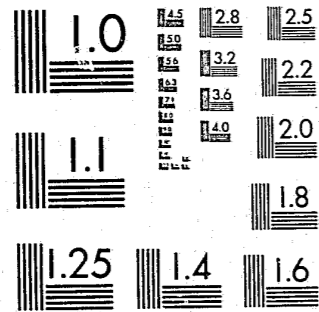


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National Institute of Justice
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20531

10/30/86

The Washington, D.C., Urine Testing Program for Arrestees and Defendants Awaiting Trial: A Summary of Interim Findings

June 5, 1986

NCJRS

JUN 30 1986

ACQUISITIONS

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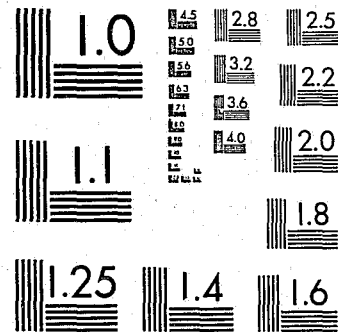
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715101

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Summary

For each month since March 1984, when the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency (PSA) began urine testing of arrestees, **more than half** the defendants tested were found to have used drugs shortly before their arrest. In April 1986, 67 percent of the arrestees tested had used drugs recently, and 32 percent of the tested arrestees had used **more than one** drug.

Cocaine use has increased dramatically since March 1984, when 15 percent of the tested arrestees were cocaine users. In April 1986, 37 percent of the tested arrestees were cocaine users. (See Exhibit 1.) Cocaine in combination with heroin was commonly found among tested arrestees.

PCP and opiates are also major drug abuse problems among arrestees in the District of Columbia. In a typical month, about one-third of the tested arrestees are PCP users, and about one-fifth are heroin users. (See Exhibit 1.) PCP in combination with cocaine was commonly found among tested arrestees.

Urine test results showed much higher rates of drug use than defendants' self-reports indicated. Only about one-half of the drug users identified by urine tests stated to PSA that they were using drugs. PCP users were especially unlikely to report that they were using drugs--only 36 percent did so. (See Exhibit 2.)

Patterns of drug use are sharply different for defendants of different ages. **Rates of PCP use are highest for the youngest defendants** (ages 18-21). **Rates of opiate and cocaine use increase until age 31-35 and then decline.** (See Exhibits 3 and 4.)

Women, who comprised 18 percent of all arrestees, had the same overall rate of drug use (52 percent) as men. In comparison with men in the same age group, **women arrestees were more likely to use opiates and cocaine and less likely to use PCP.** (See Exhibit 4.)

A substantial percentage of defendants in all major charge categories were using drugs. For example, approximately half the arrestees charged with robbery were drug users as were two-fifths of those charged with burglary and about one-third of those charged with assault. (See Exhibit 5.)

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Summary (continued)

Pretrial rearrest rates were 50 percent higher for drug users than for nonusers. Also, users of two or more drugs were more likely to be rearrested before trial than users of only one drug. (See Exhibit 6.)

Defendants who had used drugs shortly before arrest, were placed in the pre-trial urine testing program, and complied with the program's requirements by reappearing for periodic urine tests had lower rates of pretrial rearrest than defendants referred to drug abuse treatment or released without special conditions regarding drug abuse. When a defendant did not follow the urine testing program's rules, this was reported to the court, which could then impose sanctions on the defendant for failure to comply with the court's orders.

The results of the Washington, D.C., pretrial urine testing program strongly suggest that urine testing of arrestees can be an effective way of identifying defendants who pose high risks of pretrial rearrest and that a program of urine testing before trial can substantially reduce those risks for many defendants.

Background

The Urine Testing Program conducted by the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency (PSA)

- Virtually all adult arrestees in the District of Columbia, except those with relatively minor charges or facing Federal charges, are tested by PSA for the presence of 5 drugs: opiates, cocaine, phencyclidine (PCP), methadone, and amphetamines.
- PSA provides information on defendant's drug abuse to the court for its use in setting conditions of pretrial release.
- For selected defendants, PSA conducts urine testing throughout the pretrial release period.
- PSA's urinalysis program began in March 1984; currently, more than 1,000 newly arrested criminal defendants are being tested for drugs each month.

