

Using State Criminal History Records to Study Drug Offenders

This article was written by Stan Orchowsky, JRSA Research Director. Janice Iwama, JRSA Research Analyst, compiled the data.

In the June issue of *The JRSA Forum*, we reported on some of the findings of our Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)-funded multistate study of sex offender recidivism (*Using State Criminal History Records to Study Sex Offender Recidivism*). BJS provided funding for that project as one element of the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)'s goal of "improving safety and security by enhancing the quality, completeness, and accessibility of criminal history record information and by insuring the nationwide implementation of criminal justice and noncriminal justice background check systems."

In 2007, BJS gave JRSA a second award to coordinate Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) projects using criminal history records to study drug offenders. A total of six states participated in the project, which, like the previous study of sex offenders, was designed to:

- (1) facilitate the ability of SACs that are not currently able to analyze their states' criminal history records to do so;
- (2) coordinate analyses conducted by SACs that currently have the capacity to examine criminal history records in order to address the same key criminal justice issue across a number of different states; and
- (3) identify critical data quality issues in states' criminal history records.

As with the previous effort, SAC projects fell into one of two categories: capacity building/enhancing (Georgia, Maine, and Ohio) and coordinated analysis (Iowa, South Carolina, and Utah). All six SACs participated in a coordinated descriptive analysis of drug offenders.

Methodology

The SAC analyses examined a cohort of individuals who had been arrested for one or more drug offenses during CY2006. Each SAC extracted the records of these drug offenders and attempted to construct standardized tables that described either drug offenders, arrests, or charges, depending on the particular question being addressed. Due to various issues with the nature of

the records, as described below, some of the SACs chose to carry out the descriptive analyses on a randomly selected sample of drug offenders. The number of individuals included in the analyses for each state is shown in Table 1. Many of the offenders were arrested multiple times in 2006, and many of the arrests included multiple charges for drug and other offenses.

(See DRUG OFFENDERS, p. 7)

NIOSH Teams with SACs to Study Violence Against Pharmacy and Healthcare Workers

This article was written by Stan Orchowsky, JRSA Research Director, Daniel Hartley, NIOSH Workplace Violence Prevention Coordinator, and Harlan Amandus, NIOSH Branch Chief of Analysis and Field Evaluations. Kristen Stier, JRSA Administrative Assistant, was responsible for the data entry.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is the federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related injury and illness. In early 2008, NIOSH contacted JRSA to engage SACs in collecting data on workplace violence to workers in pharmacies. NIOSH was concerned about a perceived large number of robberies of pharmacies that were often related to specific drugs, such as Oxycontin and Vicodin, rather than money. NIOSH cited several possible reasons for the presumed upsurge of workplace violence in pharmacies, including shortages of illegal drugs on the streets; the higher quality of legitimate pharma-

ceuticals; the increasing use of prescription drugs for illicit purposes by young people; increased concern from industry representatives; and the number of documented incidents in the upper Midwest and Northeast (<http://www.RxPatrol.org>). However, NIOSH was finding it difficult to estimate the magnitude of the problem due to a lack of available data. Remembering their involvement with JRSA and the SACs some 15 years ago when they were interested in studying robberies of convenience stores, NIOSH contacted JRSA to see if the SACs could collect some data on the issue of crime and injuries of pharmacists and other healthcare workers.

After a number of phone calls to SAC directors, an approach was developed that used National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data to identify an initial set of incidents of homicide, robberies, and assaults of healthcare workers and pharmacists. Using a combination of offense and

(See NIOSH, p. 9)

NAS Panel Completes Review of BJS Programs

At the request of the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2006, the National Academy of Sciences convened a panel of experts to review the agency's programs in order to assess and make recommendations regarding BJS's priorities for data collection. The panel first met in February 2007, and issued its final report during the summer of 2009. An interim report published in 2008 focused on the National Crime Victimization Survey (available at http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12090). This final report, available online at http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12671&page=1, addresses the functions of BJS as a whole, including its relationships with agencies at the state and local levels.

The report contains six chapters, as well as an abstract, summary, three appendixes, and other supporting material. Findings and recommendations are presented throughout each chapter, and gathered together as a whole in Appendix A.

In brief, the panel concludes that "BJS's data collection portfolio is a solid body of work, well justified by public information needs or legal requirements and a commendable effort to meet its broad mandate given less-than-commensurate fiscal resources." The panel identifies some gaps in the coverage of data, but concludes that these gaps cannot be closed without a sustained increase in financial resources.

The panel recommends that BJS be moved out of the Office of Justice Programs in order to maintain its independence as a national statistical resource. Additionally, it recommends that the position of BJS director be made a fixed-term presidential appointment with Senate confirmation.


