



2012 Juvenile Arrestee Drug Use in the San Diego Region

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2012 JUVENILE ARRESTEE DRUG USE IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION

INTRODUCTION

Between 1987 and 2004, SANDAG completed interviews with local arrestees regarding their drug use histories as part of the federally-funded Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program. In comparison to other interview and survey efforts with households and juveniles across the country (e.g., National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey), the ADAM program was unique in that it included an objective measure of recent drug use (i.e., urinalysis), in addition to collecting self-reported information.

When the juvenile component of the ADAM program was discontinued in 2003 (one year before the entire program ended), local funding was secured, which enabled this important data collection effort to continue in the region as the San Diego County Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program.¹ In 2012, San Diego County SAM was supported by the California Border Alliance Group (CBAG) and the County of San Diego. Their support, as well as funding from SANDAG member agencies through the Criminal Justice Clearinghouse and the cooperation of the San Diego County Probation Department is gratefully acknowledged.

This CJ Bulletin, “2012 Juvenile Arrestee Drug Use in the San Diego Region,” is the first in a four-part series presenting data collected (from both juveniles and adults) in the 2012 calendar year. As part of this study, a total of 124 youth were interviewed at Juvenile Hall during two separate months (March and September) in 2012. Ninety-seven percent (97%) or 120 of these youth provided a urine sample for drug testing purposes (95 males and 25 females). This research bulletin includes the results of urinalysis trends over time, as well as information pertaining to lifetime and recent self-reported drug use, perceived risk and availability of different drugs, and characteristics of the youth that were interviewed and how these factors may be related to drug use. In addition, all of the data (percentages and raw numbers) captured through the juvenile interviews and urinalyses for the past five years (2008-2012) are available online at

www.sandag.org/cj. For questions regarding the project methodology or data set, please contact SANDAG’s Criminal Justice Research Division at (619) 699-1900.

BULLETIN HIGHLIGHTS

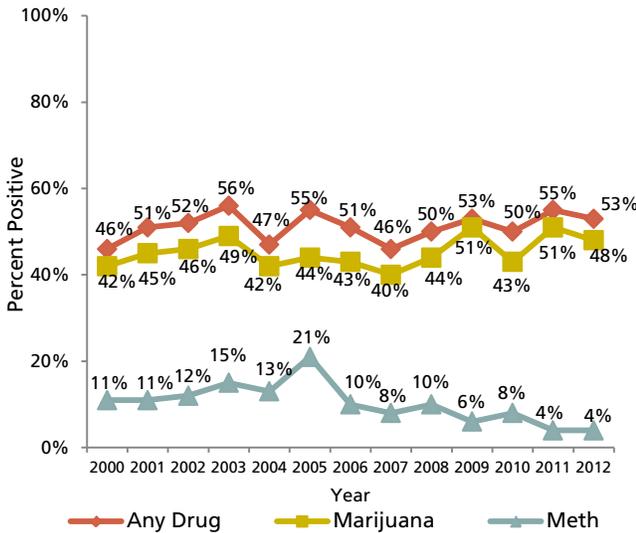
- In 2012, almost all (96%) of the youth interviewed reported experimenting with alcohol or other drugs in the past and 81 percent had used at least one substance in the past 30 days.
- Over half (53%) of the juvenile arrestees tested positive for marijuana, cocaine, opiates, meth, or PCP in 2012, down slightly from the 55 percent positive in 2011.
- Youth report using marijuana more than any other substance, including alcohol and tobacco, with an average age of first use at 13 years.
- While 41 percent of youth thought that alcohol was “extremely bad” or “very bad” for them, only 17 percent felt this way about marijuana.
- Two in five (40%) youth reported ever using prescription drugs they were not prescribed and these youth who abused prescription drugs were also significantly more likely to have used street drugs as well.
- Many youth interviewed for this project reported other risk factors for delinquency, including parental drug use and criminal histories, truancy, and family contact with CPS.
- Girls differed significantly from boys in a number of areas, including being more likely to report prior CPS involvement, running away from home, and more extensive substance use histories.

¹ In 2007, a new scaled-back Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring program, ADAM II, was launched by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in ten sites across the country with adult males, but not juvenile or adult female arrestees. For more information on this effort, please visit www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov.

