



# OSAM-O-GRAM



DATE: January 2005

DATELINE: Ohio

Wright State University  
The University of Akron

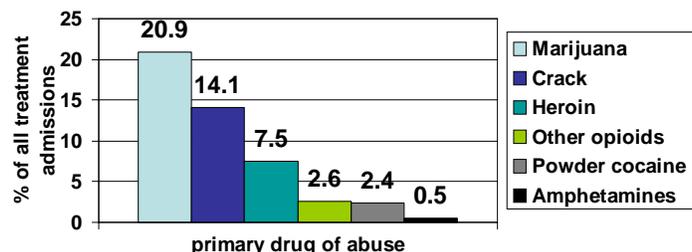
## Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions and Methamphetamine Abuse

The OSAM Network has been reporting sporadic increases in methamphetamine abuse since 2000. First reports about increases in methamphetamine abuse were from law enforcement professionals and active drug users. Initially, treatment providers were not seeing an increase in methamphetamine abuse among their clients in treatment.

In 2002, **Akron** area treatment agencies were the first to note increases in methamphetamine treatment admissions. In late 2004, **Dayton** area treatment providers also noticed increases in methamphetamine-related admissions. They reported seeing two types of methamphetamine abusers: 1) an older group (more than 30 years old) consisting of white individuals, many referred to treatment by the courts; and 2) a younger group (early 20s) consisting of white, suburban individuals. These descriptions are consistent with the characteristics reported by active methamphetamine users as well as law enforcement personnel.

Despite the fact that some treatment agencies have started seeing methamphetamine abusers seeking admission, methamphetamine may represent a very low proportion of all substance abuse treatment admissions in Ohio, if data from 2003 is any indication (Treatment Episode Data Set, Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

2003 Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions in Ohio (Treatment Episode Data Set)



\*Amphetamine category is composed mostly of methamphetamine abusers.

Interviews with active methamphetamine users suggest that some individuals may conceal their use from treatment providers or avoid treatment services altogether fearing that their use may be disclosed to law enforcement. For example, a 40-year-old active methamphetamine user from the Dayton area explained:

**Interviewer:** Do you know meth users who have gone to treatment?

**Participant:** What I've seen um, they'll go in for something else like alcohol abuse.... You just go in there, and whatever the treatment is for alcohol... Ya know, you're basically killin' two birds with one stone without ever telling the doctor.

**Interviewer:** Why is it that people would avoid telling that they are methamphetamine users?

**Participant:** One of the main reasons would be because of the retribution that could come back from law enforcement....

OSAM Network data suggest that among at least some methamphetamine abusers, heightened media attention on law enforcement efforts regarding methamphetamine production and abuse may be perceived as a significant barrier to seeking substance abuse treatment.

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 January 2005 OSAM Network meeting.

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