Regarding BJS's data series, the panel finds the individual series of high quality, but notes that they would benefit from "attention to explicit conceptual frameworks on several levels." Recurring basic content should be streamlined to a "core," with structured

topic supplements being added.

The panel recommends that BJS study the feasibility of compiling existing local crime data from police departments' electronic systems in an effort to produce a quick indicator of national crime trends. Additionally, the panel suggests that a more longitudinal approach to studying the justice system could be beneficial, and offers several strategies for improvement in this regard.

BJS State and Local Partnerships

Of particular interest to JRSA and the state Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs), JRSA's core members, is Chapter 4, which focuses on the relationships between BJS and state and local agencies. The panel writes that BJS "shares with many of its fellow federal statistical agencies the challenge that it is a national government agency tasked to measure phenomena that are inherently local in nature. To meet this challenge, it has been common for federal statistical agencies to forge partnerships with state and local governments." More specifically, the report notes that at its founding, BJS was mandated to give "primary emphasis" to the problems of state and local justice systems. Further, BJS was directed to "provide direct financial and technical assistance to local governments and agencies, rather than solely conduct data collection functions."

How the network of state SACs, which the report calls "the centerpiece of BJS's State Justice Statistics (SJS) program," fits into BJS's mandates is discussed at some length. Among the recommendations of the panel are that BJS should use its SAC and SJS programs to "more fully exploit the potential for using states as partners in data collections," and that BJS should make use of the SACs' perspective in developing longitudinal and small-area measurement systems. 

CONTENTS

National Scene

NAS Panel Completes Review of BJS Programs	2
National Association of Sentencing Commissions Gathers for Annual Conference	3
Bureau of Justice Statistics Launching New Website	3
The FBI to Begin Collecting Data on Cargo Theft	4
New Grant Monitor Comes Onboard at BJS	4
Ellen Scrivner Moves to NIJ as Deputy Director	5

JRSA News

NIOSH Teams with SACs to Study Violence Against Pharmacy and Healthcare Workers	1
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Using State Criminal History Records to Study Drug Offenders	1
JRSA Launches Parole Revocation Study	5

SAC News

Iowa SAC Completes Long-Term Study of Drug Courts	5
Maine's Muskie School Establishes Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy	5
Mississippi SAC Studies Crime Victimization and Perceptions . . .	6
New York State SAC Issues 2008 Hate Crime Report	6

Announcements

RAND Corporation Publishes Report on Police Recruitment . . .	6
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National Association of Sentencing Commissions Gathers for Annual Conference

This article was written by Becki Goggins, Director of the Alabama Statistical Analysis Center, and Jack O'Connell, Director of the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center.

The National Association of Sentencing Commissions (NASC) held its 2009 Annual Conference on August 2-4 in Baltimore, Maryland. This was the 15th Annual NASC Conference and in acknowledgement of this milestone, the event's theme was "Looking Back, Moving Forward." JRSA sponsored two Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) Directors – Becki Goggins and Jack O'Connell – to attend this event.

Risk Assessments in Sentencing

A major theme of the conference was the role of risk assessments in sentencing policy. As state budgets continue to shrink, many states are looking to implement risk assessment instruments in an effort to better identify offenders who can be diverted from traditional incarceration settings. These instruments are designed to help sentencing officials better assess an offender's likelihood of reoffending while assisting in identifying which rehabilitative programs would be of the greatest benefit to the offender.

One of the featured presenters on risk assessments was Professor Alfred Blumstein of Carnegie Mellon University. According to Professor Blumstein, states are seeking ways to reduce prison populations by reducing both the number of offenders sentenced to prison and the lengths of prison sentences. Because of this diminished focus on incarceration, there is now "more explicit concern for offender risk in the community." Professor Blumstein went on to explain how researchers have developed fairly accurate tools in terms of predicting the likelihood of recidivating. These tools are now being incorporated more frequently into sentencing guidelines and/or procedures.

Although risk assessment instru-

ments can be helpful in determining sentencing outcomes, Professor Blumstein also noted that there are certain problems created by their increased implementation. For instance, there is a chance of increasing sentencing disparity since offenders convicted of similar offenses could receive different sentences based on risk. Additionally, risk assessment instruments can "distort proportionality" in that an increased "focus on recidivism can lead to a sentence for a *serious* low-rate offense being lower than [a] sentence for a *minor* high-rate offense...e.g., spouse murder vs. burglar or low-level drug dealer." Blumstein also pointed out that some jurisdictions are producing better risk assessment models, but they are still only correlations with known error rate. Thus, when implementing risk-based sentencing it is important to know what the community risk tolerance is.

