: Drug Use

A major question that might be posed regarding this type of research related to the validity of the information gathered. Do drug users tend to distort or cover up the less desirable aspects of their lives on the street? The answer to this question is no! A variety of controlled studies have been undertaken in this behalf over the years. Addict self-reports of arrests have been compared with official records; information on drug use has been compared with urinalysis results; and intraquestionnaire safeguards and interview-reinterview procedures have been tested. In all instances, it would appear that drug users tend to tell the truth to the best of their ability.

This latter phrase, "to the best of their ability," has been emphasized

because in a variety of situations drug-using criminals simply cannot accurately remember what they may have been doing. Researchers in the drug field have long since realized the futility of collecting useful data on drug users' daily drug intake. Most regular illicit drug users on the streets use as much as they can get their hands on. Depending on their funds, their ability to "score," and the availability of drugs, some days they get a lot, some days just a little, and on a few occasions none at all. These kinds of fluctuations, combined with the fact that users do not maintain a daily record of their drug intake, tend to make accurate recall difficult. Moreover, drug users, depending on whom they are talking to, may deliberately lie about drug intake.

As such, should a drug user say that he or she uses six times a day or has a \$300-a-day habit, the information is probably incorrect. A more reliable indicator is simply to determine whether use is daily, several times a week, or once a week.

#### Validity of Self-Reports: Criminal Activity

A second problem is accurately recalling criminal activity, particularly for those who commit crimes with great frequency. To cite an example, when a Miami heroin user was asked how many burglaries he had committed during the previous 12 months, his response was: "Oh man, it must have been thousands." To a researcher such answer is of absolutely no empirical value. To aid the user in providing a more accurate estimate, the interviewer helped him to reconstruct his life events and activities for the preceding year.

Several dates were found to be prominent in his mind - his birthday, Christmas, April 17 when his mother died, July 15 when he was stabbed in a fight with a connection, April 19 when he retaliated and shot his connection to death, December 14 when he was arrested for possession of heroin, and other dates. For each he was asked what he did on those dates, and then the week before and the week after. In time, a clear picture of his criminality was put together, and what was originally "thousands" of burglaries was only 40 to 50.

FOOTNOTES

1 This research was funded by Grant # 1-RO1-DOA-1827 from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

REFERENCES

Inciardi, J.A. The War on Drugs: Heroin, Cocaine, Crime and Public Policy. Palo Alto, California: 119-122, Mayfield, 1986.

Inciardi, J.A. Crack-Cocaine in Miami, NIDA Technical Review Meeting on THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF COCAINE USE AND ABUSE, Rockville, Maryland, May 3-4, 1988.

Inciardi, J.A. Kids, Crack and Crime, in Journal of Drug Issues, (forthcoming, 1990a).

Inciardi, J.A. Trading Sex for Crack Among Juvenile Drug Users: A Research Note, in Contemporary Drug Problems, (forthcoming, 1990b).

Rouse, Beatrice NIDA Technical Review Meeting on THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF COCAINE USE AND ABUSE, Rockville, Maryland, May 3-4, 1988.

O'Malley, Johnston, and Bachman, NIDA Technical Review Meeting on THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF COCAINE USE AND ABUSE, Rockville, Maryland, May 3-4, 1988.