The research and evaluation program conducted by Toborg Associates

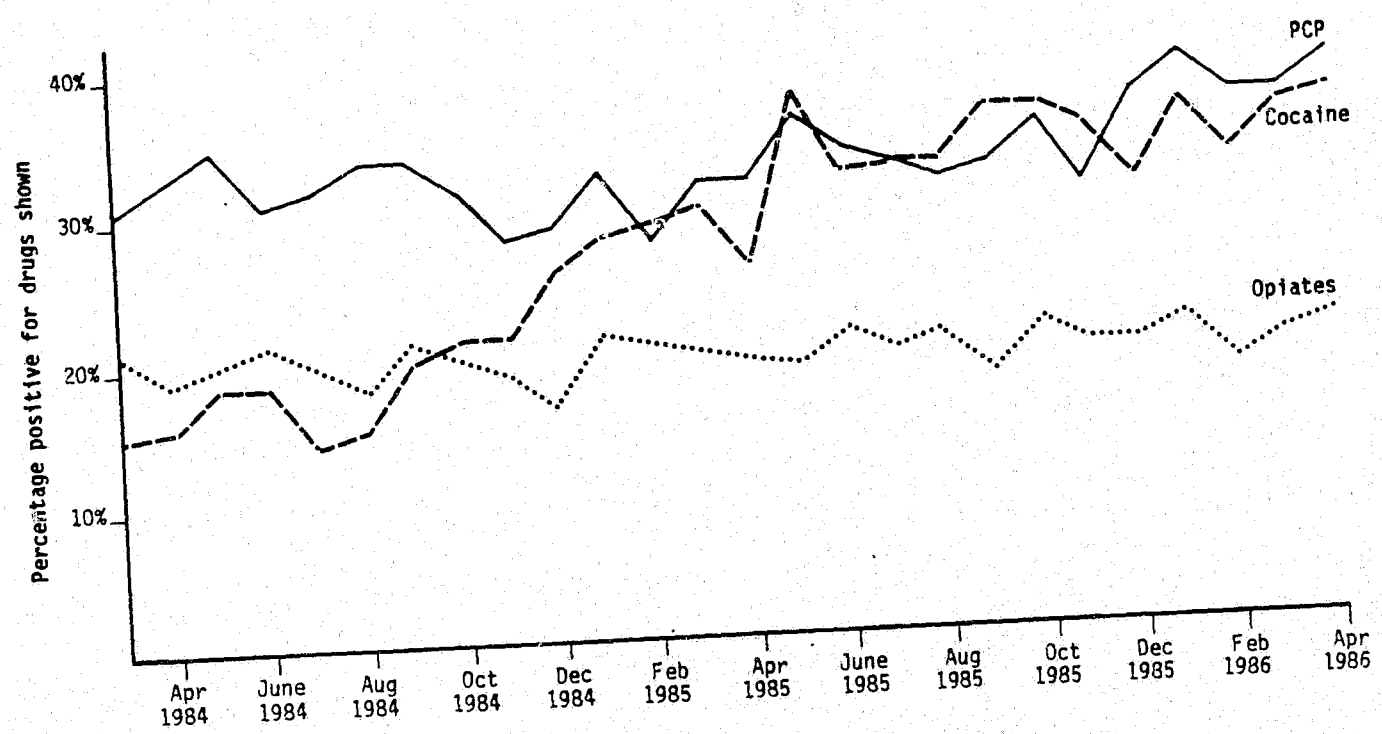
- Assesses whether current drug use at time of arrest as determined by urine testing is a good indicator of pretrial misconduct (e.g., pretrial rearrests and failure-to-appear for court).
- Evaluates effectiveness of urine testing before trial in reducing pretrial misconduct.
- Assesses relationships between drug abuse and criminality for Washington, D.C., arrestees.
- Focuses on approximately 6,000 defendants tested for drug use between June 1984 and January 1985 (the "study period").

Exhibit 1

Arrestees in Washington, D.C., Who Tested Positive for Opiates, Cocaine, or PCP*

(Based on 31,189 total tests)

- Cocaine use increased dramatically over the period: from 15 percent to 37 percent.
- PCP use averaged 33 percent.
- Opiate use averaged 20 percent.



