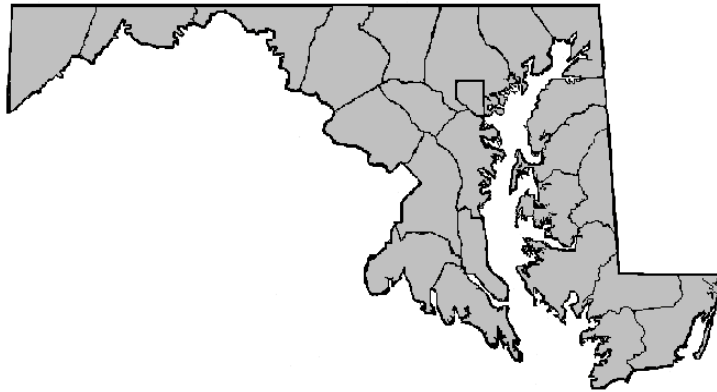


Drug Early Warning System

Working Together to Identify Emerging Drug Trends in Maryland

Juvenile Offender Population Urinalysis Screening Program (OPUS)

ANNUAL REPORT



**Report Prepared
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Juvenile OPUS is a component of the DEWS Program. Juvenile OPUS and other findings are disseminated in DEWS Faxes. The DEWS Fax is published monthly. To receive DEWS Faxes, please contact CESAR: 301-403-8329, 1-877-234-DEWS (toll-free), 301-403-8342 (fax), dews@cesar.umd.edu, www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

Supported by the Cabinet Council on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Chair, and the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention

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Juvenile Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Juvenile OPUS is one component of Maryland's Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), an initiative of the Cabinet Council on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Chair. DEWS is supported by a grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention.

The Juvenile OPUS Study was implemented by the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) in June 1998 as a urinalysis monitoring program for juveniles processed by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The project goals are to monitor changes in drug use and to identify emerging drugs of abuse among the juvenile offender population.

The Juvenile OPUS Project takes place in two venues: Intake and Detention. The Intake Study obtains interviews and urine specimens from youths being assessed in DJJ county offices. Twice a year the Detention Study obtains urine specimens only from youths newly admitted to DJJ's five detention facilities.

Over a two-year period OPUS has collected interviews and urine specimens from more than 800 youths across Maryland. This report presents some of the major findings from 14 counties that collected data for the Intake Study between May 1999 and June 2001. *

Over a two-year period, OPUS has collected interviews and urine specimens from more than 1,890 youths across Maryland. This report presents some of the major findings from the five participating detention facilities (Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center, Charles H. Hickey Jr. School, Cheltenham Youth Facility, J. DeWeese Carter Youth Facility, and Thomas J. Waxter Children's Facility). Data was collected over three data collection periods: February to May 1999, January to May 2000, and September to November 2000. *

OPUS is designed to provide insight into emerging drug trends among the juvenile offender population. It should be noted that OPUS drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population. However, prior research has indicated that offender urinalysis results provide advance warning of drug epidemics in the general population.

*Full reports may be requested from the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park: 301-403-8329, 301-403-8342 (fax) or on the web at www.cesar.umd.edu.

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park, Juvenile OPUS Annual Report, January 2002.

INTAKE STUDY

INTAKE STUDY

METHODS

- Interviewers requested informed consent from youths (intake referrals and probationers) and their parents.
- Interviewers administered a 10-15 minute, semi-structured interview. The interview provided youths the opportunity to talk about drug use by their peers and in their communities. Youths were not asked about their own drug use.
- A voluntary and anonymous urine specimen was collected and screened for 10 drugs: amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, methaqualone, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP), and propoxyphene. The amphetamine-positive tests were confirmed for amphetamines, methamphetamines, and phenylpropanolamine.
- A candy bar was offered to respondents as an incentive for participation.

