

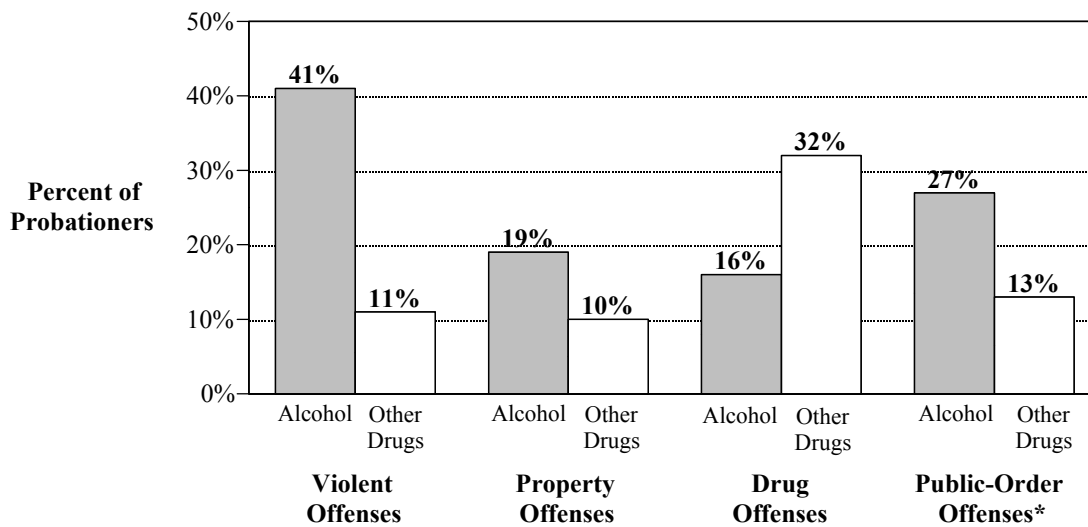
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Nearly Half of Adult Probationers Report They Were Under the Influence of Alcohol or Other Drugs When They Committed Their Crimes

The use of alcohol and/or other drugs in the commission of a crime is fairly common, according to recently released data from the first national survey of adults on probation. Overall, forty-eight percent of adult probationers reported using a substance (primarily alcohol) at the time of the offense for which they were incarcerated. The highest rates of alcohol use (excluding DWI offenders) was among offenders on probation for violent offenses (41%), while probationers sentenced for drug offenses were most likely to report illicit drug use. Since the survey depended on probationers to self-report illicit drug use, it is likely that these data underestimate the true proportion of probationers who were actually under the influence of illicit drugs when they committed their crimes. Urinalysis studies of arrestees typically find much higher rates of recent illicit drug use (see CESAR FAX, Volume 7, Issue 5).

Percentage of Adult Probationers Reporting Alcohol or Other Drug Use at the Time of the Offense, by Offense Type, 1995



*Data for probationers sentenced for driving while intoxicated (DWI) are not presented because substance use is inherent in the definition of the offense. Nearly all (99%) DWI probationers reported being under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their offense. Including DWI offenders, 75% of all probationers sentenced for public-order offenses reported alcohol use and 6% reported drug use at the time of their offense.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from Christopher Mumola, *Substance Abuse and Treatment of Adults on Probation, 1995*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, March 1998. A copy of the report is available from the Bureau of Justice Statistics World Wide Web site at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/.