RECENT AND PAST DRUG USE

Since 2000, about half of juveniles interviewed as part of SAM have tested positive for at least one drug, with the most commonly used illicit drug being marijuana. As Figure 1 shows, in 2012, 53 percent tested positive for any substance, 48 percent for marijuana, and 4 percent for methamphetamine (meth). Compared to the previous year, the percent positive for marijuana decreased slightly and the percent positive for meth stayed the same. In addition, 3 percent of the youth tested positive for cocaine (compared to 2% in 2011), 3 percent for opiates (compared to 2% in 2011), 1 percent for PCP (compared to none in 2011), and 5 percent tested positive for multiple illicit drugs (compared to 4% in 2011) (not shown).

Figure 1
OVER HALF OF JUVENILE ARRESTEES TESTED POSITIVE FOR ANY DRUG IN 2012



TOTAL = 120- 354

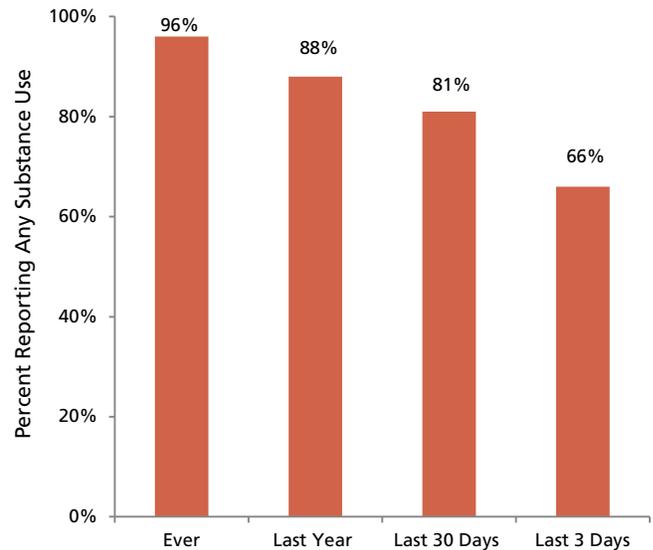
NOTE: Cases with missing information not included. Any drug includes marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, opiates, and PCP.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

In addition to obtaining a urine sample, youth are asked a series of questions regarding their experiences using alcohol, tobacco, and other substances (i.e., marijuana, ecstasy, powder cocaine, meth, crack, and heroin). As Figure 2 shows, 96 percent of the youth reported that they had tried at least one of these substances in their lifetimes, 88 percent in the past year, 81 percent in the past 30 days, and 66 percent in the previous three days. Of the 115 youth who reported ever trying one of these substances listed in

Table 1, the average (mean) number tried was 3.8 (range 1 to 8) (not shown).

Figure 2
ALMOST ALL JUVENILES INTERVIEWED REPORTED PREVIOUS SUBSTANCE USE



TOTAL = 120

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

In terms of which substances they had ever and recently used, around three-quarters or more of juveniles in 2012 reported trying marijuana, alcohol, or tobacco previously (starting around the age of 13 years old, on average) and more than half (52% to 54%) had used each of these substances during the past 30 days (Table 1). Between 8 and 34 percent of the youth also reported ever trying other substances, including ecstasy, meth,² powder cocaine, crack, and heroin.³ Youth were also asked about binge drinking (consuming five or more drinks on one occasion), with just under two-thirds (63%) reporting this behavior.

Compared to last year, fewer youth reported trying tobacco (73% in 2012, compared to 82% in 2011) and ecstasy (34% versus 47%), but slightly more reported trying crack (14% versus 8%) (not shown).

² While there was no gender difference in recent meth use, as measured by a positive urinalysis result, females were significantly more likely to report ever having tried meth (56%), compared to males (21%) and to report use in the past 30 days (24% versus 5%).

³ In addition to the substances listed in Table 1, 52 percent of the youth reported that they had ever tried spice, 17 percent mushrooms, 16 percent OxyContin (without a prescription), 15 percent inhalants, 12 percent LSD, and 3 percent GHB.

