

Calvert County OPUS Report Now Available:

Youth Offenders Report Marijuana and Ecstasy Frequently Mixed with Other Drugs

As part of the Offender Population Urine Screening (OPUS) program, 50 youths processed in the Calvert County Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Intake Office were interviewed and tested by urinalysis for illicit drug use between September 2000 and May 2001. Following are highlights about the four most frequently discussed drugs—marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, and heroin.

- More than one-third (38%) of youth offenders tested positive for at least one drug, primarily marijuana (32%).
- **Marijuana** was reported to be the most popular drug. Many youths mentioned that marijuana is frequently mixed with drugs such as PCP, cocaine, GHB, and crystal methamphetamine. According to one youth, “Marijuana is always involved; even when you are doing other drugs, it’s there” (p. 8).
- **Ecstasy** was reported to be available and fairly easy to get. As with marijuana, several youths discussed mixing ecstasy with other drugs, such as ketamine, marijuana, LSD (known as “candy flipping”), or psychedelic mushrooms (known as “hippy flipping”).
- According to youths, **cocaine** and **heroin** use is limited to certain areas or populations (such as crack and heroin use in an area called North Beach or cocaine use among “rich kids”). Most respondents were unsure about the availability of these drugs in the county.

A full copy of the Calvert County OPUS report is available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

NOTE: OPUS was established to monitor drug use among Maryland’s juvenile offenders through voluntary and anonymous interviewing and drug testing at Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake and detention facilities. OPUS began collecting data from juveniles processed by DJJ intake site staff in May 1999. OPUS drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population in this county. However, prior research indicates that drug use by juvenile offenders may provide advance warning of epidemics in the general population.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Jill Choyka of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

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DEWS is creating a new publication directed toward parents and caregivers about youth substance abuse and its prevention and treatment. If you would be interested in receiving such a publication, or if you have ideas or suggestions for topics, please contact DEWS by email at DEWS@cesar.umd.edu, fax at 301-403-8342, or phone at 877-234-DEWS.