

A Weekly FAX From the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland At College Park *

Widespread Drug Use Found in New York City's Homeless Shelters

For the first time, researchers have gone into shelters in New York City to obtain voluntary and anonymous urine specimens from residents. Around two thirds (65%) of the residents in single shelters tested positive for a drug, twice the rate found in family shelters. Much more drug use was detected by the drug tests than by the anonymous interview survey of the same population. The rates of drug use in the shelter population rival those found in tested arrestees in Manhattan. Policy makers should consider establishing drug testing and treatment programs for shelter residents in large cities across the country.

Drug Test Results for Residents of 15 Family and Single Shelters in New York City*

	Residents in Family Shelters (N=495)	Residents in Single Shelters (N=525)
Positive for:		
Cocaine	15%	54%
Marijuana	10%	20%
Alcohol	3%	7%
Positive for:		
Any Drug	29%	65%
Positive for:		
Two or More Drugs	5%	19%

* Persons were tested in January, 1992 for cocaine, marijuana, alcohol, amphetamines, opiates, and phencylidine.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from "The Way Home: A New Directory in Social Policy" --- a report of the New York City Commission on the Homeless. February 1992.

The CESAR BOARD, an electronic bulletin board for substance abuse information can be accessed with a computer and a modem by calling 301-403-8343 or 1-800-842-3727 (in Maryland)

******* CESAR SPEAKER SERIES*******

Dr. Ethan Nadelmann will be lecturing on "Drug Prohibition and Its Alternatives"
Stamp Union Room 2111, University of Maryland at College Park
April 21, 1992 at three o'clock p.m. Open to the public.

For further information about today's topic or to be placed on the distribution list, please call CESAR at 301-403-8329

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