*Shown positive by Emit test. Urine tests are also conducted for amphetamines and methadone; the rates of use of those drugs have been quite low since the urine testing program began.

Exhibit 2

Drug Users Identified by Urine Tests Who Self-Reported Drug Use (June 1984–January 1985)

- Overall, only about half the drug users identified by the urine tests had self-reported that they were drug users.
- Only 36 percent of the PCP users identified by the urine tests admitted drug use.

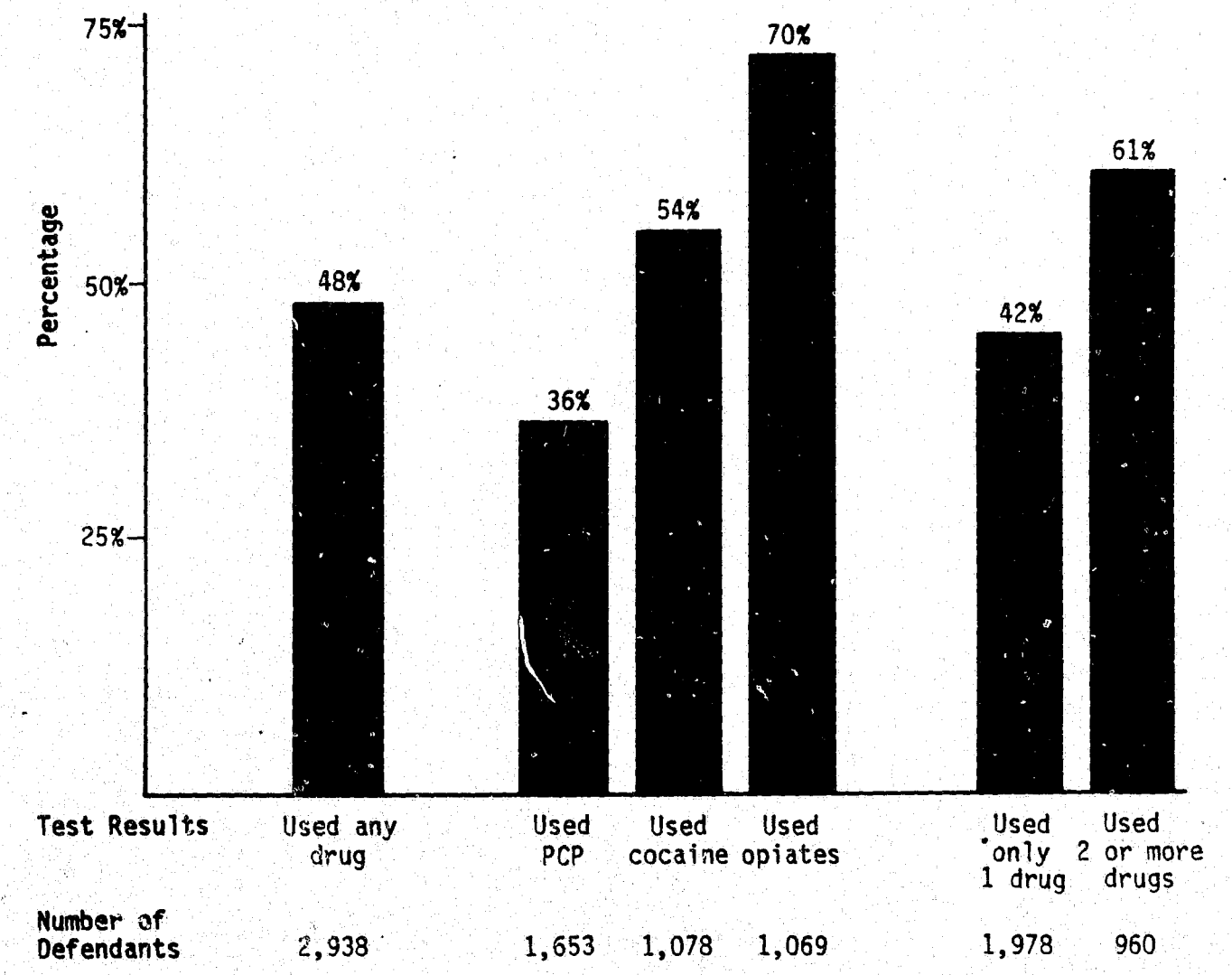


Exhibit 3 Male Arrestees With Positive Urine Tests, by Age and Drug (June 1984–January 1985)

- For male arrestees, rates of PCP use are highest for the youngest age groups.
- Rates of opiate and cocaine use among male arrestees increase until age 31-35 and then decline.

