

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

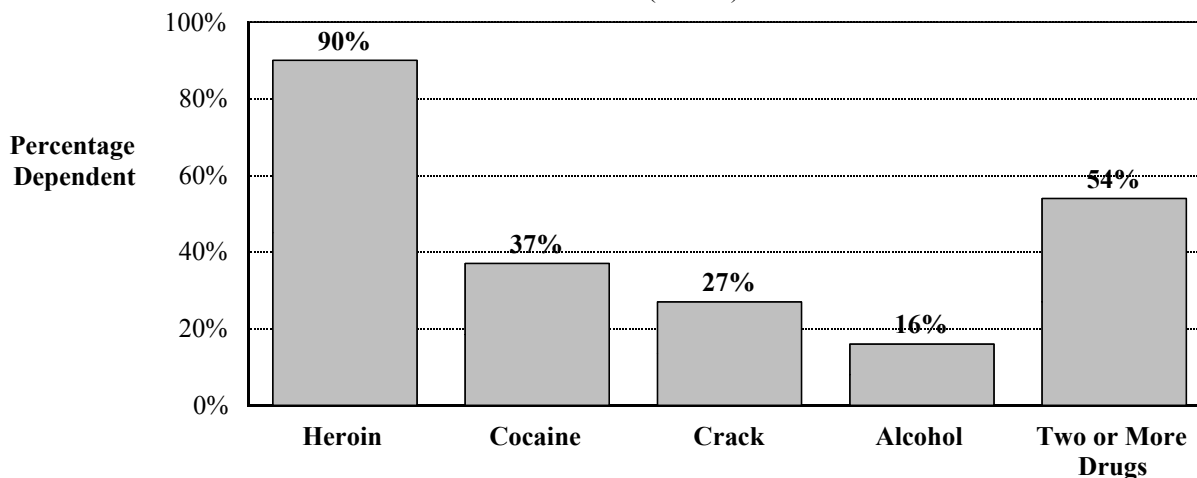
University of Maryland, College Park

Baltimore Study Finds Most Street-Recruited New Injection Drug Users Are Dependent on Heroin; Around One-Third Dependent on Either Cocaine or Crack

Ninety percent of new injection drug users (IDUs) are dependent on heroin, according to a community study of more than 200 IDUs from the Baltimore, Maryland, area who had first injected drugs less than five years prior to being studied. Around one-third of the IDUs were dependent on either cocaine (37%) or crack (27%) and 16% were alcohol dependent. Furthermore, over one-half (54%) of the IDUs were dependent on two or more substances. Despite these high rates of dependence, only 10% of these street-recruited IDUs reported being currently involved in any type of drug treatment. The authors suggest that “estimating the number of drug-dependent IDUs who are dwelling in a community or living ‘on the street’ is important for allocating drug treatment services” (p. 1100).

Percentage of New Injection Drug Users (Age 15-30) Dependent on Drugs, Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999

(N=226)



NOTES: Subjects were recruited from the community using flyers distributed in drug-trafficking neighborhoods, word of mouth, and community outreach services. Injection status was verified by the presence of injection stigmata (scar tissue or “tracks”) and through a series of questions identifying the plausibility of subject’s experience with injected drugs. Dependence was measured using 10 questions from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse that correspond with DSM-IV criteria for dependence.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Arria A., Fuller C., Strathdee, S.A., Latkin, C., Vlahov, D. “Drug Dependence Among Young Recently Initiated Injection Drug Users,” *Journal of Drug Issues* 32(4):1089-1102, 2002. For more information, contact Amelia Arria at aarria@cesar.umd.edu.

• 301-405-9770 (voice) • 301-403-8342 (fax) • CESAR@cesar.umd.edu • www.cesar.umd.edu •

CESAR FAX is supported by VOIT 1996-1002, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention. CESAR FAX may be copied without permission. Please cite CESAR as the source.