Blumstein also explained that most risk assessment instruments do not account for the "recency" of past criminal behavior. He noted that research has clearly demonstrated that the longer someone remains crime-free, the less likely that person is to recidivate. Recent research on this concept of "redemption" suggests that persons who have remained free of crime for many years are almost as unlikely as the never-arrested to commit new crimes. Because of this new research, he suggests that prior record scoring systems might need to be modified to take into account the amount of time that has passed since a defendant's last involvement with the criminal justice system.

Other researchers who presented at the conference reminded the attendees that further research needs to be conducted concerning risk assessment

(See CONFERENCE, p. 4)

Bureau of Justice Statistics Launching New Website with Streamlined Layout

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is unveiling a newly redesigned website in the fall of 2009. Many new features and tools have been added, and the site's content has been completely reorganized by topic, allowing users to quickly find the crime and justice information they seek.

New elements and benefits include a streamlined layout, prominent placement of new products and announcements on the homepage, enhanced search capabilities, and RSS feeds, among others. These enhancements make the site a more efficient and useful resource. Additionally, users can now easily join our email list to receive information about new releases by topics of interest. As a part of the redesign, a custom content management system was also developed to allow for timely

updates and efficient maintenance.

Although the site has a fresh new look, familiar content will still be available. However, in order to maximize the benefit to users and provide for future growth, some pages may no longer exist. Users who have bookmarked pages on the old site will be forwarded to the new homepage. A user guide on the homepage will help with initial navigation and introduce visitors to the new features.

BJS is very excited about this new website launch, but the work continues. In the future, the website will be enhanced with new queryable datasets, dynamically generated maps, and other data visualization tools. Users are sure to enjoy the new functionality of the website and the improved accessibility to BJS data. 🔧

(CONFERENCE, from p. 3)

instruments. For instance, Jim Austin with the JFA Institute noted that very complicated and proprietary instruments often yield predictive results that are not notably better than less detailed

New Grant Monitor Comes Onboard at BJS


Allina Boutilier joined the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) as a Justice Statistics Policy Analyst within the Criminal Justice Data Improvement Program Unit at the end of September. In her new role, Ms. Boutilier is responsible for managing several cooperative agreements under the State Justice Statistics Program, the National Criminal History Improvement Program, and the NICS Act Record Improvement Program. Prior to coming to BJS, Ms. Boutilier worked in nonprofit management at the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization, where she managed the strategic planning, implementation, and operation of 32 school-based mentoring programs and conducted quantitative and qualitative program evaluations to analyze participant satisfaction and impact on youth behavioral outcome measures. Most recently, Ms. Boutilier worked as a research analyst for Development Services Group, Inc. of Bethesda, Md., where she researched and reviewed evidence-based programs for inclusion to the OJJDP Model Programs Guide and conducted data analyses for several projects related to evaluating juvenile justice practices and policies. Ms. Boutilier has a B.A. in sociology-human services from Susquehanna University and dual master's degrees in criminology and governmental administration from the University of Pennsylvania.

or costly instruments. However, more study needs to be done to really understand the relative costs and benefits of the various systems. Christopher Baird, with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, explained that the sample sizes used in most studies of the effectiveness of risk assessment are too small to adequately test validity and that additional research is needed. Additionally, he noted that problems with internal consistency relative to the way the instruments are administered often result in reliability problems. Even if this can be fixed procedurally, he further noted that most research has not shown that these instruments are useful in terms of identifying criminogenic needs.

Jack O'Connell, who gave a presentation on Delaware's "4217" Prisoner Early Release Program, showed that a multi-agency intensive case review process produced prisoner release results

with very low recidivism findings that, after the fact, aligned well with risk assessment findings.

In summary, there was a consensus that risk assessment instruments can be useful tools for helping predict recidivism. However, much more research should be done in this area to determine the relative cost and risk of implementing these tools within various offender populations.


Other topics discussed at the conference included: (1) the economic impact of increasing incarceration rates; (2) the role of victims in sentencing policy; (3) how shrinking budgets impact sentencing and corrections policy; (4) international sentencing issues; (5) reentry and release decisions; (6) the interdependence of jail and prison populations; and (7) international progress in sentencing guidelines. To view the full conference agenda and materials, please go to <http://www.msccsp.org/nasc2009/>. 

The FBI to Begin Collecting Data on Cargo Theft

Cargo theft is estimated to cost the U.S. \$15-30 billion a year, though the true measure may be even higher, since some businesses are reluctant to report thefts out of concern for their reputations or their insurance premiums. The FBI, through its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, will soon begin collecting data relating to incidents involving cargo theft.

For states that submit summary data, the FBI will provide an electronic and a paper form to capture the numbers of crimes involving cargo theft. Cargo-related crimes that were once filed in the UCR as burglary, larceny, and robbery will have their own category. States submitting data through the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) program will use a recently adopted revised record layout containing a new data element, which is located in the Administrative Segment of NIBRS, to flag the incident as a

cargo theft. In addition, after a lengthy joint effort between FBI UCR program staff and Association of State Uniform Crime Reporting Programs (ASUCRP) representatives, the NIBRS location codes and property codes will be expanded.

