

The DASIS Report

July 30, 2004

Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Referred by the Criminal Justice System: 2002

In Brief

- In 2002, the criminal justice system was the principal source of referral for 36 percent of all substance abuse treatment admissions
- Criminal justice referred admissions were more likely than all other admissions to report alcohol as the primary substance of abuse (45 vs. 42 percent)
- About one-third (36 percent) of substance abuse treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system were younger than 25 compared with 19 percent of all other admissions

The criminal justice system is a major source of referrals to substance abuse treatment. Specific criminal justice venues and programs referring clients to substance abuse treatment include State and Federal courts, other courts, probation programs, other recognized legal entities (e.g., local law enforcement, corrections, or youth agencies), diversionary programs (e.g., Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities, or TASC), prisons, and “driving under the influence/driving while intoxicated” (DUI/DWI) programs.

In 2002, criminal justice referrals accounted for 655,000 substance abuse treatment admissions—an estimated 36 percent of the 1.9 million admissions in the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). This report examines substance abuse treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system¹ and compares their characteristics with all other admissions reported to TEDS in 2002.

Figure 1. Criminal Justice System Referrals, by Type: 2002

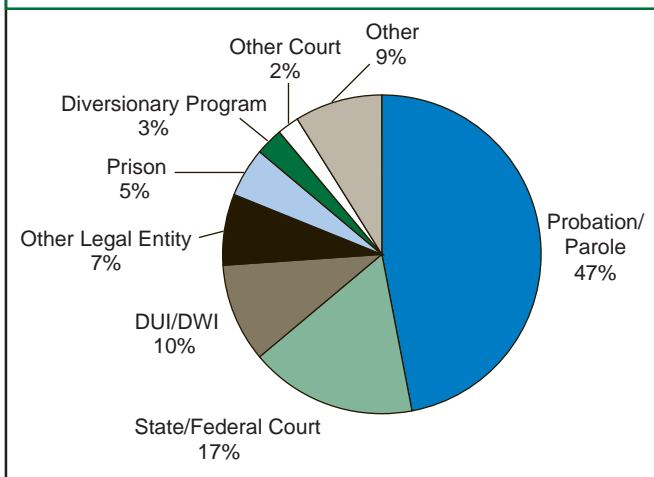
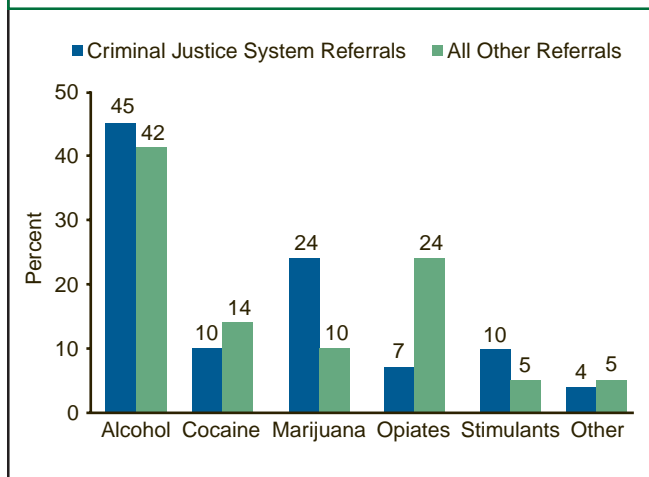


Figure 2. Admissions, by Referral Source and Primary Substance of Abuse: 2002



Source: 2002 SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS).

Trends in Referral Source

Between 1992 and 2002, criminal justice referred admissions increased by 32 percent, exceeding the 23 percent increase in total admissions over the same time period. The proportion of treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system increased from 34 percent to 36 percent during this time among admissions with known referral sources. The criminal justice system was the largest source of referrals for admission in 2002.

Type of Criminal Justice Referral

Almost half of all states reporting to TEDS collect data on the type of criminal justice referral. There were 295,000 responses detailing the type of criminal justice referral (45 percent of the 655,000 admissions referred by the criminal justice system) from the 24 States with adequate response rates on this variable in

2002.² Probation/parole program referrals were the most common type of criminal justice system referral (47 percent) (Figure 1). State and Federal courts were the next largest referral source (17 percent) among these admissions, followed by DUI/DWI programs (10 percent), and other legal entities (7 percent).

Primary Substance

In 2002, alcohol was the most frequently reported primary substance of abuse³ among all substance abuse treatment admissions. However, a larger proportion of admissions (45 percent) referred by the criminal justice system reported alcohol as their primary substance than admissions referred by other sources (42 percent) (Figure 2). Substance abuse treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system were more likely to report marijuana as a primary substance than admissions referred by other sources (24 vs. 10 percent), and were less likely to report opiates as a

primary substance (7 vs. 24 percent).

Demographics

The average age of substance abuse treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system was younger than that of all other admissions (31 vs. 36 years). About one-third (36 percent) of criminal justice referred admissions were younger than 25 compared with 19 percent of all other admissions (Figure 3). They were also more likely to be male compared with all other sources of referral (77 vs. 66 percent). Substance abuse treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system did not differ substantially in racial/ethnic composition from admissions referred by other sources.

