

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Summer 1998 Pulse Check Reports on Current Drug Use Patterns Across the Nation

Survey Description

As part of the Office of National Drug Control Policy's *Pulse Check* survey, ethnographers, law enforcement officials, and drug treatment providers in major cities across the U.S. reported trends in illicit drug use over the six months prior to the interview (from June to December 1997).

Cocaine Use

Cocaine and crack continue to be the primary drugs of abuse among treatment clients, ranging from around 20% in the western states to around 32% in other areas. Use remains stable at high levels in most areas, with the exception of scattered reports of increased powder use among middle- to upper-income users. The number of new crack users continues to be down.

Heroin Use

Nearly all sources reported that heroin use is stable or rising. Consistent with past *Pulse Check* findings, the majority of heroin users are older, hard-core users, while the number of new, younger users continues to rise. According to many sources, the heroin market has "grown more organized and discreet, enabling users to access dealers in a more businesslike and less risky fashion" (p. 16).

Marijuana Use

There remains a high level of demand for marijuana, possibly sustained by an increased availability of high quality, domestically grown marijuana. While marijuana is popular among users of all ages, incomes, and social groups, the majority of users continue to be young, and several cities reported increases in use among junior high school age youth.

Source/Contact

Adapted by CESAR from Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Pulse Check: National Trends in Drug Abuse*, Summer 1998.

Copies of the report are available from ONDCP's world wide web site (www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov) or from the ONDCP Drugs and Crime Clearinghouse (800-666-3332).