



OSAM-O-GRAM



DATE: June 2006

DATELINE: Dayton, Ohio

Wright State University & the University of Akron

Targeted Response Initiative on Young Heroin Users in Ohio Part I: Abuser Characteristics and Perceived Trends of Heroin Availability and Abuse

Between January and June 2006, the OSAM Network conducted a Targeted Response Investigation (TRI) with heroin users between *the ages of 18 and 30*. The purpose of the study was to provide a preliminary epidemiologic description of heroin use and substance abuse treatment experiences among young adults. This is part one of a five-part series of OSAM-O-Grams describing the general characteristics of young adult heroin users and reported trends of heroin availability and abuse in Ohio.

Fifty-eight individuals who were recovering or actively using heroin were interviewed in Akron (6), Cincinnati (13), Cleveland (5), Columbus (6), Dayton (11), Youngstown (5), the rural southeast (5) and the rural west (7). The mean age was about 25 years. On average, participants reported using heroin for the first time 3.6 years ago. About 65% were in substance abuse treatment or recovery. More than 25% reported using heroin on the same day or one day prior to being interviewed.

Most participants were white, and about 45% were female. The majority had a high school education. Almost 75% were unemployed, and 60% were involved with the criminal justice system. More than 40% of the participants reported living in a suburb or a rural area. Of those who indicated their family's socioeconomic status (37), 75% reported growing up in middle class or upper-middle class families. Eleven percent reported growing up in lower-middle class families, and 13% grew up in lower class families.

Availability of heroin was rated as high by most participants. Brown powder heroin remained the most common. Increasing availability of tar heroin was reported in Columbus and Athens. Average heroin prices ranged between \$120 and \$170 per gram. The majority of participants believed that heroin use has been increasing, especially among white, young adults.

Parts II, III, IV and V of this OSAM-O-Gram series will describe initiation to heroin, patterns of heroin abuse, injection-related risks, and treatment experiences.

Table 1. Demographic and basic drug use characteristics	No (%)
Age	
Range	20 - 31
Mean (SD)	24.6 (3.4)
Gender	
Male	31 (53.4%)
Female	27 (46.6%)
Ethnicity	
White	52 (91.2%)
African American	4 (7.0%)
Other	1 (1.8%)
Education	
Less than high school	17 (29.3%)
High school or GED	23 (39.7%)
Some college	18 (31.0%)
Employed	
Yes	18 (25.9%)
No	43 (74.1%)
Marital status	
Single	50 (86.2%)
Married	3 (5.2%)
Separated	5 (8.6%)
Residence	
City	34 (58.6%)
Suburb	13 (22.4%)
Rural area	11 (19.0%)
Criminal justice system	
No	23 (39.7%)
Yes, probation or parole	20 (34.5%)
Yes, case pending	12 (20.7%)
Yes, incarcerated	3 (5.2%)
Years since first heroin use	
Mean (SD)	3.6 (1.7)
Last heroin use (days ago)	
Same day or 1 day ago	15 (25.9%)
2 to 7 days ago	12 (20.7%)
1 to 4 weeks ago	2 (3.4%)
More than 4 weeks ago	29 (50.0%)
In treatment or recovery?	
Yes	37 (64.9%)
No	20 (35.1%)

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Informants located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the June 2006 OSAM Network meeting.

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