

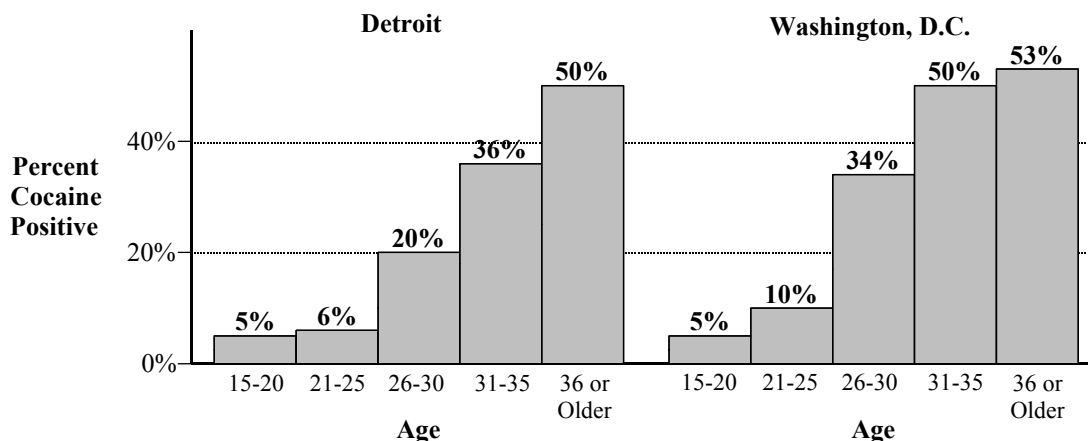
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Cocaine Use Mainly a Problem Among Older Arrestees

Recently released data from the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program (formerly the DUF program) indicate that cocaine use among arrestees is now largely a problem among older, established users. In 21 of the 23 ADAM sites across the U.S., older adult male arrestees are testing positive for cocaine at more than double the rates of the younger arrestees.* For example, in Detroit and Washington, D.C. 20% to 53% of male arrestees aged 26 and older tested positive for cocaine in 1997, compared to 10% or less of younger arrestees. This age disparity in cocaine positives, “combined with the fact that the [younger] cohort’s test positive rate is not increasing over time, imply lower cocaine initiation rates and a gradual aging out of the cocaine using cohort in the community” (p. 1). These findings are consistent with previous analyses of arrestee data showing that crack/cocaine use among arrestees is declining in the U.S. (see CESAR FAX, Volume 6, Issue 31).

Percentage of Detroit and Washington, D.C. Adult Male Arrestees Testing Positive for Cocaine, by Age, 1997



*Cocaine positive rates of the youngest arrestees charged as adults exceed the rates of the oldest arrestees in only two sites (Houston and San Antonio).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from the National Institute of Justice, “1997 Annual Report on Adult and Juvenile Arrestees,” July 1998. A copy of the report is available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800-851-3420 or www.ncjrs.org.