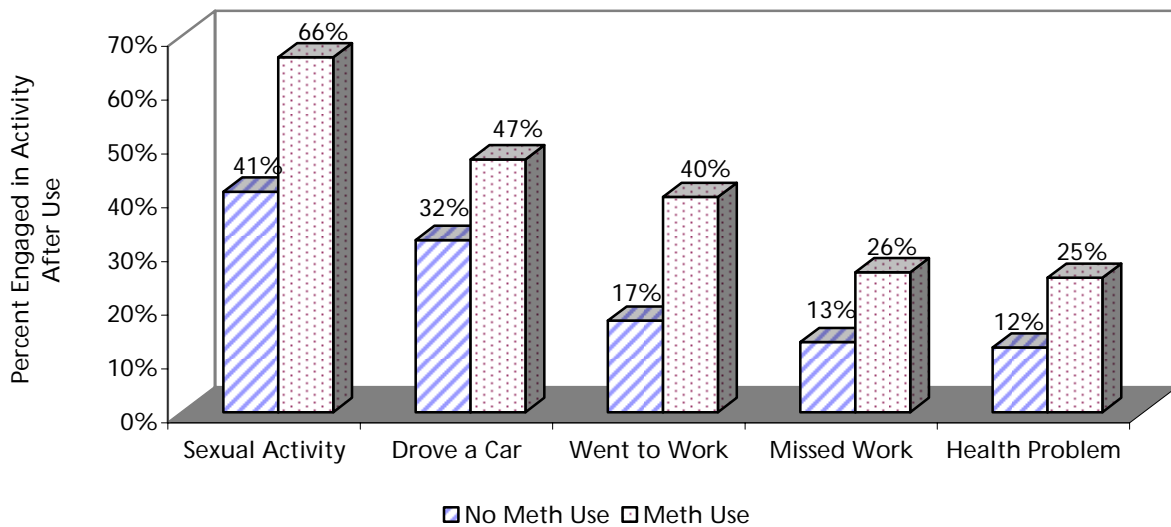


## Under the Influence: Methamphetamine User's Costly Behaviors

Newly released 2004 Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program statistics include information regarding risky behaviors that could negatively affect users and others around them. Information collected through these interviews with arrestees show that methamphetamine (meth) users are significantly more likely to place themselves and others at risk for health related injury and problems. As Figure 1 shows, meth users were significantly more likely than other arrestees to use drugs and then engage in sexual activity (which places both partners at increased risk for sexually transmitted diseases), drive a car, or go to work. They were also more likely to miss work and have drug related health problems.

**Figure 1**  
**METH USERS MORE LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN RISKY ACTIVITIES WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE**



SOURCE: SAM Program 2004

Research has shown how these risky behaviors can translate into actual costs through increased medical care, (e.g., visits to the hospital emergency room) and loss of potential productivity, especially due to criminal justice involvement. The Office of Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) most recent 2002 estimated cost of drug abuse to the United States was \$180.9 billion, up 5.3 percent from 1992<sup>1</sup>. In particular, there has been a documented rise in the number of employees using meth in the workplace<sup>2</sup>, which has been linked to increases in workplace theft, absenteeism, staff turnover, worker compensation claims, employee healthcare costs, and loss of productivity<sup>3</sup>. For more information on meth use in San Diego, please refer to our recently released CJ Bulletin at [www.sandag.org/cj](http://www.sandag.org/cj) which presents additional SAM statistics.

<sup>1</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy (2004). The Estimated Cost of Drug Abuse in the United States 1992-2002, Executive Office of the President 207303, Washington, DC: Author.

<sup>2</sup> CBS News (May 20, 2005). Employer Drug Testing Slows Spread of Use [On-Line]. Available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/05/15/ap/business/mainD8A3P4N80.shtml>.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Business and Economic Research (2004, December). Final Report: The Economic Impact of Methamphetamine Use in Benton County, Arkansas [On-Line]. Available at [http://cber.uark.edu/data/Meth\\_Benton\\_County.pdf](http://cber.uark.edu/data/Meth_Benton_County.pdf).