The FBI has set January 2010 as the date to begin accepting the new NIBRS data for cargo theft. January 2010 is also the tentative start date for the acceptance of the new property and location codes. States will have between 18 and 24 months after January 2010 to implement the NIBRS changes. Participating agencies should note that implementation of the new NIBRS data element must be consistent among all reporting agencies within a state. Therefore, either all or none of the agencies that report NIBRS data within a state must report cargo theft data via the new NIBRS data element. 

SAC NEWS

Iowa SAC Completes Long-Term Study of Drug Courts

In August, the Iowa SAC completed a report entitled *Statewide Process and Comparative Outcomes Study of 2003 Iowa Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts*. The report provides results of a statewide evaluation of the six adult and three juvenile drug courts in operation during CY2003. Completion rates, recidivism, substance abuse treatment, and supervision and placement (juveniles only) costs were examined by model (Judge vs. Community Panel models) and by judicial district and compared to referred and probationer/matched samples. The samples were

tracked from their entry into drug court, or the study, through December 31, 2007, yielding approximately three and four years' follow-up for the adult and juvenile samples, respectively.

More than half (52%) of all adult drug court participants graduated. Overall, adult drug courts appeared to work better for males, whites, methamphetamine users, and those without earlier arrests or prior prison admissions. The Judge model had higher graduation rates compared to the Community Panel model on a variety of demographic, substance abuse, and criminal history measures. In addition, the Judge model had the lowest recidivism rates of all groups examined. Cost comparisons show the total average cost per participant in the Judge model was higher than in the other groups examined, with higher substance abuse treatment and drug court costs. It appears the percentage spent on substance abuse treatment relative to correctional supervision costs may have some effect on reducing recidivism, although it is not clear at what level.

Just over half (53.3%) of juvenile participants graduated from the program, with greater success for misdemeanor- versus felony-level referrals and offense history. The Judge model had a graduation rate almost twice that of the

Community Panel model (76.9% vs. 39.4%) and had better success in graduating both male and female participants, non-minority participants, participants with misdemeanor-level referrals and history, and participants for whom marijuana was their drug of choice. Juvenile drug courts did not reduce new offenses. Juvenile drug courts received more substance abuse treatment service units than did the comparison groups and most of the service units received were outpatient. Juvenile drug court graduates had much lower criminal justice supervision costs than non-graduates and matched and referred samples, and lower placement costs than non-graduates and the matched sample. The report is available online at <http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/cjpp/publications/fy10.htm>.

Maine's Muskie School Establishes Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy

The Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service, which houses the Maine Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), has announced the formation of the Catherine E. Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy. A key emphasis of the new institute, which combines the

(See SAC NEWS, p. 6)

Ellen Scrivner Moves to NIJ as Deputy Director

Ellen Scrivner joined the National Institute of Justice in August as Deputy Director. Dr. Scrivner is a nationally recognized expert on a broad range of policing issues. Her career in the public sector spans more than 25 years – and includes service as the chief psychologist for two major county police departments, Deputy Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, Deputy Director of the COPS Office at the Department of Justice in the 1990s, consultant to the Office of Law Enforcement Coordination at the FBI, and, her most recent position, Director of the Leadership Academy at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City. She brings to her new position a wealth of experience in applied research and successful collaboration between the federal government and state and local law enforcement.

JRSA Launches Parole Revocation Study

In 2006, one in four admissions to state prison was for a violation of the conditions of some form of post-prison supervision (this excludes California, where the rate is much higher, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *Prison Inmates at Midyear, 2007*). As states become increasingly strapped for funds, a number have begun to question the wisdom of incarcerating parole violators. JRSA has begun a project, being funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), designed to provide information on the circumstances surrounding parole violations and revocations. The goals of the project are to identify the number and

nature of parole violations and factors related to these violations, as well as the factors related to the decision to revoke parole. In May of this year, JRSA issued a solicitation for SACs to participate in the study. The SACs in Maine, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming received awards to carry out data collection and analysis in their states. A kick-off meeting to discuss methodology will be held this month in JRSA's offices; the study will be completed by August of next year. For more information, contact JRSA Research Director Dr. Stan Orchowksy at sorchowsky@jrja.org. 📧

(SAC NEWS, from p. 5)

resources of three former institutes, will be to seek solutions that integrate policies and strategies across four closely related areas. Institute staff conduct research and policy analysis, program development and evaluation, and training and technical assistance projects in: children, youth, and families; disability and aging; population health and health policy; and justice policy.

