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Executive Summary

When the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) established the Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program in 1988, it was the first time an objective drug testing method would be routinely used to assess the validity of self-reported drug use among people charged with crime. DUF demonstrated that it is possible to conduct research on drug use among arrestees in the jail setting, and for many years the program provided information to policymakers and practitioners about drug use in the at-risk population of arrestees.

Evaluations of DUF led NIJ to decide to strengthen the program by making the sampling procedure more scientifically sound, standardizing data collection, and instituting other changes. After several years of development and testing, the restructured program was fully implemented in 2000 as Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM). Probability-based sampling was adopted, the interview instrument (questionnaire) was enhanced to cover several new areas of drug use and related behavior, and the number of sites was increased.

The 2000 annual report reflects these changes. That means it departs from previous years' reports in some ways. As in the past, it presents information about arrestees' drug use, both overall and site by site. This year the report also features a series of chapters that examine in depth some of the new topics that are now a routine part of the questionnaire. The emphasis is on adult male arrestees, because probability-based sampling is currently used only for this population. As in the past, the report includes a summary table of data from each site, but this year the tables also show risk for drug and alcohol dependence,

admissions to treatment, and drug market participation. Another series of essays documents the new ADAM method and explores possible new ways to apply it.

The "audiences" for ADAM data are the same as in the past. For policymakers, there is a broad overview of drug use among the population at risk for crime. For practitioners in the justice system who deal day-to-day with drug use and related crime, ADAM offers information useful for planning control strategies. Practitioners in the ADAM sites can compare the drug-use profile of their jurisdiction with that of other sites. For researchers, the ADAM data offer myriad possibilities for investigating the drug-crime link.

Overall findings and ADAM redesign

In 2000, drug use continued to be common among adult male arrestees, as in previous years. The ADAM redesign strengthens the reliability of the findings and makes it possible to explore new areas of drug use and related behavior.

- In half the 35 ADAM sites, urinalysis indicated that 64 percent or more of adult male arrestees had recently used at least one of five drugs: cocaine (undistinguished between crack and powder), marijuana, opiates, methamphetamine, or PCP (phenylcyclidine). Marijuana was the drug most commonly used, followed by cocaine.
- The transition from DUF to ADAM in 2000 completed a major redesign of the program. One component of the redesign included enhancing the data collection instrument (the interview questionnaire)

to ask about alcohol use, risk for dependence on drugs and alcohol, substance abuse treatment, and drug market participation, including how and where drugs are obtained. The number of sites in the ADAM program increased from 23 to 35 (including two “affiliated” sites¹). Arguably the most important change was the adoption, at all ADAM sites, of probability-based sampling for selecting adult male arrestees.

Drug dependence and treatment

As part of the redesigned program, adult male arrestees’ risk for dependence on drugs is measured, and they are asked about their experiences with treatment.

- Between about one-fourth and one-half of all adult male arrestees in the ADAM sites were found to have been at risk for dependence on drugs.
- Although a large percentage of adult male arrestees had not only used drugs but also were at risk for drug dependence, few had received treatment. Among the ADAM sites, the range in the proportions who said they were treated on an inpatient basis in the year before their arrest for either drugs or alcohol was 4 percent to 17 percent, and the range of those who had received outpatient treatment was 2 percent to 15 percent.
- With few exceptions, adult male arrestees who were treated for drug or alcohol use in the year before their arrest were more likely than not to have no health insurance.

Alcohol use and alcohol dependence

Alcohol abuse can be associated with behavioral problems, including crime. ADAM asks adult male arrestees about their use of alcohol and measures their risk for dependence on it.

- Adult male arrestees drank heavily. Among the sites, the proportions who had five or more drinks on at least one occasion in the month before their arrest ranged from a low of 35 percent to a high

of 70 percent. Drinking at the level defined as “heaviest” was not uncommon: The proportions who had five or more drinks on one occasion on 13 or more days in the month before their arrest ranged from 10 percent to 24 percent.

- Risk for alcohol dependence was measured by a special set of questions, or “screen.” By this measure, more than four in five of the “heaviest” drinkers were at risk. In half the sites, 85 percent or more were at risk, with the range among the sites 67 percent to 91 percent.
- The heaviest drinkers were also likely to have used illicit drugs. On average, 71 percent of them had used at least one drug in the month before their arrest.

Drug markets

The ADAM redesign makes it possible to obtain information about drug markets from a large number of buyers at the local level in many sites nationwide. Adult male arrestees were asked about the extent of their participation in drug markets, how and where they acquired drugs, what difficulties they encountered trying to do so, how often they obtained drugs, and the dollar value of the drugs.

- In the 23 sites analyzed,² the market for marijuana was the largest, as measured by percentage of adult male arrestees who participated. Much smaller percentages participated in the markets for crack cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine.
- Many arrestees participated in one or more drug markets. The majority reported little difficulty completing a drug transaction, saying such obstacles as police activity and lack of drug availability were not a problem.
- Fairly large proportions of adult male arrestees did not rely solely on cash to obtain drugs, whether marijuana, crack cocaine, or powder cocaine. These non-cash exchanges most commonly took place at a social setting or at work. In

many sites, when arrestees paid cash for marijuana, the most common method of obtaining it was by using a phone or pager, and for crack cocaine it was by approaching a dealer in a public place.

