



The Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network (OSAM)

Executive Summary

Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services

This Executive Summary presents findings from the OSAM meeting held in Columbus, Ohio, on June 18, 2008. It is based on data collected from January 2008 – June 2008 by Regional Epidemiologists in Athens and surrounding counties (rural southeast), the Akron and Canton areas, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown. They interviewed active and recovering drug users, substance abuse treatment providers, and law enforcement personnel, and collected statistical data to enhance their drug trend reports. Crime labs in Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo, and Canton, as well as those of the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI & I) in Richfield (covering Cleveland, Akron and Youngstown), London (southern and central Ohio), and Bowling Green (northwest Ohio excluding Toledo) provided additional data on drug purity and availability. Researchers at Wright State University reviewed reports and compiled this summary of major findings.

Crack Cocaine

- Crack-cocaine availability remains high, and its use is widespread. Users noted declines in quality and price. Injection of crack was noted everywhere but in Toledo and Columbus.

Focus group participants reported widespread, high availability of crack cocaine, which was confirmed by all crime labs but Cincinnati's. User group members noted poor, declining quality, but most crime labs indicated high purity (60%+). Gram prices ranged generally from \$25 – \$70, but \$100 was reported in Athens. Prices for 1/8 ounce (“8-balls”) ranged from \$100 – \$150, but were lower in Dayton and Cincinnati (\$80 – \$100). According to participants, crack-cocaine user groups remain diverse, and increasing numbers of white suburban users were reported in Toledo and Dayton. Use by Hispanics was noted in Cincinnati and Dayton. Middle-aged and elderly users were again reported in several areas of the state. Crack cocaine is usually smoked alone, although it is sometimes smoked with marijuana. Users in Akron, Athens, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Youngstown, and Dayton reported that heroin users inject crack cocaine and heroin together (known

as “speedballing”). Crack cocaine is sometimes also used together with alcohol, marijuana, and benzodiazepines.

Powdered Cocaine

- The availability and perceived quality of powdered cocaine is moderate to high. Its abuse is often associated with heroin users, older professionals, and whites in their late teens and 20s.

Akron, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo participants rated powdered cocaine availability as moderate; however Athens, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Youngstown participants suggested that availability was high. Crime labs noted high to moderate availability of powdered cocaine, and those in Dayton and BCI & I Richfield indicated increases in its availability. User group member reports of the quality of powdered cocaine varied throughout the state, but those in Akron, Athens, Cincinnati, and Dayton reported “good” or “excellent” quality. Crime labs generally reported moderate levels of purity (30% – 60%), but the crime lab in Cleveland reported high purity (60%+). Prices of grams of powdered cocaine ranged from \$30 – \$80, except in Athens and Toledo, where prices of \$80 – \$100 were reported. Intranasal inhalation was again reported to be the most common mode of use of powdered cocaine, but most areas of the state reported injection use, typically in conjunction with heroin. Users reported again that powdered cocaine is sometimes used also with alcohol, marijuana and benzodiazepines.

Heroin

- Users, treatment providers, and crime lab professionals rated heroin availability as moderate to high. Most areas of the state continue to report transition from pharmaceutical opioid to heroin abuse.

Increases in heroin availability and use were reported in Athens, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Youngstown. Powder form heroin predominates, except in Columbus and Athens, where tar is more common. Most other areas of the state reported low to moderate availability of tar heroin. Columbus and Cincinnati users noted high-quality heroin, but users elsewhere reported fair to poor, declining quality. Several crime labs

reported high purity (60%+), but those in Dayton, Toledo, and Canton-Stark County noted moderate purity, ranging from 30% to 60%. Grams of powder heroin sold for \$90 – \$120 in Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown, but for \$200 in Akron and for \$150 – \$200 (white powder) and \$125 – \$170 (brown powder) in Cincinnati. The crime labs in Cleveland, Dayton, and BCI & I Richfield reported heroin-fentanyl mixtures, which Dayton and Toledo users also noted. Heroin users included those in their 60s, but those in their early 20s were particularly noted in Akron, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown. Dayton treatment providers again noted increased admissions among white, suburban youth. Participants in Athens, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo reported that users often make the transition from abuse of pharmaceutical opioids to abuse of heroin. Use of heroin by means of injection was reported to be more common, but intranasal inhalation was reported in every region except Cleveland; participants in Columbus reported the smoking of heroin. Heroin is sometimes used in conjunction with cocaine, marijuana, and pharmaceutical opioids and tranquilizers.

