

# The OAS Report

March 18, 2005

## The Office of Applied Studies

The mission of SAMHSA's Office of Applied Studies (OAS) is the collection, analysis, and dissemination of critical public health data to assist policymakers, providers, and patients in making informed decisions regarding the prevention and treatment of mental and substance use disorders. OAS manages three national data activities:

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### The Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS)

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The **Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS)** is made up of three components.

The **Inventory of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (I-SATS)** is a listing of all known public and private substance abuse treatment facilities in the United States and its territories.

The **National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS)** is an annual survey of all I-SATS facilities that collects information on location, characteristics, treatment services offered, and utilization. Information from the N-SSATS is used to compile and update the *National Directory of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Treatment Programs* and the on-line Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator.

The **Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)** is a compilation of data on the demographic and substance abuse characteristics of admissions to and discharges from substance abuse treatment. Information on treatment admissions is routinely collected by State administrative systems and then submitted to SAMHSA in a standard format.

To access publications from DASIS, go to the OAS website:

<http://oas.samhsa.gov/dasis.htm>

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## The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN)

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The **Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN)** is a public health surveillance system that monitors drug-related visits to hospital emergency departments (EDs) and drug-related deaths reviewed by medical examiners and coroners (ME/Cs). DAWN has undergone many recent changes.

Since 2003, DAWN has been tracking *all* types of drug-related ED visits and drug-related deaths, regardless of the drug involved or the reason for drug use. DAWN covers non-medical use of prescription and over-the-counter medications, use of pharmaceuticals for legitimate therapeutic purposes, and drug abuse. In addition to the abuse of illegal drugs, DAWN collects cases related to overmedication, malicious poisonings, suicide attempts, and underage alcohol use, as well as cases involving accidental ingestion or adverse reaction to prescription and over-the-counter medications or dietary supplements.

### **Emergency department (ED) component:**

Data on ED visits are collected from a probability sample of non-Federal, short-stay, general hospitals that operate 24-hour EDs. Data from the sample are used to generate estimates for the United States and for the 22 major metropolitan areas that were sampled for this purpose.

**Medical examiner/coroner (ME/C) component:** Data on drug-related deaths are collected from ME/C jurisdictions in many of the metropolitan areas covered by the ED component and from selected States. The ME/C component is not based on a statistical sample, so national estimates of drug-related deaths are not possible.

To access publications from DAWN, go to the DAWN website: <http://dawninfo.samhsa.gov>

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## The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

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The **National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)** has been conducted since 1971. Prior to 2002, the name of the survey was the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). NSDUH serves as the primary source of information on the prevalence and incidence of illicit drug, alcohol, and tobacco use in the civilian, non-institutionalized population aged 12 or older in the United States. Approximately 67,500 interviews are conducted each year using computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) methods. The current methodology also allows for both national and State-level analysis of NSDUH variables.

Topics examined in NSDUH include:

- Lifetime, past year, and past month substance use
- Symptoms of substance abuse and dependence and other mental disorders
- Treatment for substance use and other mental disorders
- Risk and protective factors, such as perceived risk of use, parental involvement, family and neighborhood characteristics, and school performance
- Criminal justice involvement
- Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, including employment and workplace programs

To access publications from NSDUH, go to the OAS website: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda.htm>

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## OAS Publications

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The Office of Applied Studies releases data from these three data systems on an ongoing basis.

- **Periodically**, OAS publishes:
  - The Analytic Series including special studies using NSDUH, DASIS, and DAWN data; and
  - The Methodology Series including special studies of NSDUH, DASIS, and DAWN methodology and related issues.

- **Annually**, OAS publishes:
  - The NSDUH Series, including the National Findings, and State Estimates;
  - The DASIS Series, including the TEDS admissions report, the TEDS discharge report, the N-SSATS report, and the I-SATS directory; and
  - The DAWN Series, including the ED trends report and the Mortality report.
- **Weekly**, OAS publishes:
  - Data from one of the three data systems in The Short Report Series (*The DASIS Report*, *The DAWN Report*, and *The NSDUH Report*).

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## The OAS Website

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The OAS website is available through the Internet at <http://oas.samhsa.gov>. The website allows for access to:

- Published reports (back to 1996) indexed by
  - Topic: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/topics.cfm>
  - Year: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NewPubs.htm#Year>
- Detailed methodology reports
- Web-only reports
- Public use files available through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive (SAMHDA)
- Detailed tables from each OAS data system

In addition, you can

- Find substance abuse treatment services using the Treatment Locator: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/facilitylocator.doc.htm>
- Submit questions or publication requests: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/Mail/email.cfm>
- Join the OAS mailing list
- Sign-up for email notification of new OAS reports

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## Public Access to OAS Data

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Data files from both NSDUH and DASIS are available through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive (SAMHDA). DAWN data are not available for public access due to confidentiality restrictions.

The goal of the archive is to provide ready access to substance abuse and mental health research data and to promote the sharing of these data among researchers, academics, policymakers, service providers, and others. The goal is to increase the use of the data in understanding and assessing substance abuse and mental health problems and the impact of related treatment systems.

In order to make NSDUH and DASIS data files available to the public, SAMHSA follows standard procedures used by many Federal statistical agencies to create a public use file (PUF). The PUF includes most of the data from the restricted dataset, but protects every respondent's personal information from disclosure, as required by law. The PUF is available on the SAMHDA website as a downloadable ASCII fixed-format file. All documentation is also on the website including the codebook, questionnaire, and both SAS and SPSS data definition files. In addition to the downloadable format, SAMHDA also allows for online analysis of the NSDUH, TEDS, and N-SSATS files.

To access NSDUH, TEDS, or N-SSATS data: <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/SAMHDA/archive.html>

For help using SAMHDA, read the short reports on using SAMHDA available on the OAS website: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/tutorial.cfm>

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## Contacting OAS

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To contact OAS for questions regarding our data systems, to request publications, or for general inquiries, call 240-276-1212 or email us from our website: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/Mail/email.cfm>

