

The DASIS Report

June 21, 2002

Treatment Admissions for Injection Drug Abuse

In Brief

- In 1999 there were 179,000 treatment admissions for primary injection drug abuse and 34,000 admissions for secondary injection drug abuse
- Opiates accounted for 83 percent of admissions for injection drug abuse, followed by methamphetamine/amphetamine (11 percent) and cocaine (5 percent)
- Injection drug admissions of young people aged 15 to 25 years old increased between 1992 and 1999

Injection drug users are at high risk of blood-borne infections, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C, through the sharing of syringes and other injection paraphernalia. In 1999, there were about 179,000 admissions reported to the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) for which the primary drug of abuse was injected. Injection drug use secondary to a non-injected substance was reported by an additional 34,000 admissions.

This report presents characteristics of primary injection drug admissions to treatment, as reported to TEDS. TEDS collects data on the approximately 1.6 million annual admissions primarily to facilities that receive some public funding. TEDS records represent admissions rather than individuals; a person may be admitted to treatment more than once in a given time period.

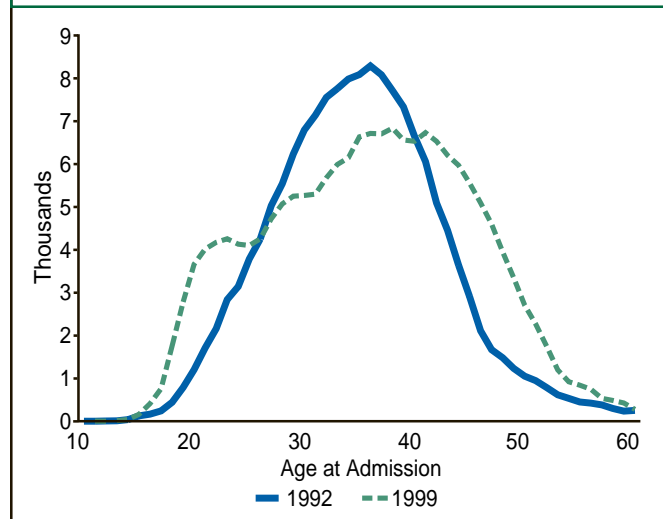
Heroin and other opiates accounted for 83 percent of all admissions for injection drug abuse (Table 1). The other most commonly reported injected drugs were methamphetamine/amphetamine¹ (11 percent) and cocaine (5 percent).

Table 1. Primary Injection Drug, by Race/Ethnicity: 1999

Race/ Ethnicity	Number of admissions (000s)	Percent				Total
		Opiates	Metham- phetamine/ amphet-	Cocaine	Other	
Total	179	83	11	5	1	100
White	108	77	16	6	1	100
Black	25	92	1	5	1	100
Hispanic	37	95	2	2	1	100
Puerto Rican	12	98	0	2	0	100
Mexican	20	94	3	2	1	100
AI/AN	3	68	23	7	2	100
Asian/PI	1	86	9	4	1	100
Other	4	92	4	3	1	100

Note: AI/AN=American Indian/Alaska Native; PI=Pacific Islander

Figure 1. Injection Drug Admissions by Age at Admission: 1992 and 1999



Source: 1999 SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS).

The number of admissions for primary injection drug use increased by 14 percent between 1992 and 1999 while admissions for non-injected drugs rose by 3 percent (data not shown). Admissions for injected opiates rose 17 percent between 1992 and 1999. In the same period the number of admissions for injected methamphetamine/amphetamines increased by 197 percent, while admissions for injected cocaine fell by 58 percent.

Demographics

Injection drug admissions of young people aged 15 to 25 increased between 1992 and 1999 (Figure 1). Admissions of persons older than age 40 also increased.

Racial/ethnic groups exhibited different injection drug preferences in 1999 (Table 1). Opiates were reported as the primary drug for 95 percent of Hispanic and 92 percent of Black (non-

Hispanic) injection admissions. Primary methamphetamine/amphetamine injection was reported for 23 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native admissions and 16 percent of White (non-Hispanic) admissions.

Looking at the demographic characteristics of types of injection drug abusers, admissions for primary opiate injection were 56 percent White, 15 percent Black, 13 percent Mexican, and 8 percent Puerto Rican (data not shown). One third of primary opiate injection admissions (33 percent) were female.

Methamphetamine/amphetamine admissions were overwhelmingly White (89 percent), and a relatively large proportion (44 percent) were female.

Admissions for primary cocaine injection were 71 percent White, 15 percent Black, 6 percent Mexican, and 2 percent Puerto Rican; some 37 percent were female.

Frequency of Use

The frequency of use in 1999 was highest among injected opiate admissions. Daily injections in the month prior to admission were reported for 82 percent of injected opiate admissions, almost half (47 percent) of injected methamphetamine/amphetamine admissions, and for 43 percent of injected cocaine admissions (data not shown).