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Substance abuse treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system were more

Figure 3. Admissions, by Referral Source and Age: 2002

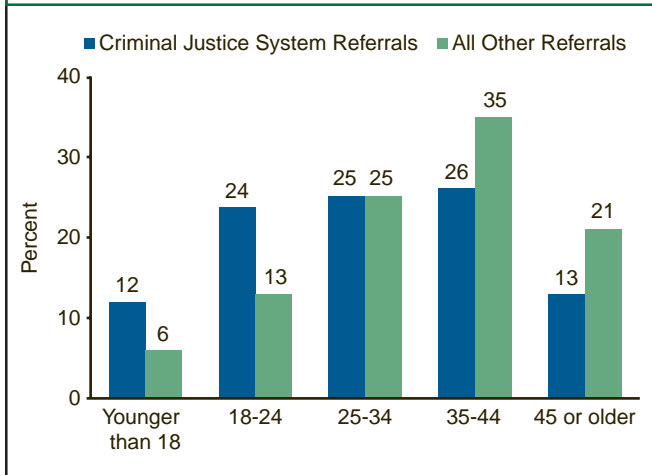
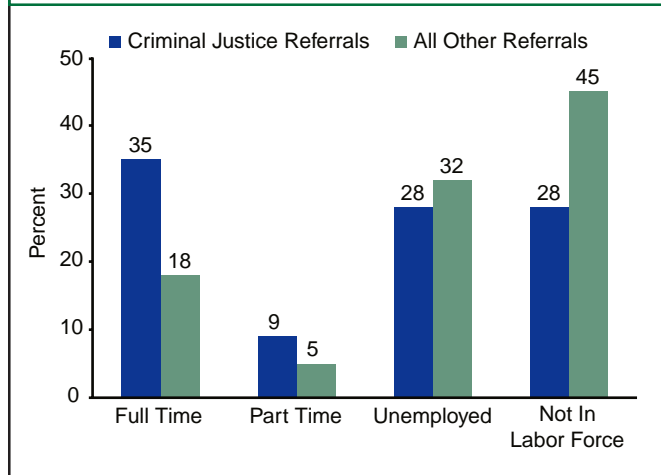


Figure 4. Admissions, by Referral Source and Employment Status: 2002



likely to report being employed full- or part-time than other admissions (44 vs. 23 percent) (Figure 4). As noted in an earlier report,⁴ the effect was particularly pronounced for DUI/DWI referrals, where admissions were three times as likely to be employed full-time as they were to be unemployed. Criminal justice referred admissions did not differ substantially in educational attainment from admissions referred by other sources.

Treatment History and Service Setting

Substance abuse treatment admissions referred by the criminal justice system were more likely to report no prior treatment episodes than admissions referred by other sources (54 vs. 38 percent). They were also more likely to be in ambulatory treatment settings than admissions referred by other sources (80 vs. 50 percent), and less likely to be receiving detoxification services (7 vs. 31 percent).⁵

End Notes

- ¹ For earlier reports discussing TEDS criminal justice referrals, see Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies (Rockville, MD), *The DASIS report: Treatment referral sources for adolescent marijuana users* (March 29, 2002), *Coerced treatment among youths: 1993 to 1998* (September 21, 2001), and *How men and women enter substance abuse treatment* (September 7, 2001).
- ² "Detailed criminal justice referral" is a Supplemental Data Set item reported with a 75 percent or higher response rate in 2002 by 24 States and jurisdictions, including: AZ, CO, DC, HI, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, MS, ND, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, TX, UT, and WV.
- ³ The primary substance of abuse is the main substance reported at the time of admission.
- ⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. *The DASIS report: Employed admissions: 2001*. Rockville, MD. April 2, 2004.
- ⁵ TEDS records the service setting to which clients are admitted. Service settings are of three types: ambulatory, residential/rehabilitative, and detoxification. Ambulatory settings include intensive outpatient, non-intensive outpatient, and ambulatory detoxification. Residential/rehabilitative settings include hospital (other than detoxification), short-term (30 days or fewer), and long-term (more than 30 days). Detoxification includes 24-hour hospital inpatient and 24-hour free-standing residential.

The Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS) is an integrated data system maintained by the Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). One component of DASIS is the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). TEDS is a compilation of data on the demographic characteristics and substance abuse problems of those admitted for substance abuse treatment. The information comes primarily from facilities that receive some public funding. Information on treatment admissions is routinely collected by State administrative systems and then submitted to SAMHSA in a standard format. Approximately 1.9 million records are included in TEDS each year. TEDS records represent admissions rather than individuals, as a person may be admitted to treatment more than once.

The DASIS Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies, SAMHSA; Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc., Arlington, Virginia; and RTI, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Information and data for this issue are based on data reported to TEDS through March 1, 2004.

Access the latest TEDS reports at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/dasis.htm>
 Access the latest TEDS public use files at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/SAMHDA.htm>
 Other substance abuse reports are available at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>



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