Pharmaceutical Opioids

- **Vicodin® and Percocet® remain the most commonly abused pharmaceutical opioids. There were increasing reports of the illicit use of Suboxone®.**

Users and treatment providers reported the moderate to high availability of Vicodin® (hydrocodone and acetaminophen) and Percocet® (oxycodone and acetaminophen). Crime labs confirmed these reports and noted overall increases in Vicodin® availability. Estimates of the availability of OxyContin® (oxycodone, controlled-release) ranged from low in Akron to moderate in Dayton (which represents an increase) to high in Athens. Crime labs reported moderate to high availability of OxyContin®, although Columbus users and the Columbus crime lab noted a slight decrease. High availability of Dilaudid® (hydromorphone) was reported by the Cleveland crime lab, and some users in Toledo rated its availability as moderate, but few cases were reported by other crime labs and user groups. Availability of methadone tablets and wafers was reported low to moderate in most regions of the state. The street availability of methadone in liquid form was reported by Toledo, Cincinnati, and Columbus users, and Columbus crime lab personnel. Athens and Cincinnati users reported low to moderate availability of fentanyl patches. Dayton, Youngstown, Cleveland, and Toledo participants reported moderate to high availability of Suboxone® (buprenorphine and naloxone). Most crime labs reported its low availability, but the crime lab in Cleveland reported high and increasing availability.

Vicodin® and Percocet® prices still range from \$0.50 – \$1 per milligram. Athens users noted increases in OxyContin® prices back to prior levels of \$1 per milligram. The prices reported in Youngstown, Dayton, and Cincinnati for Suboxone® in 8-milligram tablets ranged from \$5 – \$20. Fentanyl patches ranged in price from \$20 – \$60, depending on size. Forty-milligram methadone wafers sold for \$20 – \$40 in Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown.

Males and females, old and young, especially white teens and young adults, abuse pharmaceutical opioids. Swallowing tablets or crushing and snorting them are the most common use modes, but the crushing of OxyContin® tablets and their injection was reported in Athens, Cleveland, Dayton, and Toledo. Pharmaceutical opioids are sometimes used with cocaine, alcohol, heroin, and benzodiazepines.

Benzodiazepines

- **Abuse of Xanax®, Klonopin®, and Valium® remains common.**

Users reported high availability of benzodiazepines. Athens, Dayton, and Toledo users reported high availability of Klonopin® (clonazepam) and Xanax® (alprazolam). Most crime labs noted moderate to high and increasing availability of Xanax®, as did Akron and Youngstown users. Athens, Cleveland, and Toledo participants reported high availability of Valium® (diazepam). Benzodiazepine prices (\$1 – \$5 per tablet, depending on dose) haven't changed. The most common mode of administration is oral, but intranasal inhalation of crushed tablets was also reported, and injection was noted in Cincinnati and Cleveland. Benzodiazepine users are diverse, but whites and those aged 18 – 25 and 35 – 50 (especially female) appear to be disproportionately represented. Benzodiazepines are sometimes used also with marijuana, heroin, pharmaceutical opioids, and alcohol.

Other Pharmaceuticals

- **Abuse of Seroquel®, Soma® and other pharmaceuticals was reported.**

Toledo and Dayton participants again noted abuse of Seroquel® (quetiapine fumarate). Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and BCI & I London crime labs reported its low availability. Each crime lab reported low availability of Soma® (carisoprodol), but users in Dayton and Cleveland noted its easy, increasing availability. Abuse of Ritalin® (methylphenidate) and Adderall® (amphetamine/dextroamphetamine) was reported in Athens, Dayton, and Toledo; most crime labs reported their low to moderate availability.