Table 1
YOUTH REPORT INITIATING SUBSTANCE USE AT AROUND AGE THIRTEEN ON AVERAGE

	Ever Used	Avg. Age 1 st Use	Used Last 30 Days
Marijuana	93%	13.0	54%
Alcohol	90%	12.7	52%
Tobacco	73%	13.1	53%
Binge Alcohol	63%	13.4	31%
Ecstasy	34%	14.2	6%
Meth	28%	14.1	9%
Powder Cocaine	26%	14.9	8%
Crack	14%	14.2	2%
Heroin	8%	14.7	3%
TOTAL	120	17-111	120

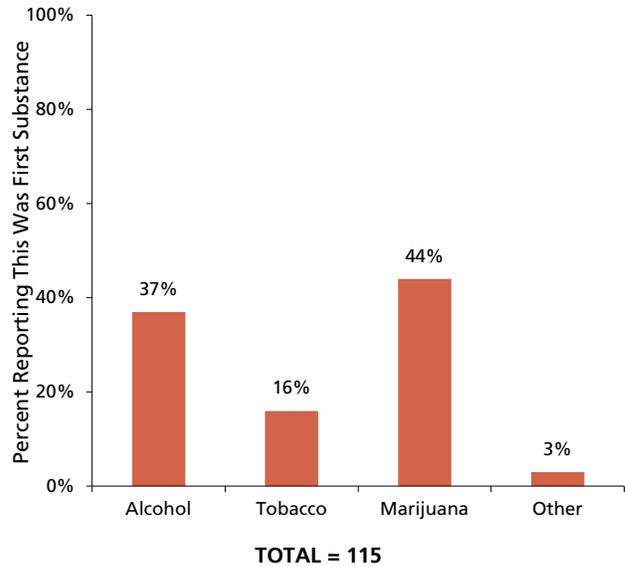
NOTE: Cases with missing information not included. Binge alcohol defined as five or more drinks on one occasion.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

GATEWAY AND OTHER DRUG USE PATTERNS

“Gateway drug” is a term used to refer to a substance (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana) whose use is thought to precede and possibly lead to the use of and dependence on harder drugs. When asked to describe what substance they had first used, almost all (96%) reported a gateway drug (not shown), including marijuana (44%), alcohol (37%), and tobacco (16%) (Figure 3). The “other” drugs included meth (2) and spice (1). When asked who they were with when they first used this substance, 61 percent said a friend, 12 percent a youth relative (other than a sibling), 9 percent a sibling, 6 percent another adult relative, 4 percent a parent, 4 percent someone else, and 9 percent said they were alone (not shown).

Figure 3
MARIJUANA FIRST SUBSTANCE USED BY MOST YOUTH



NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

Additional analyses regarding patterns of gateway drug use also revealed that most youth had used all three, rather than just one or two of these substances. As Table 2 shows, of the 115 youth who had ever tried a gateway drug, 75 percent had tried all three.

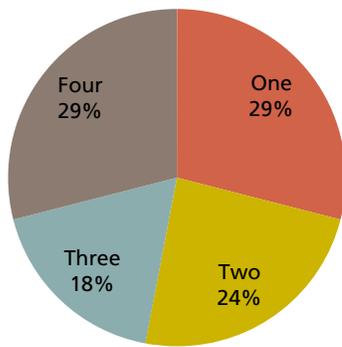
Table 2
MOST JUVENILES HAVE TRIED MORE THAN ONE GATEWAY DRUG

Gateway Drugs Youth Have Ever Tried	
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Marijuana	75%
Alcohol and Marijuana	16%
Marijuana Only	6%
Alcohol and Tobacco	2%
Alcohol Only	2%
TOTAL	115

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

Figure 4 shows the proportion of youth who used one or more of the “harder drugs.” As this graph shows, 71 percent reported ever using more than just one of these six substances (meth, powder cocaine, mushrooms, ecstasy, OxyContin (without a prescription), crack, or heroin). This pattern speaks to the severity of addiction for some of these youth and supports the need for effective treatment for this population.

