



Ohio

Department of Alcohol &
Drug Addiction Services



Boonshoft
School of Medicine
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

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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 January 23, 2009. It is based on data collected from June 2008 to January 2009 in Athens (rural southeast), Akron/Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown. Regional Epidemiologists 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) provided additional data on drug availability and purity indicators. Researchers at Wright State University reviewed reports and compiled this summary of major findings.

Crack Cocaine

- **Decreases in crack cocaine availability and quality were noted in most regions. Users noted increased prices of the drug. Reports of crack cocaine injection increased in Toledo, Columbus and Dayton.**

Users, treatment providers, and law enforcement professionals indicated decreased availability of crack cocaine in most areas of the state, except Columbus. Previously, crack availability was rated 10 (on a 0 to 10 scale) in all regions, but it decreased to 7-10 in the second half of 2008. Crime lab professionals in Cincinnati, Columbus, Canton and BCI&I Bowling Green also reported decreases in crack cases. As a result of decreased availability, users in Toledo, Dayton, and Athens reported being offered heroin instead of crack cocaine by their dealers. Users noted poor, declining quality of crack, and reported increased sales of counterfeit crack cocaine (“dummies” or “fleece”). However, most crime labs reported moderate to high purity of crack cocaine. Increases in crack cocaine prices were reported in several regions of the state with a gram selling for \$60-\$100. Prices for 1/8 ounce (“8-balls”) ranged from \$125-\$200, but sold for upwards of \$250 in Athens. In the prior reporting period, crack sold for \$25-\$70 per gram in most areas of the state. According to participants, crack cocaine user groups

remain diverse, but some increases were noted among younger users (aged 12-15) and whites, particularly females. Use by Hispanics was noted in Cincinnati and Dayton. Crack cocaine is typically smoked; however, crack injection among heroin users was reported in all regions, and increases in injection behavior were reported in Toledo, Columbus, and Dayton. This is the first time since 1999 that the OSAM Network has indicated a decrease in the availability of crack cocaine.

Powdered Cocaine

- **Moderate but decreasing availability of powdered cocaine was reported by users and crime lab professionals. Users reported poor quality and increased prices.**

Powdered cocaine availability was rated moderate and decreasing across the state, with Toledo, Cleveland, and Youngstown users reporting availability as low as 2-4 (on a 0 to 10 scale). Most crime labs reported moderate availability and decreased number of cases since the last reporting period. Users in all regions reported low, decreased quality of the drug. Crime labs generally reported moderate levels of purity (30% - 60%), with the exception of labs in Dayton (high, 60%+) and Canton-Stark (low, 10%-30%). Users reported increased prices of \$50-\$70 per gram, to upwards of \$100 in Athens, Cleveland, Dayton, and Cincinnati. An “8-ball” of powdered cocaine was priced at \$120-\$150, and prices of up to \$300 were reported in Cleveland, Dayton, and Athens. In the prior reporting period, powdered cocaine sold for \$30-\$80 per gram in most areas of the state. Intranasal inhalation is the most common mode of administration. Increases in injection behavior were reported in Dayton and Toledo. Powdered cocaine is sometimes used in combination with alcohol, heroin (“speedball”), marijuana, and benzodiazepines. Powdered cocaine was typically used by whites aged 20-40, young African-American crack dealers, and Hispanics. Its use among gay males was noted in Columbus and Cincinnati. This is the first time since 2003 that the OSAM Network has observed statewide decreases in availability and increases in prices of powdered cocaine.

Heroin

- Most regions of the state reported increasing availability of heroin. Substantial increases in heroin-related treatment admissions were noted in the Dayton and Athens areas.

According to users and crime lab professionals, heroin availability was high or moderately high and increasing in all regions of the state, except Columbus, where availability of heroin declined from high to moderate in the second half of 2008.

According to users, due to recent decreases in cocaine availability, some dealers switched to selling heroin instead of crack. As in the prior reporting period, powder heroin that varied in color from tan to brown was the predominant type in most regions of the state. Black tar was also available across the state, and it was the most commonly seen form of heroin in the Columbus and Athens areas. Crime labs reported moderate to high purity of heroin. Prices typically averaged \$60-\$65 per ½ gram or \$90-\$120 per gram in Dayton, Columbus, Toledo, and Youngstown, and between \$120-\$180 per gram in Akron and Cincinnati. Injection remained the most common route of administration in most areas of the state, and intranasal inhalation was typical among new, less experienced users.

