

CESAR Releases Report on Drug Use Among Female Juvenile Detainees in Maryland

Since 1992 CESAR has been conducting a series of studies on drug use among juvenile detainees in Maryland. The most recent study assesses drug use among female juvenile detainees at the Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center in Laurel, Maryland. This study included the collection and testing of hair specimens to supplement the interview and urine test data. Urine specimens were analyzed for 10 drugs* and alcohol; hair specimens were analyzed for marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, and PCP. Among the findings were the following:

- 84% of the youths reported ever using alcohol; 71% reported ever using cigarettes; and 71% reported ever using marijuana.
- The median age for first use of drugs was 13 years old for alcohol, cigarettes and inhalants and 14 for marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine, and PCP.
- Youths significantly underreported the extent of their drug use. Three-quarters of the youths who tested positive for cocaine by hair analysis reported in the research interview that they had never tried cocaine.
- As in the previous studies in this series, youths charged with drug offenses had the highest rate of positive test results (62% positive for any drug).
- A number of the youths indicated they used drugs "to forget about problems" or things troubling them. The most frequently mentioned substances in this context were cigarettes (18%), marijuana (17%), and alcohol (13%).

*Marijuana, cocaine, opiates, PCP, amphetamines, methaqualone, methadone, benzodiazepines, propoxyphene, and barbiturates.

SOURCE: E. D. Wish, T. A. Gray, and E. B. Levine (1996). "Recent Drug Use in Female Juvenile Detainees: Estimates from Interviews, Urinalysis, and Hair Analysis." For more information, contact Eric Wish or Tom Gray of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

NEW CESAR REPORT ON DRUG USE AMONG FEMALE JUVENILE DETAINEES NOW AVAILABLE

To receive a complimentary copy of "Recent Drug Use in Female Juvenile Detainees: Estimates from Interviews, Urinalysis, and Hair Analysis" contact CESAR by phone (301-403-8329), fax (301-403-8329), or e-mail (cesar@cesar.umd.edu). Copies of previous studies in this series (Study 1: Thomas J. Waxter Children's Center and Study 2: Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center) are also available.

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