Figure 4
MOST YOUTH WHO HAVE TRIED “HARDER DRUGS” HAVE USED MORE THAN JUST ONE



TOTAL = 66

NOTE: “Harder drugs” include methamphetamine, powder cocaine, mushrooms, ecstasy, OxyContin (without a prescription), crack, and heroin.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

ILLEGAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov), prescription drug abuse ranks second – only behind marijuana – as the nation’s most prevalent drug problem. For this project, in 2012, 44 percent of the youth reported ever using prescription (40%) and/or over-the-counter medication (26%) illegally (not shown). These percentages are considerably higher than those reported for youth between the ages of 12 and 17 in the general population according to the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health, where 10 percent reported any lifetime abuse. Consistent with national data, the most commonly abused prescription drug type was painkillers (which includes Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet, Codeine, Dilaudid, Fentanyl, Morphine, and Methadone) (90%) (not shown), followed by tranquilizers (e.g., Xanax, Valium, Rochas) (44%) (Table 3). In terms of over-the-counter drugs, 84 percent described abusing Coricidin (also referred to as DXM, skittles, or Triple C) and 55 percent described abusing liquid cold medicines (Table 3).

In addition, those youth who reported abusing prescription or over-the-counter medication were significantly more likely to have tried the gateway drugs, as well as other substances, including ecstasy, meth, powder cocaine, and mushrooms, as Table 4 shows.

Table 3
PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE REPORTED BY MORE THAN ONE IN THREE YOUTH

Prescription Drugs	
Vicodin	67%
Tranquilizers	44%
OxyContin	33%
Morphine	27%
Percocet	23%
Codeine	23%
Amphetamines	21%
Methadone	17%
Soma	15%
Antidepressants	4%
Barbiturates	4%
Dilaudid	4%
Fentanyl	2%
TOTAL	48
Over-the-Counter	
Coricidin	84%
Liquid Cold Medicines	55%
TOTAL	31

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

Table 4
YOUTH WHO ABUSE PRESCRIPTION OR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION ALSO USE OTHER SUBSTANCES

	Percent Who Ever Tried That Substance*	
	Prescription or Over-the-Counter Medicine Abuse	No Prescription or Over-the-Counter Medicine Abuse
Marijuana	100%	87%
Alcohol	98%	84%
Tobacco	92%	58%
Ecstasy	60%	13%
Meth	43%	16%
Powder Cocaine	43%	12%
Mushrooms	30%	6%
TOTAL	53	67

*Significant at $p < .05$.

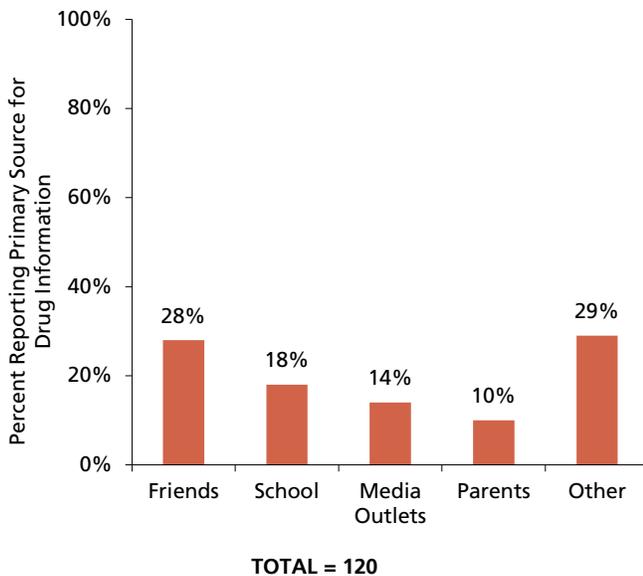
NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF DRUGS

For several years, prevention messages have targeted parents about the need to have candid conversations with their children regarding the risks associated with drug use (e.g., www.theanti-drug.com). However, when these youth were asked to describe their main source of information regarding what drugs do to you, only one in ten (10%) said parents, with others saying friends (28%), school (18%), media outlets (television, movies, or the Internet) (14%), and other individuals/institutions (29%)⁴ (Figure 5).

Figure 5
FEW YOUTH REPORT LEARNING ABOUT DRUGS FROM THEIR PARENTS



NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

Youth were also asked to rate (on a four-point scale) how bad they think different types of drugs are, regardless of their past use of the drug. As Table 5 shows, those who had used meth, inhalants, LSD, OxyContin, tobacco, mushrooms, ecstasy, and alcohol were significantly less likely to report thinking the drug was “extremely” or “very” bad for them compared to those who had never used the drug. Overall, only 17 percent thought that marijuana was “extremely bad” or “very bad” for them, the lowest for any substance, following alcohol at 41 percent overall (not shown).

