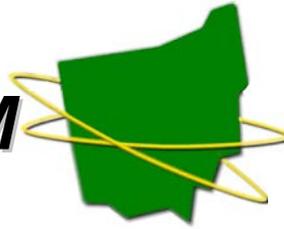




OSAM-O-GRAM



DATE: January 2007
DATELINE: Ohio

Wright State University & the University of Akron

Targeted Response Initiative on Substance Abuse among Older Adults Part I: Participant Characteristics

In response to collaborative work between the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) and other state agencies focusing on seniors, the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network (OSAM) was asked to conduct a *Targeted Response Initiative* on substance abuse issues among older adults (aged 60 years and above). The goal of the initiative was to describe the perceptions of service providers and older adults regarding the nature of alcohol and other drug abuse practices as well as substance abuse treatment needs among seniors. This Osam-O-Gram is part one of a five-part series on drug abuse among older-aged adults.

Between June 2006 and January 2007, 31 focus groups and 12 individual interviews were conducted by OSAM Network Regional Epidemiologists. Overall, 166 individuals were interviewed in 8 locations across the state, including Akron (17), Cincinnati (21), Cleveland (22), Columbus (18), Dayton (31), Youngstown (18), Cleveland (22), and Athens (15).

Eighty-two participants were social service providers, including substance abuse treatment counselors, visiting nurses and home health aides, case managers working at the Area Agencies on Aging, and other professionals working with older adults.

Area	Seniors: Active or recovering users and non-users	Service providers	Total number of participants
Akron	12	5	17
Athens	2	13	15
Cincinnati	10	11	21
Cleveland	22	0	22
Columbus	6	12	18
Dayton	15	16	31
Toledo	9	20	29
Youngstown	13	5	18
Total	84	82	166

Eighty-four participants were older adults. Twenty six of them did not self-report drug abuse but were knowledgeable about drug abuse trends among their peers. Fifty eight of the senior participants were active or recovering drug users. The majority reported alcohol abuse (70%). About 30% were heroin abusers, and 28% reported abusing powdered cocaine (typically, in combination with heroin). Pharmaceutical drug abuse was reported by 17% of senior participants. About 9% of older adults used marijuana and 14% crack cocaine.

Parts II-V of this series will describe patterns and perceived extent of alcohol, prescription drug and illicit drug abuse in the older-aged adult population, perceived reasons of alcohol and other drug abuse, consequences of abuse, and substance abuse treatment issues specific to older-aged adults. This series highlights a growing and complex phenomenon that has typically not been considered part of our country's "drug problem."

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 2007 OSAM Network meeting.

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