Heroin was commonly used with powdered cocaine, pharmaceutical opioids, and benzodiazepines. Several areas of the state noted increases in heroin use, especially among young whites. Treatment providers in Athens and Dayton indicated substantial rise in heroin-related treatment admissions.

Pharmaceutical Opioids

- Emerging reports of Opana® (oxycodone) diversion and abuse were noted in Athens, Cincinnati, and Dayton. Several areas of the state noted increases in street availability of Suboxone® and Subutex®.

Users, treatment providers, and crime lab specialists in most regions of the state reported moderate to high street availability of hydrocodone and oxycodone-containing products, such as Vicodin® (hydrocodone and acetaminophen), Percocet® (oxycodone and acetaminophen) and OxyContin® (oxycodone, extended-release). There was a significant decline in availability of methadone wafers, but availability of methadone tablets was moderate in most regions of the state. Availability of Duragesic® (fentanyl transdermal system) and Dilaudid® (hydromorphone) was generally low. Emerging reports of street availability of Opana® (oxycodone) were noted by Regional Epidemiologists in Athens, Cincinnati, and Dayton. Crime lab data suggested its low availability in most regions of the state. Availability of Suboxone® (buprenorphine and naloxone) was generally low to moderate, but some increases were reported in Athens, Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus. Users and crime lab professionals in several regions of the state noted potential increases in street availability of Subutex® (buprenorphine).

Most pharmaceutical opioids, including Vicodin®, Percocet®, methadone tablets, and OxyContin®, continue to sell for about \$0.50-\$1 per milligram of opioid content. Suboxone® prices may range from \$5 to \$30 for an 8-milligram tablet.

Pharmaceutical opioids are typically taken orally or crushed and then inhaled intranasally. However, several areas of the state noted increasing reports of injection use of OxyContin®. Treatment providers in Dayton and users in Athens noted the first reports about injection use of Suboxone® and Subutex®, although these findings will have to be verified in the future OSAM Network reports. Illicit use of pharmaceutical opioids remains widespread. Although use has been reportedly more common among whites than other racial groups, several regions of the state noted increasing use by African Americans.

Benzodiazepines

- Xanax® and other benzodiazepines remain easily available in most regions of the state.

Cleveland and Columbus users noted moderate availability of Xanax® (alprazolam), but users from other areas of the state reported its availability as high, as did crime labs in Canton-Stark County, Cleveland, Dayton, and BCI & I Richfield and London. Most crime labs reported moderate to high availability of other benzodiazepines (e.g., clonazepam, diazepam, and lorazepam), but the crime labs in Toledo and BCI & I Bowling Green reported nil to low availability. Users reported oral ingestion and intranasal inhalation of benzodiazepines. Injection use of benzodiazepines was reported in Dayton. Users and treatment providers in several regions of the state noted their concurrent abuse with alcohol, marijuana, heroin, and pharmaceutical opioids.

Other Pharmaceuticals

- Several regions of the state noted high street availability of Ritalin® and Adderall®. Seroquel® remains easily available, but of low street value.

Users in Athens, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dayton reported moderate to high availability (5-10) of Ritalin® and Adderall®. Toledo school officials perceived their declining abuse by students. The Cleveland crime lab reported high availability, those in Cincinnati and BCI & I London and Richfield noted moderate availability, and other crime labs noted low availability.

Users in Akron, Athens, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo reported moderate to high availability of Seroquel®, and noted its low street value. Cleveland's crime lab reported high availability of Seroquel®, Dayton and Canton-Stark County crime labs reported its moderate availability, and others reported its low availability.

Methamphetamine

- Users and crime labs noted declining, low availability of methamphetamine.