⁴ Of the 35 individuals who cited another information source, 46 percent said it was from their own personal experience, 29 percent treatment providers, 11 percent other drug users, 6 percent the justice system, 6 percent someone else, and 3 percent other relatives.

Table 5
NON-USERS PERCEIVE MORE HARM THAN USERS

	Percent Who Think The Drug Is Extremely Or Very Bad	
	Never Used Drug	Used Drug
Meth*	97%	76%
Heroin	96%	100%
Crack	96%	88%
Powder Cocaine	93%	81%
Inhalants*	92%	61%
LSD*	89%	57%
OxyContin*	87%	56%
GHB	87%	50%
Tobacco*	87%	50%
Mushrooms*	86%	37%
Ecstasy*	85%	63%
Spice	76%	70%
Alcohol*	73%	37%
Marijuana	44%	14%
TOTAL	9-111	4-111

*Significant at $p < .05$.

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

In another series of questions, individuals who had ever used the drug were asked to rate how easy the drug is to obtain, again on a four-point scale. As Table 6 shows, around three-quarters or more of these individuals reported that marijuana, tobacco, alcohol, meth, and heroin were “very easy” or “easy” to obtain.

Table 6
JUVENILE ARRESTEES REPORT MANY SUBSTANCES EASY TO OBTAIN

Percent Who Think The Drug Is Very Easy Or Easy To Obtain	
Marijuana	90%
Tobacco	88%
Alcohol	77%
Meth	71%
Heroin	71%
Ecstasy	68%
Crack	46%
Powder Cocaine	38%
TOTAL	7-107

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

Youth who had tried alcohol were asked how they had obtained it the last time they used it. The three most common ways included having someone over the age of 21 give it to them (33%), someone else buy it from a store for them (21%), or someone under the age of 21 give it to them (18%) (not shown).

When the 47 youth who had ever used prescription drugs illegally were asked how easy it was to obtain without a prescription, 30 percent said “very easy,” 30 percent “easy,” 28 percent “difficult,” and 13 percent “very difficult.” When asked to describe how they got it:

- the most common response (85%) was that they received it from someone else, (with 33 of the 40 describing the giver as a friend, 11 as an acquaintance, 2 as family, and 2 as someone they did not know);
- 34 percent said they bought it from someone;
- 30 percent stole it from someone (with 8 of the 14 saying they stole it from family, 6 from friends, and 2 from acquaintances); and
- 13 percent said they stole it from a pharmacy (not shown).

DRUG TREATMENT

One in three (33%) juveniles interviewed in 2012 reported that they had previously received some type of drug treatment. When these 39 youth were asked for more details regarding this prior treatment, their responses revealed that:

- 44 percent had been in treatment once, 26 percent twice, and 31 percent three or more times;
- the most recent treatment experience was more likely to be court-ordered (77%) than voluntary (23%);
- most recently (if more than one treatment episode), 23 percent had attended in-patient treatment, 33 percent out-patient treatment, 28 percent Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous (NA/AA), and 15 percent received treatment while in custody in a detention facility;
- 66 percent had received treatment for marijuana, 61 percent for alcohol, 24 percent for meth, 18 percent for cocaine/crack, 13 percent for heroin, and 13 percent for other substances; and

- 69 percent reported that they had successfully completed treatment⁵ (not shown).

When asked if they currently need treatment, only 21 percent responded affirmatively. However, this desire varied by prior treatment history, with non-completers most likely to report needing it (42%), followed closely by those who had completed treatment (41%), and those who had no prior treatment history (11%). Of the 25 individuals who felt they needed treatment, 44 percent wanted it for their marijuana use, 44 percent alcohol, 20 percent tobacco, 20 percent meth, 8 percent powder cocaine, 8 percent heroin, and 4 percent crack (not shown).

CRIMINAL HISTORY AND GANG INVOLVEMENT

Instant Offense

The SAM interview is conducted at Juvenile Hall with youth who were arrested within the previous 48 hours. One-third (32%) of youth had an “other” offense (which includes probation violations), 24 percent a violent offense, and 21 percent a status offense (such as truancy or a curfew violation) as their most serious arrest charge. The remaining youth were arrested for a highest charge that was a property offense (19%) or a drug offense (4%) (not shown).

