

**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

University of Maryland at College Park\*

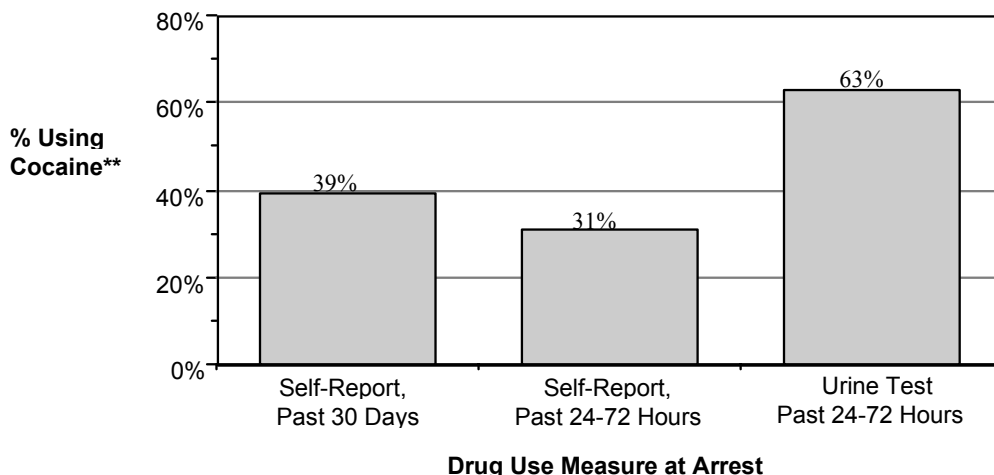
## *Arrestee Urine Tests Better Predictors of Rearrest Than Self-Reported Drug Use*

Can we dispense with urine testing and merely ask arrestees about their drug use when assessing risk of future arrest? A new study presented at the October meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Phoenix suggests that arrestee urine tests for drug use are better correlates of rearrest than self-reports. The study examined the relationship of self-reported drug use and urinalysis results to rearrest in a sample of 1,180 persons arrested and booked in Washington, D.C. in 1989.

Extensive drug use information taken from interviews conducted by the Drug Use Forecasting (DUF)\* program was not associated with subsequent arrest after controlling for demographic and criminal history information. Only the urine test information was associated with rearrests.

In addition to their usefulness for predicting rearrests, urine tests identify more current users than self-reports (see figure below). While interview information about drug use may be useful for diagnosing need for treatment, it cannot take the place of urine testing when the goal is to identify current users, or to assess risk of rearrest.

**Estimates of Cocaine Use from DUF Self-Reports and Urine Tests  
(N=1,180 Arrestees in Washington, D.C. in 1989)**



\* The DUF program collects voluntary, anonymous interview data and urine specimens from arrestees in 24 cities in the U.S.

\*\* Includes cocaine and crack.

SOURCE: Eric Wish and Christina Polsenberg, "Arrestee Urine Tests and Self-Reports of Drug Use: Which is More Related to Rearrest?," CESAR, University of Maryland at College Park. Paper presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Phoenix, Arizona, October 27-30, 1993. Dr. Wish may be contacted at CESAR.

## **Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse in Washington, D.C.**

The report Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse in Washington, D.C. is now available from CESAR. To get a complimentary copy of the report, call CESAR at (301) 403-8329.

For more information about today's topic or to be placed on the distribution list, please call CESAR at 301-403-8329. CESAR FAX is supported by a grant from the Governor's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Commission.