

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

NIJ Ending Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (ADAM): Experts Agree That Program's Demise Is A "Huge Loss"

*"ADAM should go back to the lean system it was when it was real time and responsive—
before scientific purists, attempting to improve it, made it very expensive and slow."*

—Dr. Robert DuPont, first Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse

A January 29, 2004, press release from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), U.S. Department of Justice (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pdf/adam_letter.pdf) announced the demise of the \$8.4 million ADAM program, citing the "significant reduction in the congressional appropriation to NIJ in fiscal year 2004 for social science research." NIJ hopes to replace the ADAM program with a data collection system to provide a national estimate of drug use among arrestees, contingent on the availability of future funding.

The ending of the program surprised many experts and ADAM site directors have expressed frustration over the lack of communication regarding the decision. In an effort to determine the impact of ADAM's demise, CESAR staff contacted experts in the substance abuse and criminal justice fields. These persons agreed that very important policy information about drug trends will be lost without ADAM.

- "ADAM showed that different drugs were important in different places and provided indication of trends and diffusion across the country. Methamphetamine stayed in the West for a long time before it began moving eastward. That information would not be available if there was only a single national drug abuse rate. It is utterly astonishing that we are willing to spend \$10 billion a year incarcerating drug offenders and not willing to spend \$8 million for ADAM to measure local features of drug abuse and its connection with crime."

—Professor Alfred Blumstein, Carnegie Mellon University

- "We have lost an ability to track national trends such as the rise and fall of crack use and the entrenched nature of heroin markets." In addition, "this is a real loss for local communities that are trying to develop a better understanding of the changing patterns in drug use on the streets and in their homes."

—Jeremy Travis, Senior Fellow, Urban Institute and former NIJ Director

- "I wonder if perhaps we could "get a pretty good idea [of drug trends] with something less costly. Maybe five or six places are enough."

**—Dr. Jerome Jaffe, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, University of Maryland
School of Medicine**

ADAM's predecessor, the Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program, was launched by NIJ in 1987 to predict and track drug use trends in arrestees. The groundbreaking program was the only national level survey to measure drug use by urinalysis rather than self-reports. In January 1988, Attorney General Edwin Meese released the initial findings from 12 cities showing 53 to 79% of male arrestees tested positive for drugs. DUF was renamed ADAM in 1997 and expanded to 35 locations nationwide with the addition of complex sampling procedures and an extended interview.

NOTE: CESAR's director, Dr. Eric Wish, designed and launched the DUF program while he was a NIJ Visiting Fellow from 1986 to 1990.

• 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.