Prior Offenses and Arrests

Around three-quarters (77%) of the youth reported they had been arrested previously (the median number of prior arrests was 3.0 and the range was 1 to 20) and around two-thirds (68%) said they had previously been detained at a juvenile facility. In addition, 77 percent said that they had been under probation supervision before, 91 percent of whom said that they still were. Those youth with a prior arrest were more likely to report ever having tried alcohol (95% versus 75%), marijuana (98% versus 75%), and ecstasy (40% versus 14%) (not shown).

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the youth also reported previously committing a property-related offense, whether or not they were arrested for it. When further queried as to the nature of this/these offense(s), 79 percent of the 91 said they had shoplifted, 56 percent committed vandalism,

⁵ Some of the reasons for not completing treatment included that they were kicked out, they had been arrested, they were still in, they wanted to use, or the program was too strict.

36 percent burglary, 27 percent motor vehicle theft, and 7 percent forgery (not shown).

According to the municipal code, juveniles' presence in public places is generally limited, with certain exceptions, between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. When asked if they were aware of these curfew laws, almost all (91%) of the youth reported that they were and about three in every five (58%) said that they had actually been stopped by law enforcement in the past for violating curfew (not shown).

Drug Distribution

Despite the fact that few (about 1 in 20) youth were arrested for a drug-related offense as the highest charge, 40 percent reported that they had some previous involvement in drug distribution – either selling drugs (15%), serving as a middleman (5%), or both (20%). When asked what drug(s) were involved, 96 percent of the 48 youth said marijuana, 25 percent meth, 21 percent ecstasy, 15 percent another drug, 10 percent powder cocaine, 4 percent crack, 4 percent heroin, and 2 percent LSD. When asked how much they made from these activities in the past 30 days, the median was \$145 (range \$10 to \$4,000) (not shown).

Gang Involvement

Around one in five (18%) of the youth interviewed as part of this study reported they had been in a gang and another 18 percent indicated they had hung out with a gang. On average, these 44 individuals said they had hung out with the gang for 3.2 years (range 4 months to 10 years). Youth who reported being gang members were significantly more likely to report bringing a weapon to school in the past (55% versus 18%). Youth who said they were *not* in a gang were asked “do you feel you will ever be in a gang” – all (100%) said they would not (not shown).

Additional information about juvenile gang involvement is compiled for this project through a gang addendum. Data from this addendum through 2011 is available on the SANDAG website and updated information will be published later this year as part of the SAM CJ Bulletin series.

OTHER RISK FACTORS

Teen Prostitution

As part of the interview, juveniles were asked if they have ever been approached by someone offering to pimp or prostitute them and if so where this happened. Five percent responded affirmatively. These one boy and five girls were approached on the street (2), in a park (1), at the mall (1), at a house (1), and at a motel (1) (not shown).

Six percent of the youth (2 boys and 5 girls) reported ever engaging in prostitution, two of whom had done so in the past 30 days. On average, these youth began to engage in this activity at the age of 15.0 (range 12 to 18). Four (two boys and two girls) of the youth also reported engaging in pimping, with both of the girls also reporting they had engaged in prostitution (not shown).

Home Environment

Overall, most of the youth interviewed reported living in a stable environment, but some lived in a group setting or other arrangement without a biological parent. Specifically, prior to arrest, 94 percent reported living in a stable residence, 4 percent said they lived in some type of group setting, and 2 percent said they were homeless. When asked who they lived with, two-thirds (66%) said their mother; 35 percent their father; and 23 percent said they did not live with a parent at all. Other information regarding the youths' lives included:

- when asked to rate the quality of their relationship with their parents, 45 percent said “excellent” or “very good,” 40 percent said “good,” and 15 percent said “not very good” or “very bad;”
- when asked who they would turn to when they needed someone, 50 percent said a parent, 18 percent a friend, 18 percent another adult, 10 percent a youth relative, and 3 percent said no one;
- 68 percent reported that they lived with at least one sibling;
- 25 percent said that their immediate family had some type of previous Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement;
- 11 percent had been in foster care at some time in their life;

- 3 percent said they were already a parent themselves, 7 percent of the boys said their girlfriend was pregnant, and 5 percent of the girls said they were pregnant; and
- 43 percent of the youth reported a sibling and 59 percent said a parent had been previously arrested and booked into a detention facility (not shown).