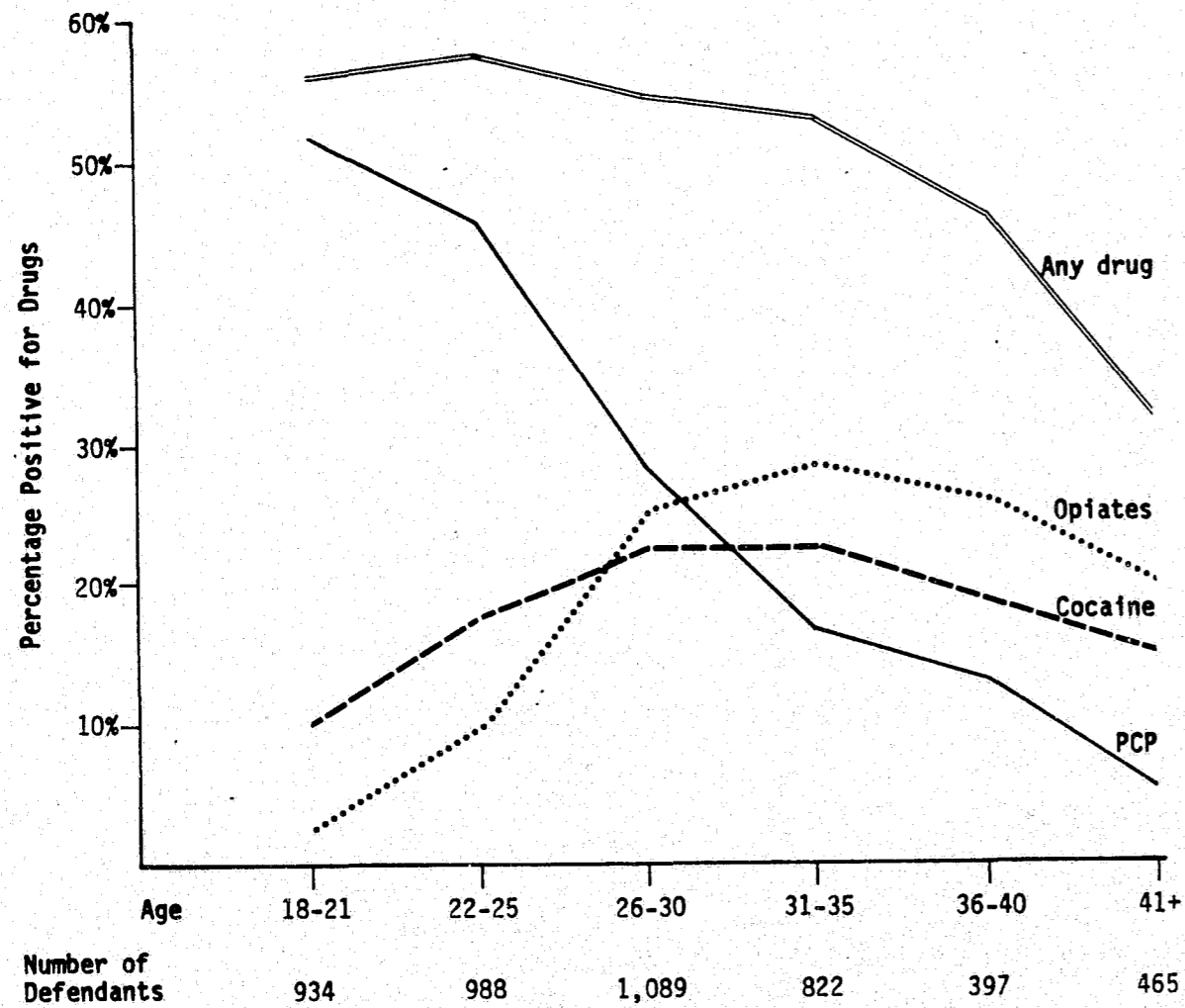


Exhibit 4 Female Arrestees With Positive Urine Tests, By Age and Drug (June 1984–January 1985)

- Women, who comprised 18 percent of all tested arrestees, had the same total rate of drug use (52 percent) as men.
- In contrast with men of the same age (see Exhibit 3), women were typically more likely to use opiates or cocaine and less likely to use PCP.

