



DATE: June 2005

DATELINE: Dayton, Ohio

Wright State University & the University of Akron

Ease of Access to Commonly Abused Drugs: Perceptions Shared by Active Crack and Heroin Abusers in the Dayton Area

In the previous reporting period, a group of active illicit drug users were asked to rate their access to various drugs on a scale from 0 (not available) to 10 (very easy to find). Rating results indicate that regardless of age, ethnicity or gender, individuals who were regular crack and/or heroin users (n=17) rated their access to different drugs in a very similar way, which suggests an overlapping nature of heroin and crack “scenes” in the Dayton area.

Crack was rated as being the most readily available drug. Access to heroin and powder cocaine was considered to be somewhat lower than crack, but similar to marijuana. Xanax® was rated as being the most available of the commonly abused pharmaceutical drugs. Access to MDMA (ecstasy) and methamphetamine was rated as very low among heroin and crack users.

An interesting finding is that heroin and crack users rated marijuana availability somewhat lower than that of crack and similar to heroin and powdered cocaine. Such seemingly unexpected finding might be related to the fact that heroin and crack users are less interested in marijuana, which is often considered a “beginner” drug. On the other hand, these perceptions may reflect more aggressive and “open” marketing and distribution strategies employed by crack and heroin dealers:

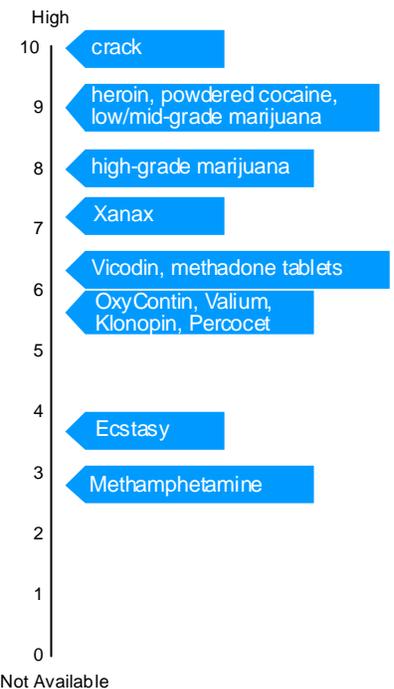
“You can ride down the street and they would knock on my window, and show me who had the biggest rock [of crack].” (47-year-old African American woman, crack user)

“I have people stop me sometimes and give me a cap of it [heroin] with their phone number wrapped in.” (43-year-old white man, heroin user)

“You gotta actually know somebody [to get weed]. There’s no people standin’ on the side of the street like they do crack.” (27-year-old white man, marijuana user)

These results are limited to individuals actively involved in crack and heroin scene, and may be very different from perceptions shared by primary abusers of other drugs. Nevertheless, they provide a insight into how crack smokers and heroin users in the Dayton area perceive access to different drugs.

Ratings of Drug Availability in Dayton According to Crack & Heroin Users



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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