Gender Differences in Self-Reported Risk Factors

While males are more likely to come into contact with the justice system for delinquent acts than girls, the data compiled here supports other research nationally that indicates females who enter the system may be more likely to have problems related to prior victimization, substance abuse, and mental health.

Specifically, in 2012, girls that were interviewed were significantly more likely than boys to report that:

- their families had prior CPS involvement (64% vs. 15%);
- they had ever run away from home (76% vs. 41%);
- they had tried alcohol at an earlier age on average (11.8 years vs. 12.9);
- they had tried meth (56% vs. 21%), ecstasy (60% vs. 27%); LSD (28% vs. 7%), and spice (76% vs. 45%); and
- they had missed school due to substance use (50% vs. 16%).

These statistics, which are also consistent with analyses of data in previous years, speaks to the continued need for gender-responsive and specific services for this at-risk population.

Parental Drug Use

When asked whether they knew if their parents had abused alcohol or used other drugs, 14 percent said their parents had abused alcohol, 14 percent used other drugs, and 17 percent both (55% said their parents had not abused either alcohol and/or other drugs).⁶ When asked what (drugs) they used, the most

common responses included marijuana (79%), meth (42%), cocaine/crack (18%), and heroin (15%) (not shown).

Runaway Behavior

In addition to youth being exposed to parental substance use and criminal justice system contact, it also appears that many of the youth are running away. Specifically, 48 percent of the youth reported they had previously run away from home, which included 76 percent of the girls and 41 percent of the boys, a significant difference. Youth who reported previously running away were also significantly more likely to report their families had previous contact with CPS (73% versus 39%), that their parents had abused drugs (60% versus 38%), and that they had tried alcohol (98% versus 82%), tobacco (84% versus 63%), marijuana (100% versus 85%), meth (41% versus 16%), and ecstasy (45% versus 24%) (not shown).

Drug Use at Home

While only 6 percent of the youth reported that they had ever used illicit drugs with their parents, 43 percent reported that they had used drugs at home previously (with 58% of the 48 youth acknowledging a parent or caregiver was at home when this substance use occurred and 46% that the caregiver was aware of this use). Twenty-two percent (22%) reported keeping drugs at home (not shown).

Mental Health

Overall, 22 percent reported they had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Seventy-three percent (73%) of these 26 youth reported they had been prescribed Ritalin or Adderall, two of whom had also given or sold the drug to someone else (not shown).

One in ten (10%) youth reported they had previously thought about killing themselves and 8 of these 12 individuals had previously made a suicide attempt (not shown).

⁶ According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 12 percent of children in the general population live with at least one parent who

abused or was dependent on alcohol or other drugs in the past year (CESAR Fax [2009, May]. *More Than One in Ten Children in the U.S. Live with a Substance-Abusing or Substance Dependent Parent*, 18, 18. Available: www.cesar.umd.edu).

Table 7
SUMMARY OF OTHER YOUTH RISK FACTORS

Previously ran away from home	48%
Parental alcohol or other drug abuse	45%
Previous CPS involvement	25%
Does not live with biological parent	23%
ADHD/ADD diagnosis	22%
Previously in foster care	11%
Suicidal thoughts	10%

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

SCHOOL AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Overall, 91 percent of the 2012 sample reported they had previously skipped school or been truant⁷ and 17 percent were not currently enrolled in school because of an expulsion, suspension, or dropping out on their own.

Other information related to school included:

- 77 percent reported they do not like school;
- 43 percent have been referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB);
- 19 percent have an Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- 24 percent have brought a weapon to school, most often a knife,⁸
- the median GPA was 2.5 (range .0 to 4.3); and
- 14 percent of the youth overall said they have been bullied - 9 percent at school, 10 percent near school, and 7 percent over the Internet or through telephone messages (not shown).

One-third (33%) reported current participation in pro-social extracurricular activities. When these 40 youth were asked to describe the type of activity they were involved in, 53 percent indicated a church-sponsored activity (including regular attendance), 48 percent a sport, 8 percent an artistic endeavor, and 8 percent a school club. Thirteen percent (13%) of the youth also reported having a job (part-time for 47% of these youth, 27% odd jobs, and 27% full-time) (not shown).