The institute's new justice policy program merges the expertise and research capacity of several justice concentrations – domestic violence/sexual assault, criminal justice, and corrections. The Maine SAC, located within the new program, provides significant quantitative analysis expertise and capacity to an array of program research activities. The SAC is benefiting from the multidisciplinary research opportunities created by merging justice-related areas and by closer proximity to students in the School's graduate public policy and management and law programs. Maine SAC director Carmen Dorsey has been appointed to lead the new program.

The Cutler Institute's 200 practitioners and scholars – who have backgrounds in social work, sociology, law, public health, health services, economics, business, public policy and management, and organizational development – are known for applying the latest research to real-world problems. Working closely with federal and state policy makers, nonprofits, and other universities, the Cutler Institute specializes in building collaborative partnerships focused on improving the public and private systems that support individuals, families, and communities.

The Muskie School of Public Service (<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/>) at the University of Southern Maine is Maine's premier public policy school, combining an extensive applied research and technical assistance portfolio with three master's degree programs and a doctoral program in public policy. The School is nationally recognized for applying innovative

RAND Corporation Publishes Report on Police Recruitment

The RAND Corporation announced the publication of "Police Recruitment and Retention in the Contemporary Urban Environment: A National Discussion of Personnel Experiences and Promising Practices from the Front Lines." The report is a summary of the presentations, discussions, and opinions offered by panelists at a conference held by RAND in June 2008. Topics include changing police workforce issues, strategies being employed, lessons that could be learned from other organizations such as the military, and in-depth analyses of police recruiting and retention in selected cities. A free, searchable PDF of the publication is available at the RAND website at http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF261/, and hard copies are available for purchase. For more information about the report, contact Jeremy Wilson at jwilson@msu.edu.

knowledge to critical issues in the fields of sustainable development and health and human service policy and management.


Mississippi SAC Studies Crime Victimization and Perceptions

For the FY 2008 State Justice Statistics project, the Mississippi SAC (MS-SAC) is conducting an analysis of data regarding crime victimization and perceptions of crime in the state. The MS-SAC has completed the data collection phases for this project, and is finishing up its initial report. The final report should be available by early November.

New York State SAC Issues 2008 Hate Crime Report

The New York Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) released the *2008 Annual Hate Crime Report* in August. The report provides an analysis of hate crime incident data reported by law enforcement agencies throughout New York State. Major findings include:

- Reported hate crimes were most frequently motivated by anti-Jewish (36%), anti-black (25%), and anti-gay male (11%) biases.
- Six hundred and ten hate crime victims were identified, of whom 411 were victims of crimes against persons. Of these,
 - Anti-Jewish biases accounted for 129 of 153 victims of religious bias.
 - Bias against one's sexual orientation was reported for 73 hate crimes, with 60 incidents for anti-male homosexual.
 - Anti-black bias was reported for 102 of 173 incidents related to race/ethnicity and national origin.
 - Anti-gender bias accounted for 7 incidents, of which 3 were anti-female.
- Five hundred ninety-six hate crime incidents were reported, of which 397 were crimes against persons. Of these 397 crimes against persons, nearly half involved physical attacks such as murder and assault, and half involved intimidation and aggravated harassment.
- One hundred ninety-nine crimes against property involved property destruction, damage, or vandalism.
 - Fifty-four percent involved religious bias motivation.
 - Eighty-five percent of property crimes against blacks and Jewish individuals involved destruction or vandalism.

The New York SAC has collected hate crime incident data from police agencies since the enactment of the New York State Hate Crime Act in 2000. 

(DRUG OFFENDERS, from p. 1)

Issues in Analyzing State Criminal History Records

As was the case in the study of sex offenders, during the course of their projects the SACs identified a number of issues related to the use of criminal history records for conducting research on drug offenders. Some of the issues were similar to those described in the June *Forum* article: arrest records with no dispositions; disposition/custody records with no corresponding arrest; missing information; and inconsistencies in data, such as different birth dates recorded for the same individual for different arrest events. The current effort uncovered additional issues specific to the study of drug offenses and offenders.

State Drug Statutes

At the outset of the study, SACs sought to identify the nature of the drug offense (sale vs. possession, for example) and the type of drug (marijuana vs. cocaine, for example). All six SACs discovered problems with the way drug offenses were recorded in the criminal history records that made this difficult to accomplish. In many states this was related to the fact that the codes used in the records were based on state drug law statutes, which did not correspond to our drug offense and type of drug breakdowns. Instead, these states have adopted the classification established by the Federal Controlled Substances Act (21 USC, Section 812), which identifies five “schedules” of drugs based on the drug’s potential for abuse, established medical uses for the drug, and the impact of abuse of the drug. In some cases, states have adapted these to fit their own state statutes, or have added additional drug or offense types onto older statutes. As a result, states may use codes that combine different drug types and different drug offenses under the same statute, making it difficult to interpret with appropriate specificity the code used in the criminal history record. In fact, with the exception of South Carolina, the SACs could not identify the type of drug for the majority of charges found in the criminal history records.