- In four high-volume sites (Miami, Phoenix, Seattle, and Tucson), the number of transactions in the crack market was much larger than in the powder cocaine and marijuana markets. In these sites, the estimated size (measured in dollars) of the crack cocaine market in a 30-day period was 2 to 10 times larger than the size of the powder cocaine and marijuana markets. The range among these sites in the market size of crack cocaine was about \$226,000 to \$1,400,000.

Drug use among adult female arrestees

Although only about one in five people arrested in the United States is a woman, and the proportion of women who commit drug offenses is even smaller, the number of women charged with drug offenses is not inconsequential. Research on women's involvement in drugs has been relatively limited, but the ADAM redesign offers the opportunity to expand research on their drug use and drug-related behavior.³

- As in previous years, urinalysis revealed that a large percentage of women arrestees had used drugs. Cocaine was the drug for which the proportion testing positive was highest, with marijuana coming in second.
- Of the women arrestees who used drugs or alcohol, about half were found at risk for drug dependence.
- Only very small percentages of women arrestees had been treated for drug or alcohol use the year before their arrest. The average among the sites was 11 percent.

Drug use among juvenile detainees

Data on drug use were collected from male and female juvenile detainees in 8 of the 35 ADAM sites (Birmingham, Denver, Los

Angeles, Phoenix, Portland, San Antonio, San Diego, and Tucson). Data were also gathered in Cleveland, but for juvenile male detainees only. The samples were not probability-based, nor were the interviews conducted with the expanded ADAM questionnaire.⁴

- Juveniles were more likely to test positive by urinalysis for marijuana than any other drug.
- Cocaine came in a distant second; the percentages testing positive for methamphetamine were also low.

Implementing the new ADAM study design at the local level

Implementing the new, probability-based ADAM study design involved adopting standardized data collection procedures among 35 sites. This entailed redefining the catchment areas (the area from which arrestees are drawn to participate in the program) to make them uniform among the sites, and designing sampling plans at the county level and the level of each facility to ensure that all arrestees have some probability of being included among those participating in the program.

- In DUF, the definition of the catchment area varied from site to site, and often consisted of a single jail. In ADAM the catchment area was redefined as the county for all sites.
- Data collection was redesigned to account for variations among the sites in the structure and size of local criminal justice systems and processes. The county-level sampling model adopted was flexible enough to be applied to the specific counties/sites.
- The transition from DUF to ADAM showed that standardized protocols and probability-based sampling can be implemented in the dynamic environment of the jail.
- Within one year of introducing the new sampling method, almost all the ADAM sites had successfully implemented it. That means they can now develop reliable

prevalence estimates for a variety of drug-related issues, including the proportions of arrestees who test positive for drugs and those who need treatment.

“Calendaring” in ADAM: examining annual patterns of drug use and related behavior

A new feature in the ADAM interview instrument in 2000 is “calendaring,” which permits analysis of drug use and related behavior for the period of a full year. Through memory aids built into the questionnaire, arrestees’ behavior is examined month by month for the entire 12-month period of the survey. The technique can increase accuracy in arrestees’ recall of drug use and related behavior.

- Data from selected sites, when broken down by different periods of time in the year, demonstrated that recent drug use is not always a good measure of longer-term, more typical use.
- The annual rates of arrest for individual arrestees can vary by type of drug used.
- The ADAM redesign permits the data to be “crosswalked” with other annually conducted national surveys of drug use and related behavior. Analysis indicates that some of these surveys do not cover the subpopulation reached by ADAM.

- The proportions of arrestees who used heroin and cocaine at least 15 days a month in every month of the year were higher than the proportions who used them less frequently (for example 1 to 7 days a month in each month).

Estimating hardcore drug use in the community

ADAM is developing a method that can be used to estimate the prevalence of hardcore drug use in the sites. Made possible by the adoption of probability-based sampling, the method infers prevalence in the community from the count of adult male hardcore users who are arrested and booked at the ADAM sites. Arrest rates are therefore key to the calculations.

- Preliminary estimates indicate that, in most ADAM sites, there are 750 arrests and bookings a year for every 1,000 hardcore drug users and that the number of hardcore users ranges from just over 1,500 (Minneapolis) to almost 126,000 (New York). For sites where sampling takes place in several jail facilities, the numbers are likely underrepresentations, by perhaps as much as half.
- Once the method has been refined, the ADAM sites should be able to use it to make their own calculations.

NOTES

1. ADAM’s two affiliated sites—so called because they are funded by sources other than NIJ—are Charlotte/Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and Albany/New York Capital Area.
2. This analysis was confined to the 23 sites where the markets for all three heavily used drugs—marijuana, crack cocaine, and powder cocaine—were most active.
3. Because the number of women arrested is much lower than the number of men, fewer are available for participation in ADAM. Some ADAM sites do not include women arrestees. The expanded ADAM questionnaire was used to interview the women arrestees, but probability-based sampling does not yet include them.
4. Juvenile detainees are interviewed with the DUF instrument (questionnaire), but the program is considering designing a new interview instrument for them, to collect information about drug treatment and participation in drug markets.