⁷ The median number of days truant of those who were truant in the previous month was 4.0 (range 1 to 20).

⁸ When asked the reason for bringing the knife, 57 percent of the 28 respondents noted the protection it offered, 18 percent said for status, 11 percent for retaliation, 4 percent to threaten someone, and 31 percent for another reason - including they forgot they had it on them or it was for someone else.

OTHER RISKY BEHAVIORS

At the end of the interview, youth were asked if they had participated in any types of specific risky behaviors in the past 12 months. As Table 8 shows, around one-third or more reported they had engaged in a number of these behaviors, with the most common including getting in trouble with parents, getting sick, participating in sex acts,⁹ feeling badly about something they did when drunk or high, and riding in a car with a driver under the influence.

Table 8
MANY JUVENILE ARRESTEES PARTICIPATE IN RISKY BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH DRUG USE

Get in trouble with parents for using alcohol/drugs	46%
Get sick from alcohol/drugs	40%
Participate in sex acts after using alcohol/drugs	35%
Feel bad about something done when drunk/high	35%
Ride in a car with a driver who has used alcohol/drugs	32%
Not remember what happened while drinking or using drugs	29%
Get in physical fight after using alcohol/drugs	28%
Pass out after using alcohol/drugs	27%
Go to school drunk/high	26%
Miss school because of alcohol/ drugs	23%
Drive a car after drinking/using drugs	13%
Have alcohol/drug-related health problems	9%
TOTAL	116-120

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: SANDAG SAM Program, 2012

Youth also are asked about whether certain traumatic events had happened to them in the past year. Around one in four (26%) reported that one had occurred and 8 percent that more than one had occurred. These events included being expelled (19% of all respondents), the death of a relative (12%), being involved in a serious accident (10%), and the divorce of their parents (3%) (not shown).

In another series of questions, youth were asked if they had ever crossed the U.S./Mexico border to obtain alcohol or other drugs. Overall, 9 percent (11) of the

⁹ Twenty-three percent (23%) of the youth reported they "always" use a condom when engaging in sexual activities, 23 percent said "most of the time," 28 percent "some of the time," and 28 percent said "never."

youth said they had, with 9 crossing for just alcohol and 2 just for drugs. In addition, around one in ten (8%) reported they had previously been approached to transport drugs across the border. The median age of first crossing was 16.0 (range 13 to 18) for alcohol and 15.5 (range 15 to 16) for other drugs and those who crossed for drugs reported obtaining heroin (2) and marijuana (1) (not shown).

ADDITIONAL SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Additional descriptive information regarding this sample of 120 youth follows.

- The average age of these youth was 15.8 years (range 12 to 18).
- 66 percent of the youth were Hispanic, 21 percent White, 10 percent Black, and 3 percent other.
- 78 percent of the youth reported they were born in San Diego County, 7 percent somewhere else in California, 7 percent in another state, and 9 percent in another country.
- 33 percent reported currently living in the Central Major Statistical Area (MSA)¹⁰ of San Diego County, 19 percent in North County East, 13 percent in North County West, 13 percent in South Suburban, 12 percent in East Suburban, 7 percent in North City, 3 percent outside of San Diego County, and 1 percent in East County.

SUMMARY

As the data here describe, youth booked into Juvenile Hall continue to face a number of risk factors that require communities and systems of care to work together. Some of the risks described here include both gateway and other drug use at relatively early ages; poly-drug use; negative peer groups, including gang involvement; challenging home environments with individuals who also use drugs and have had contact with the justice system; and truancy. These data offer program and policy leaders support for continued prevention and targeted intervention services at a time when resources are limited. Specific areas of prevention and intervention focus could include ensuring treatment availability that is family-based; education for parents regarding the importance of prevention including strategies for effectively interacting with their children about this topic; coordination with educational units to address truancy, as well as facilitating prevention messages; and continued support of pro-social activities.

¹⁰ MSAs are groups of subregional areas (SRAs) which, in turn, are groups of census tracts. The seven MSAs encompass the entire San Diego region, with boundaries remaining static over time. For a map of these areas, please see www.sandag.org/resources/maps_and_gis/gis_downloads/downloads/images/msa90.html.