

CJNBRIEF



2017 Methamphetamine Use by San Diego County Arrestees

Data from the SANDAG Substance Abuse Monitoring program



Research findings from the Criminal Justice Clearinghouse

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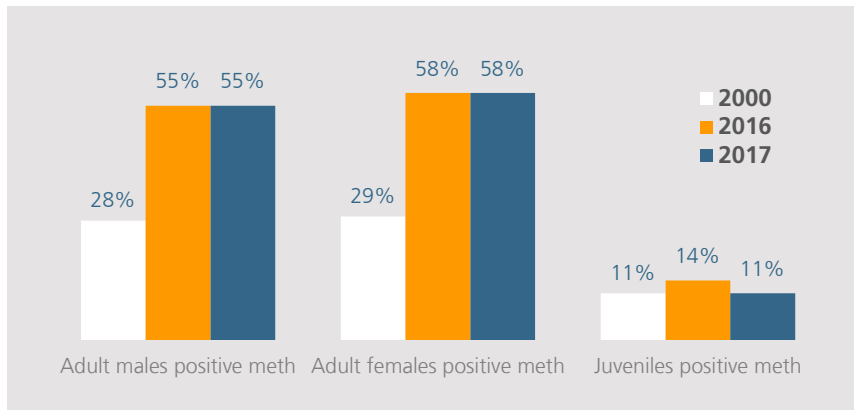
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July 9, 2018

Introduction

Interviews with adult and juvenile arrestees regarding drug use and other risky behavior have been conducted by SANDAG since 1987. As part of this effort, all arrestees who are randomly selected to participate in the Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program and report methamphetamine (meth) use in the past 30 days are asked to answer additional questions (i.e., the meth addendum). The meth addendum was added to the research protocol because meth has consistently been one of the most commonly used illicit drugs by arrestees in San Diego County and the risk the drug poses to the user, children in the household, and the community in general. This CJ In Brief summarizes data from these interviews and is the fourth in the series of CJ Bulletins, In Briefs, and Flashes for this program from this most recent calendar year 2017.

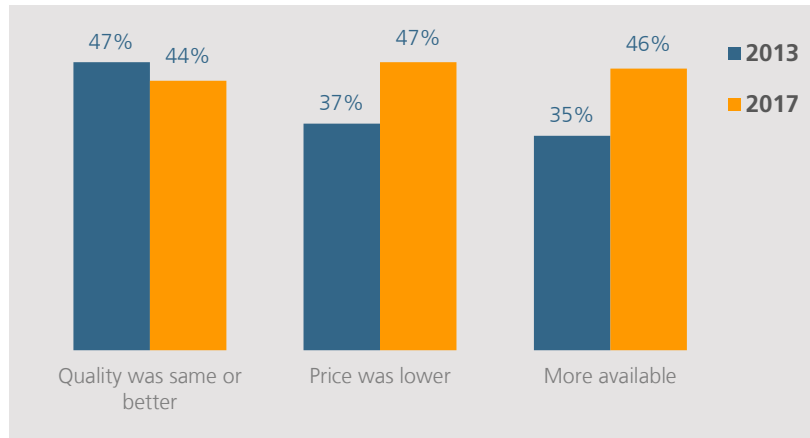
METH USE In 2017, the percent of adult males and females positive for meth remained the same as in 2016 – 55 percent for males and 58 percent for females. These 2016 and 2017 rates represent 18-year highs. The proportion of juveniles positive for meth was down in 2017 (11%) from 2016 (14%).



Percent of arrestees positive for meth, 2000-2017

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Adult males	28%	32%	34%	38%	43%	44%	36%	24%	20%	22%	25%	26%	31%	41%	40%	48%	55%	55%
Adult females	29%	37%	37%	47%	42%	51%	47%	44%	31%	38%	33%	39%	47%	46%	53%	52%	58%	58%
Juveniles	11%	11%	12%	15%	13%	21%	10%	8%	10%	6%	8%	4%	4%	10%	13%	8%	14%	11%

AVAILABILITY OF METH A five-year comparison shows that while around the same percent of arrestees reported that meth quality was the same or better in 2017, compared to 2013, a much larger percentage of arrestees said the price was lower and a greater percentage said the drug was more available.



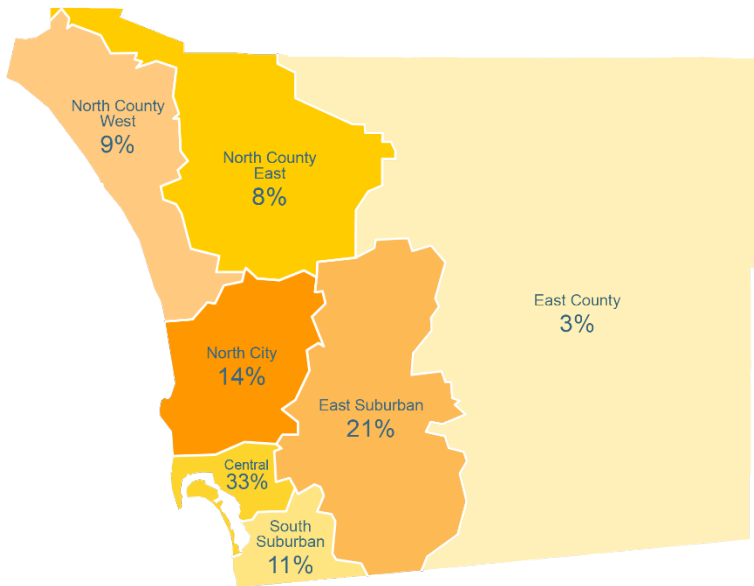
“It’s a nasty drug. It gets you very high. It eats you up alive.”
 46-year-old Black female arrested for spousal abuse