Most users, law enforcement officials, and treatment providers reported low availability of methamphetamine. The Canton-

Stark County crime lab reported a slight increase to moderate availability. Users and crime labs reported availability of both powder and glass-type methamphetamine. Crime labs in Canton-Stark County, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo reported that methamphetamine was often found in “Ecstasy” (MDMA) tablets. Some users reported that powder-type methamphetamine sold for \$100 per gram, and glass-type sold for \$120 per gram. Typical users were said to be rural or suburban whites, and use by gay males was reported in Columbus. Crime labs in Cleveland and BCI&I London reported high purity (60% or greater), but other crime labs reported moderate to low purity. Cincinnati and Columbus users confirmed that most methamphetamine users smoke it, and that injection is uncommon. Treatment providers reported few treatment admissions for methamphetamine addiction.

Marijuana

- **Marijuana availability and use remain high. Its use remains socially acceptable in several quarters.**

Almost all users rated marijuana availability high, as did all crime labs but those in Cincinnati and BCI&I Bowling Green, which noted declines to moderate availability. Users again reported and named low-, medium- and high-quality types of marijuana. Most crime labs confirmed the high quality of the marijuana cases they processed. Ounces of low-grade marijuana sell for \$60-\$120, and those of mid-grade sell for \$80-\$150. High-grade varieties such as Hydro (or 'dro), Dank, Chronic and Purple Haze (or Purp) were reported to sell by the gram in prices ranging from \$10-\$30. Ounce prices for high-grade varieties ranged from \$160 (Youngstown) to \$200-\$450 (Akron, Athens, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton) to \$600-\$700 (Toledo). Cincinnati users perceived an increase in marijuana use by Hispanics. Marijuana users were reported to range in age from teenagers (or younger) to middle-aged and older adults. Marijuana was frequently used in conjunction with alcohol and other drugs. Concurrent use of marijuana and crack cocaine and/or powdered cocaine (variously dubbed “coco-puffin’,” “shake-and-bake,” or “Primo”-smoking) was reported in Akron, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown. The dipping of marijuana joints into embalming fluid, PCP (phencyclidine), or cough syrup was reported in Cleveland, Columbus, and Youngstown.

Hallucinogens

- **Users and crime labs reported moderately high availability of Ecstasy (MDMA). Crime labs reported**

moderate to high and increasing availability of piperazines. Low availability of LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, and ketamine was reported.

Users in Athens, Cleveland, and Dayton reported moderate to high availability of Ecstasy (MDMA), while Toledo users reported low availability. According to the crime lab data, Ecstasy availability ranged from moderate to high in most regions of the state, but was rated low in Dayton. Prices per tablet ranged typically from \$5-\$10 to \$15-\$25. Still associated with young adults and club-going, Ecstasy use was reported to be increasing among African-Americans in Cincinnati and Dayton, and especially among young females. In Toledo, Ecstasy was reported to be used in combination with erectile-dysfunction drugs. In Cincinnati, Ecstasy use was linked to increased violence. Most crime labs noted considerable adulteration of Ecstasy tablets with BZP (benzylpiperazines) and/or TFMPP (3-Trifluoromethylphenylpiperazine). Crime labs rated the overall availability of piperazines as moderate to high. Although users in several regions complained of low and/or declining quality of Ecstasy tablets, none identified piperazines as common adulterants.

Users reported the low, sporadic availability of psilocybin mushrooms. Toledo users reported prices of \$30 per 1/8 ounce. Crime labs reported low to moderate availability of psilocybin. LSD availability was reported by crime labs to be nil to low, except for BCI&I Richfield, which reported moderate availability. Use of LSD and mushrooms remains seasonal and/or sporadic and associated with young adults, some baby boomers, music concerts, and cultural festivals. Doses of LSD were reported in Athens, Cincinnati, and Dayton to cost \$5-\$12. One-thousand doses of LSD and 33 pounds of mushrooms were seized in Cincinnati, the largest such bust ever in the area. Low availability of ketamine was registered by most crime labs. Crime labs in BCI&I Richfield and Canton-Stark County reported low availability of *Salvia divinorum*.

- **High availability of PCP (phencyclidine) was again reported in the Cleveland area.**

Cleveland crime lab and users reported high availability of PCP. The BCI&I Richfield crime lab (serving Cleveland, Akron and Youngstown) reported its stable, low availability. Cleveland users said tobacco cigarettes or marijuana joints were dipped in it and then smoked.

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 Kent State University. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the January 2009 OSAM Network meeting.

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