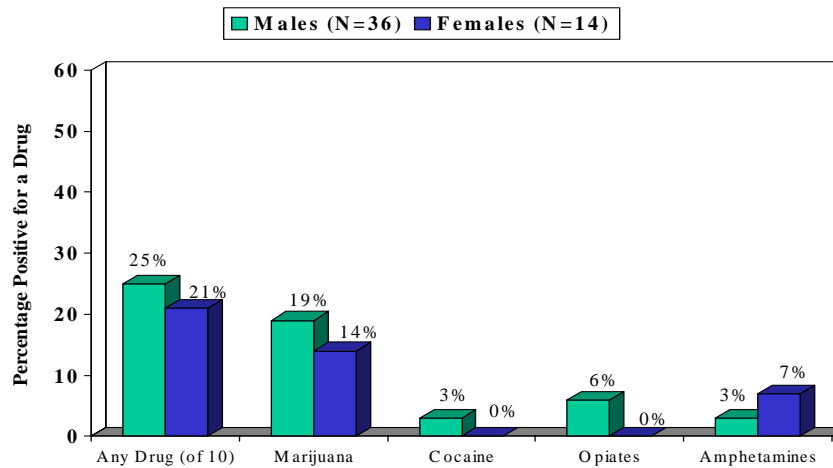
**Anne Arundel County
Intake Study Findings
November-December 2000**

Characteristics of Tested Juveniles

- 78% of the 64 interviewed juveniles provided a urine specimen.
- 72% of the tested juveniles were 15 or older.
- Nearly half (46%) were charged with a property offense, while 38% were charged with a violent offense.

Urine Test Results, by Gender

- 25% of the interviewed males and 21% of the interviewed females tested positive for any drug, primarily marijuana.



Selected Responses from Interviews with Youths

- Some youths claimed that marijuana is not a drug: “It comes from the earth, no problem” (18-year-old male). “It’s not really a drug—it’s a brain enhancer that makes you see things” (15-year-old male).
- “[Ecstasy] makes everything beautiful” (16-year-old female).
- Few youths reported that they were familiar with heroin use.

The full Intake Study Findings for this county are available through CESAR on the web at www.cesar.umd.edu or by contacting CESAR directly (301-403-8329).

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park, Juvenile OPUS Annual Report, January 2002.

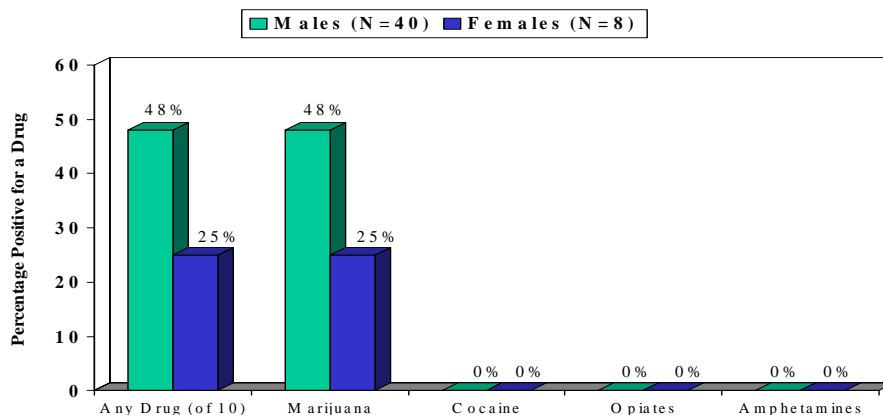
**Baltimore City
Intake Study Findings
November 1999-December 1999**

Characteristics of Tested Juveniles

- 82% of the 62 interviewed juveniles provided a urine specimen. *
- 69% of the interviewed juveniles were 15 or older.
- More than one-third (37%) of tested youths were charged with a drug-related offense, while 25% were charged with a violent offense, and 23% with a property offense.

Urine Test Results, by Gender

- 48% of the interviewed males tested positive for any drug, while 25% of the interviewed females tested positive for any drug. Juveniles tested positive for marijuana only.



*Due to laboratory error, three of the male urine specimens were lost. Results are, therefore, based on 48 of the 51 urine specimens collected.

Selected Responses from Interviews with Youths

- Juvenile offenders interviewed in Baltimore City were less likely to have heard of ecstasy than their counterparts in other Maryland counties. Respondents thought of ecstasy as a new drug available only within the last few months.
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