Table 1. Number of Drug Offenders Arrested in 2006

	GA	IA	ME	OH	SC	UT
No. of drug offenders	54,544	11,062	3,298	36,500	23,230	15,551
No. in sample	—	1,575	—	3,000	—	1,500

Generic Codes and Literals

In some states, fields to indicate specific drug codes were available but not used. In Utah, for example, the SAC discovered that the field containing the specific drug statute was left empty in the vast majority of cases, and so the SAC was forced to use more generic National Crime Information Center (NCIC) codes. These latter codes, however, were also found to be problematic, with “drug type not specified” codes often being employed, or observed disagreements between drug codes and literal descriptions provided. The Ohio SAC also found that elements of the record that allow for specificity in coding type of drug were not employed. The Iowa SAC noted that the use of literals was problematic, citing a dozen different ways that “possession of marijuana” might be recorded, and even a number of variations in how statutes might be cited in literal fields. Further, the SAC reports that in recent years many of the arrest field entries involve the use of drop-down menus containing standardized charge codes and literal offense descriptions, with the latter for drug offenses being “possess controlled substances.” Thus while analyzing older records involved the time-consuming task of examining a variety of potential literal descriptions, the newer records do not allow for the analysis of type of drug at all.

Missing Records

While missing records are a potential problem in any research using criminal history records, they can be a particular issue in analyzing drug offenses, which are often misdemeanor-level offenses. In some states, minor drug offenses are handled via tickets and summonses. Since most states only record “fingerprintable” offenses in their repositories, minor drug offenses may not be included in criminal history records.

Selected Findings

Before reviewing selected findings from the SAC studies, it should be noted that these findings must be viewed with caution. The information provided here must be considered within the context of the data issues discussed above. Comparisons among states may be particularly misleading due to differences in state statutes, the availability of individual data elements, and differences in the completeness and accuracy of the data recorded in the state repositories.

Table 2 shows the types of drug offenses for each of the six SACs included in the study.

As the table shows, the majority of drug arrests in all states are for possession, which includes both misdemeanor- and felony-level offenses (the latter often involving possession with intent to distribute). Possession of drug paraphernalia comprises a considerable proportion of drug offenses in several states, while distribution/trafficking accounts for a large proportion of offenses in others.

Table 3 shows the type of drug for all drug charges in each state. As noted previously, most SACs had difficulty identifying the specific type of drug from the criminal history records, although the category “other/unknown/not specified” includes arrests for drug paraphernalia, for which drug type is not relevant, plus a small number of charges involving drugs other than those listed in the table. Marijuana accounted for the largest proportion of drug charges in the four states that reported these data. Methamphetamine comprised a larger proportion of arrests in Iowa and Utah than in Maine and South Carolina.

Table 4 provides information on additional, non-drug charges for the drug offenders in the cohort. In all states, the largest proportion of charges was for other misdemeanors. In Iowa,

(See **DRUG OFFENDERS, p. 8**)

(DRUG OFFENDERS, from p. 7)

Maine and Utah, about 1 in 5 charges were other felony charges; this percentage was almost twice as large in Ohio.

Finally, Table 5 provides statistics on age, race, and gender of drug offenders. Drug arrestees in Ohio (average age 32.6 years) appear to be older than those in the other states. Iowa's drug arrestees were the youngest of the six states', with over half being 25 years old or younger. Race and gender breakdowns tend to correspond to state general populations in general and arrestee populations in particular. African-American men comprised almost half of drug arrestees in Georgia and South Carolina, and about 43% of drug arrestees in Ohio. White males comprised roughly two thirds of drug arrestees in the other three states.

Summary


This project provides further evidence of the viability of using state criminal history records to study critical policy-relevant topics. As with our previous study on sex offenders, there are limitations to these data as a source for research, and these limitations appear to be more severe for the study of drug offenses and offenders than they were for sex offenders. In particular, states had a difficult time distinguishing among types of drugs, such as marijuana versus cocaine, in the criminal history records. This limits the types of policy questions related to drug offenders that can be addressed using these data. We hope that as SACs continue to work with the data and provide feedback to their state repositories, at least some of the limitations identified in this study can be overcome. BJS's dedication to improving the state criminal history records through analysis is demonstrated by their continued funding of SAC analyses of these data. A third round of projects, looking at felony case processing, is currently underway in SACs in five states (Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, and New York). JRSA and the SACs hope to continue to work with BJS to improve the quality of state criminal history records through analyses such as the one described here. 