Methamphetamine

- Low to moderate availability of methamphetamine was reported.

Participants reported low availability of methamphetamine in Akron, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and Youngstown, while those in Athens, Cleveland, and Toledo reported moderate availability. Slight increases in methamphetamine availability were indicated by Toledo users; the Toledo crime lab reported low and declining availability, while the BCI & I Bowling Green crime lab noted moderate, increasing availability. In addition to the considerable local production of “powder,” “bathtub,” and “peanut butter” varieties of methamphetamine, Toledo users suspected out-of-state origins for other, higher quality forms. Reports of prices per gram ranged from \$40 in Toledo to \$80 – \$150 elsewhere. Users were said to be rural, “working-class” individuals, but use by younger people in club settings was also noted. Crime labs reported mostly moderate (30% – 60%) to high (60%+) purity. Smoking and intranasal inhalation were commonly reported, but injection use was reported in Toledo and Columbus. Users reported that pharmaceutical tranquilizers and opioids are used after binges of methamphetamine use to enable sleep.

Marijuana

- Across Ohio, marijuana availability remains high, and its use is widespread.

Marijuana availability across Ohio is high. An ounce of low-grade marijuana (“dirt-weed”) sells for \$40 – \$80, mid-grade (“commercial”) sells for \$100-\$150, and high-grade (“Texas Blueberry,” “G13” and “Purple Haze”) sells for \$250 – \$450 per ounce and \$40 – \$50 per 1/8 ounce. Users and treatment providers reported that marijuana is perceived to be a low-risk drug, and that it is used by those of varied ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses. Teen, pre-teen, middle-aged, and elderly users were reported in Akron, Dayton and Toledo. Marijuana is sometimes used in conjunction with alcohol, benzodiazepines, crack cocaine, and heroin.

Hallucinogens

- Increasing availability of Ecstasy and low to moderate availability of LSD and psilocybin mushrooms was reported.

Athens, Columbus, Dayton, and Columbiana County users reported increasing availability and abuse of Ecstasy (MDMA) that is consistent with reports from January 2008. Crime labs in Cleveland, Toledo, and BCI & I Bowling Green reported high availability of Ecstasy, but crime labs in Dayton and Canton-Stark County reported low and declining availability. Users reported widely ranging prices of tablets of Ecstasy, selling for as little as \$8 – \$10 or for \$15 – \$20 or \$25 – \$35. Club-goers, teens and young adults, including high school and college students, were reported to be the most typical users, but even younger users and African Americans were noted in Dayton and Akron. The crime labs in Columbus, BCI & I London, and Canton-Stark County reported considerable adulteration of Ecstasy tablets with methamphetamine, benzylpiperazine (BZP) and trifluoromethylpiperazine (TFMPP). Users and crime labs reported low, seasonal availability of LSD and psilocybin mushrooms, but LSD was reported by the BCI & I crime labs in Richfield and London as being moderately available. Dayton participants perceived “young whites” to be the typical users of mushrooms. Cincinnati, Dayton, and Toledo participants reported prices of \$20 – \$35 per 1/8 ounce. No one reported the use of benzylpiperazines, but four crime labs noted its moderate availability, and BCI & I Bowling Green reported its high availability. Use of Salvia divinorum was reported in Akron, Toledo, and Dayton.

PCP

- High availability and abuse of PCP was again reported in the Cleveland area.

Cleveland users and its crime lab reported high, localized availability of PCP, which is sold typically in bottles of different sizes or as cigarettes dipped in it, each of which cost \$5.

Full OSAM reports are available at: <http://www.odadas.state.oh.us>.

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Regional epidemiologists located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual reports 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 2008 OSAM Network meeting.

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