According to law enforcement, over the past several years, drug trafficking organizations in Mexico responded to legislation that banned the legal importation of ephedrine/pseudoephedrine by changing their production method to the P2P method. Since the production process is continually improving in efficiency, prices can be lowered and quality maintained. In “super labs,” multiton quantities of meth are now being produced daily.

Method for obtaining meth	Pattern of use (on average)	Duration and mode of use
<i>How do “typical” meth-using arrestees get the drug?</i>	<i>How often and how much do they use?</i>	<i>How long and how do they use it?</i>
<p>98% purchased in San Diego County</p> <p>48% have sold meth or acted as a middleman in last year</p> <p>43% have a main source</p> <p>47% buy from someone else when main source not available</p> <p>59% have bought from someone they didn’t know</p> <p>36% have carried a weapon with them when they got meth</p>	<p>Use 3 times in a day when they use</p> <p>Use 7 days in a row</p> <p>Use 1 gram of meth each time they use</p>	<p>75% usually smoke it (alone or with another drug)</p> <p>50% have also snorted it</p> <p>35% have injected it</p> <p>On average (median), adults had used meth for 14 years, with a range of less than a year to 47 years</p>

Takeaway Most meth users obtain the meth in the County, about half were involved in drug distribution in some way, and over one in three have carried a weapon when obtaining it.

LOCATION OF METH PURCHASE Most arrestees reported they bought meth in the Central or East Suburban major statistical areas of the County in 2017.

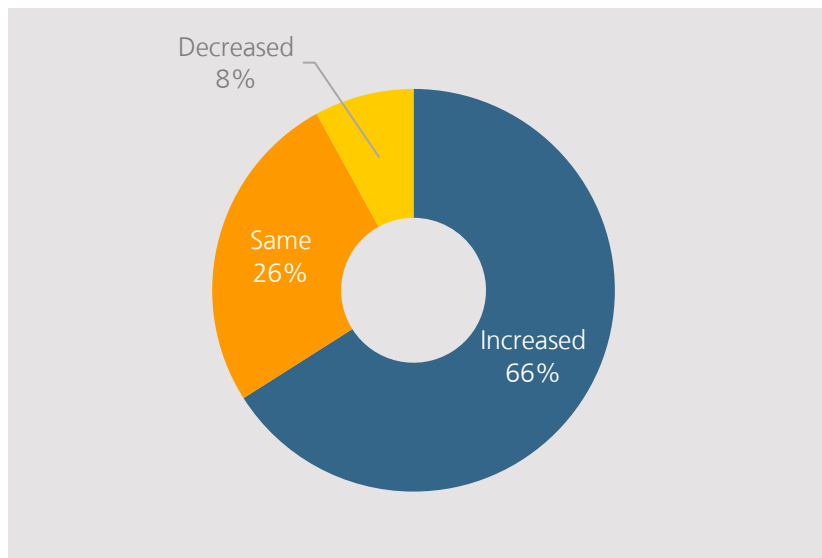


62%

of those employed or who were a student report using meth before going to work or school.

The most common job types reported by these arrestees were construction, unskilled labor, and food service.

DEMAND FOR METH According to arrestees involved in distribution, two-thirds (66%) said the demand had increased in 2017 compared to one year ago.



“It is the ultimate catalyst for self-destruction. It is absolute incarceration.”

30-year-old White male arrested for a property offense

Study background

This SANDAG CJ In Brief, **2017 Methamphetamine Use by San Diego County Arrestees**, is part of a series of reports highlighting findings from data collected as part of the SAM program. As part of this program, adult and juvenile arrestees are approached within 48 hours of their arrest (and booking) to participate in an interview regarding their drug use and other recent behaviors.

In 2017, a total of 487 adults were interviewed as part of SAM and provided a valid urine sample. Of these, 238 (49%) reported having used meth in the past 30 days. The meth addendum was completed with 234 adults, including 157 males and 77 females. For the 106 juveniles, 23 (22%) reported meth use in the past 30 days and 20 completed an addendum, including 13 boys and 7 girls.

“Meth is not worth it. It destroys you.”

27-year-old Hispanic female arrested for a drug offense

Acknowledgements

This effort would not be possible without the cooperation of the San Diego County Sheriff’s and Probation Departments, and the funding support of the Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), County of San Diego, and SANDAG member agencies. To learn more about the SAM program and to access other current reports, as well as aggregate data from the meth addendum, please visit sandag.org/sam.

RECOMMENDED CITATION San Diego Association of Governments (2018). *2017 Methamphetamine Use by San Diego County Arrestees*. San Diego, CA: Author

“I wouldn’t wish the use of this drug on my worst enemy.”

50-year-old White male arrested for a property offense