Table 2. Types of Drug Charges (Percentages by State)

Offense Type	GA (%)	IA (%)	ME (%)	OH (%)	SC (%)	UT (%)
Possession (including felony)	66.0	60.0	55.4	54.7	60.4	51.5
Sale	2.3	0.3	—	< 1	0	7.2
Manufacturing	—	1.3	4.4	1.5	0	0.7
Distribution/Trafficking	28.8	10.5	30.9	19.6	7.3	—
Paraphernalia	1.4	14.5	3.7	20.0	8.4	39.1
Other	3.7	5.0	5.5	3.8	2.5	1.6
Unknown/Miscellaneous	<0.1	8.4	—	<1	21.4	—

Table 3. Type of Drug (Percentages by State)

Drug Type	IA (%)	ME (%)	SC (%)	UT (%)
Marijuana	24.0	6.2	41.7	16.7
Cocaine	3.3	3.6	19.1	4.4
Heroin	0	3.3	0.2	1.4
Methamphetamine	6.3	0.9	0.1	11.1
Other/unknown/not specified	66.5	86.0	38.9	66.3

Georgia and Ohio could not provide data on type of drug.

Table 4. Non-Drug Charges Filed with Instant Drug Offense (Percentages by State)

Offense Type	IA (%)	ME (%)	OH (%)	SC (%)	UT (%)
Violent felony	5.1	1.5	2.8	4.9	6.6
Other felony	19.7	19.9	35.0	13.2	19.9
Misdemeanor	75.2	78.7	49.2	81.9	22.8
Unknown/miscellaneous	—	—	13.0	—	50.7

- Georgia could not provide information on felonies vs. misdemeanors.
- Ohio's "unknowns" include larcenies and other offenses that could not be identified as felonies or misdemeanors.
- An additional 40% of charges in Utah were identified as "DUI" and "general property," but were not specifically designated as misdemeanor charges.

Table 5. Age, Race, and Gender of Drug Arrestees

	GA	IA	ME	OH	SC	UT
Average age	29.7	—	30.8	32.6	29.5	29.7
% 25 years and younger	47.1%	51.1%	38.9%	29.0%	46.9%	45.4%
Race and gender (%) [*]						
White males	34.5	63.8	66.7	35.5	30.7	68.3
Black males	47.1	13.9	3.9	43.0	47.8	3.7
White females	11.5	17.7	25.8	13.3	12.4	23.0
Black females	6.9	3.0	0.3	6.5	7.2	0.7

^{*}Excludes "other" race and "unknown" race and gender categories for some states.

(NIOSH, from p. 1)

location codes (NIBRS has a code for offenses that occur in a drug store, hospital, or doctor's office), SACs in Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin volunteered to participate in a NIOSH study. They identified an initial set of incidents that occurred in 2005 and 2006 in selected localities in their states. The Illinois SAC obtained incident reports directly from police departments. The SACs then obtained the police incident reports for each of the initial cases identified. Using a form developed by NIOSH with input from the SACs, detailed information was collected from each incident report. The information included: day and time of incident; characteristics of the victim(s); occupation of the victim(s); injuries sustained by the victim(s); characteristics of the assailant(s); relationship between victim(s) and assailant(s); and whether or not a weapon was used. SAC researchers completed hardcopy versions of the data collection forms and provided these to JRSA and NIOSH. JRSA and NIOSH independently entered the study data into databases. The analysis for this article was done by JRSA using its database. NIOSH plans to publish a more detailed peer-reviewed article from analysis of its database.

Table 1 shows the number of cases contributed by each state; 1,069 incidents were included in the sample. The number of localities included varied widely from state to state.

Table 1. Number of Cases for Each Participating State

State	Number of Cases
Ohio	289
Illinois	441
South Carolina	108
Tennessee	194
Wisconsin	37
TOTAL	1,069

Figure 1 shows the types of offenses that were committed against the victims in the sample. Over half of the incidents examined involved simple assault and battery, with robberies accounting for about one in four incidents. There was one homicide included in the sample cases.

Table 2 shows where the incidents occurred. Hospitals and clinics accounted for over half of the incidents, while pharmacies and drug stores accounted for an additional 42%. Table 3 shows the occupations of the primary victims of the incidents. Nurses and security guards were the mostly likely to be attacked, nurses almost exclusively in hospitals and clinics, and security guards either in hospitals or in drug stores. Cashiers were victims in about 14% of incidents, almost always in drug stores. Pharmacists and staff working in pharmacies were victims in only about 1 of 20 incidents. About 65% of victims in the "other" occupation category were assaulted in hospitals. These individuals included mental health counselors, paramedics,

and emergency room technicians. In pharmacies, the "other" category included clerks, supervisors, and store owners.

