



OSAM-O-GRAM

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DATELINE: Ohio



Wright State University
The University of Akron

Emerging Populations of Crack Cocaine Abusers Identified: Adults Over Age 40 with Little or No Prior Drug History and Juveniles

Crack cocaine abuse continues at high levels in Ohio's urban areas. It is a leading cause of drug treatment admissions among adults, second only to alcohol.

In the last reporting period, law enforcement officials in Lucas and Montgomery Counties, and treatment providers in Columbus, Toledo, Akron and Canton reported significant increases in the numbers of young people, including adolescents, referred to treatment for crack cocaine abuse.

In the current reporting period, OSAM Network Regional Epidemiologists report that crack cocaine remains readily available and its abuse continues, especially in the urban centers of Cleveland, Youngstown, Akron, Canton, Columbus, Toledo, Dayton and Cincinnati.

Evidence from law enforcement officials, treatment providers and active drug users indicates that the previously identified emerging population of juvenile crack cocaine users persists. Reportedly, juveniles are becoming increasingly involved in the sale, distribution and abuse of crack cocaine.

Another emerging population of crack cocaine users was identified by treatment providers in Stark, Summit and Cuyahoga Counties in the current reporting period. Treatment providers in these counties reported increasing numbers of adults over the age of 40 seeking treatment for crack cocaine abuse. Reportedly, many of these individuals began abusing crack only in the past few years and have little or no prior histories of substance abuse. Treatment providers in Cuyahoga County reported the following observations:

I have some elderly clients who get started like in their fifties, sixties, first time ever using.

A lot of my older male clients who use crack have been recently turned on to it by the younger females who indeed trade sex for crack, so they kind of get them hooked on it and lure them in that way.

Because we have no other information to corroborate this finding at this time, further monitoring of this potential trend is needed.

These findings suggest that crack cocaine intervention and prevention programs focused on older adult populations and juvenile populations may be needed. It is also recommended that older adults admitted for substance abuse treatment be carefully screened for pharmaceutical drug abuse.

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 June 2002 OSAM Network meeting.

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