Duration of Use

Injection drug users tended to use drugs for many years before entering the treatment system. Among 1999 injected drug admissions, persons admitted for injecting opiates averaged 14 years of use before entering treatment for the first time, while those admitted for injecting methamphetamine/amphetamine averaged 12 years, and for cocaine 13 years (data not shown).

Figure 2. Previous Admissions for Substance Abuse Treatment, by Injection Drug: 1999

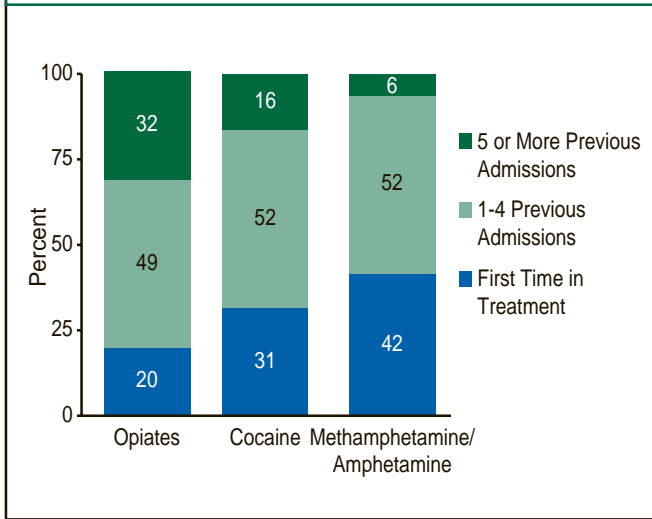
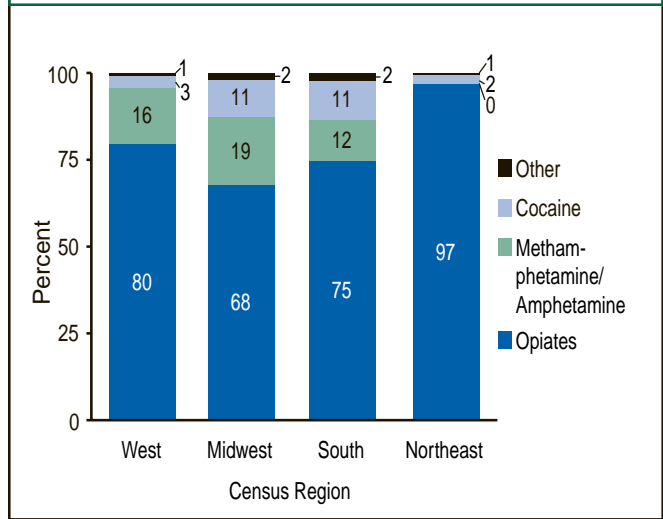


Figure 3. Primary Injection Drug, by Census Region: 1999



Prior Treatment

Injection drug users found it difficult to maintain abstinence (Figure 2). Among 1999 injection drug admissions, 32 percent of opiate admissions had 5 or more prior treatment episodes, as did 16 percent of injected cocaine and 6 percent of injected methamphetamine/amphetamine admissions. Only 1 in 5 admissions for injected opiates was entering treatment for the first time compared with 31 percent of cocaine and 42 percent of methamphetamine/amphetamine admissions.

Injection of Multiple Drugs

Injection of more than one drug was reported for 24 percent of injection drug admissions in 1999. Injection of both opiates and cocaine was most common, reported for 19 percent of all injected drug admissions.

Geographic Differences

There were distinct regional differences in the primary drug injected (Figure 3). In the Northeast Census region in 1999, opiates represented 97 percent of injection drug admissions. Methamphetamine/amphetamine injection was most prevalent in the Midwest (19 percent) and West (16 percent). Primary

cocaine injection was most prevalent in the Midwest and South, each at 11 percent.

End Note

¹ Methamphetamine/amphetamine admissions represented primarily methamphetamine in 1999. Four States (AR, CT, OR, and TX) did not distinguish between these substances. Among the other reporting States, methamphetamine constituted 94 percent of combined methamphetamine and amphetamine admissions.

The Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS) is an integrated data system maintained by the Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). One component of DASIS is the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). TEDS is a compilation of data on the demographic characteristics and substance abuse problems of those admitted for substance abuse treatment. The information comes primarily from facilities that receive some public funding. Information on treatment admissions is routinely collected by State administrative systems and then submitted to SAMHSA in a standard format. Approximately 1.6 million records are included in TEDS each year. TEDS records represent admissions rather than individuals, as a person may be admitted to treatment more than once.

The DASIS Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies, SAMHSA; Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc., Arlington, Virginia; and RTI, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Information and data for this issue are based on data reported to TEDS through April 16, 2001.

Access the latest TEDS reports at: <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/dasis.htm>

Access the latest TEDS public use files at: <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/SAMHDA.htm>

Other substance abuse reports are available at: <http://www.DrugAbuseStatistics.samhsa.gov>



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