Table 2. Type of Business Where Incident Occurred

Type of Business	Percent of Cases
Hospital/Clinic	53%
Pharmacy/Drug Store	42%
Doctor's Office	2%
Other/Unknown	3%

Table 3. Occupation of Primary Victim

Occupation	Percent of Cases
Nurse	18.1%
Security guard	17.8%
Cashier	13.7%
Pharmacist/ pharmacy staff	5.5%
Store manager	8.2%
Doctor	3.6%
Unknown	14.3%
Other	18.8%

Table 4 shows the types of injuries suffered by the primary victims. In about half of the incidents, no physical injury took place. The remaining incidents resulted in relatively minor injuries, including bruises, scratches and bites. About 2% of injuries required hospitalization, and an additional 12% were treated in emergency rooms or doctors' offices. Another 11% of injured victims received first aid at the scene. About 39% of the victims received no treatment for their injuries.

Table 4. Injuries Suffered by Primary Victim

Injury	Percent of Cases
No injury	49.8%
Abrasion/bruise	11.9%
Puncture/cut	4.9%
Scratch/bite	2.6%
Unconsciousness	0.7%
Fracture	0.2%
Death	0.1%
Other/Unknown	34.4%

Percentages total to more than 100% due to multiple injuries.

(See NIOSH, p. 10)

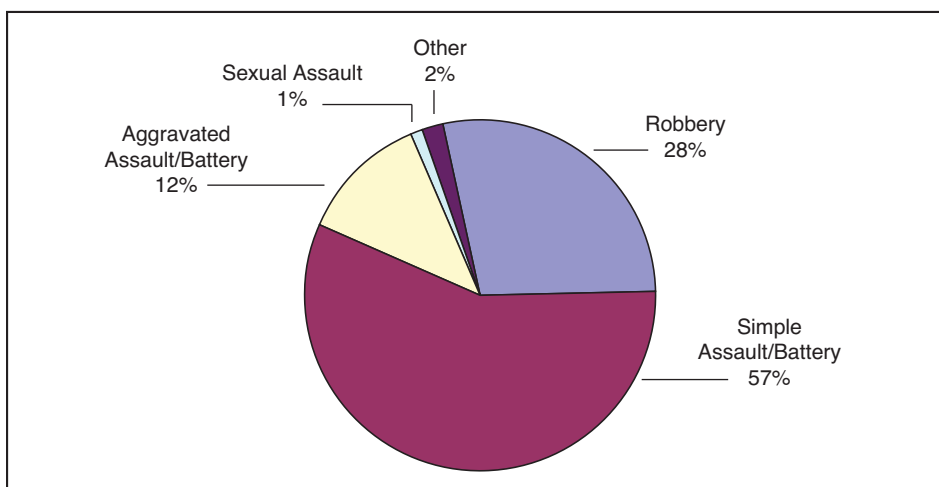


Figure 1. Offense Types for Crimes Against Health Care Workers

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(NIOSH, from p. 9)

The data collected by the SACs suggest that the prevalence of robberies of pharmacies for drugs is not as high as was originally suspected by NIOSH. However, the prevalence may be higher in more recent years and in the upper Northeast and upper Midwest where the problem in pharmacies has been suspected. Additionally, the study data are not nationally representative and did not include any cities in the Northeast, West, or Southwest. Therefore, these data should be interpreted with caution.

Of all the incidents that occurred in pharmacies, only 16% involved the theft of drugs. Of the 448 incidents that occurred in pharmacies, 344 (77%) involved a robbery of some type. With reference to only the robbery data, 43% involved the theft of merchandise, 37%

involved stolen cash, and the remaining 20% involved the theft of drugs.

On the other hand, it appears that nurses working in hospital emergency departments and security guards working there and in drug stores had higher frequencies of being attacked while at work. These findings are consistent with those from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on non-fatal lost workday injuries (<http://www.BLS.gov>).

The SAC directors who participated in the study identified several benefits from their perspective. First, the study confirmed the utility of NIBRS-compatible data for research purposes, at least as an initial source of information. The study also highlighted for some SACs that focusing on aspects of incidents such as location and victim occupation can be equally as important as focusing on more traditional factors, such as vic-

tim or offender characteristics. Finally, several SAC directors expressed surprise at the actual findings of the study, specifically, the amount of violence, although often without serious injuries, directed at staff in hospital emergency rooms. From NIOSH's perspective, the SACs could be a very useful partner to help NIOSH with surveillance of emerging workplace violence problems for workers with a high risk of workplace violence.

JRSA will continue to analyze the data provided by these five SACs, and hopes to continue to collaborate with NIOSH on this and related issues.

The findings and conclusions in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. 4