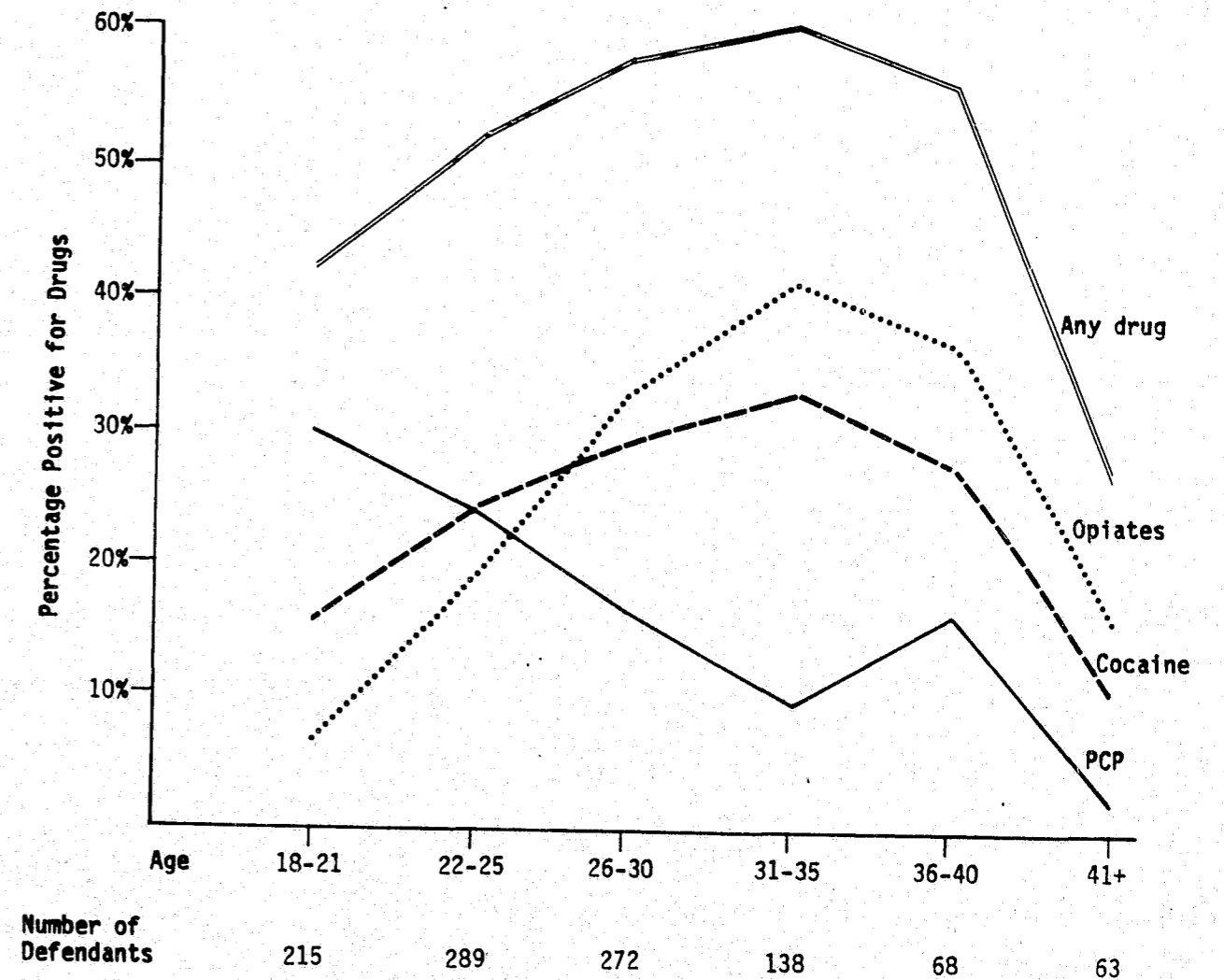


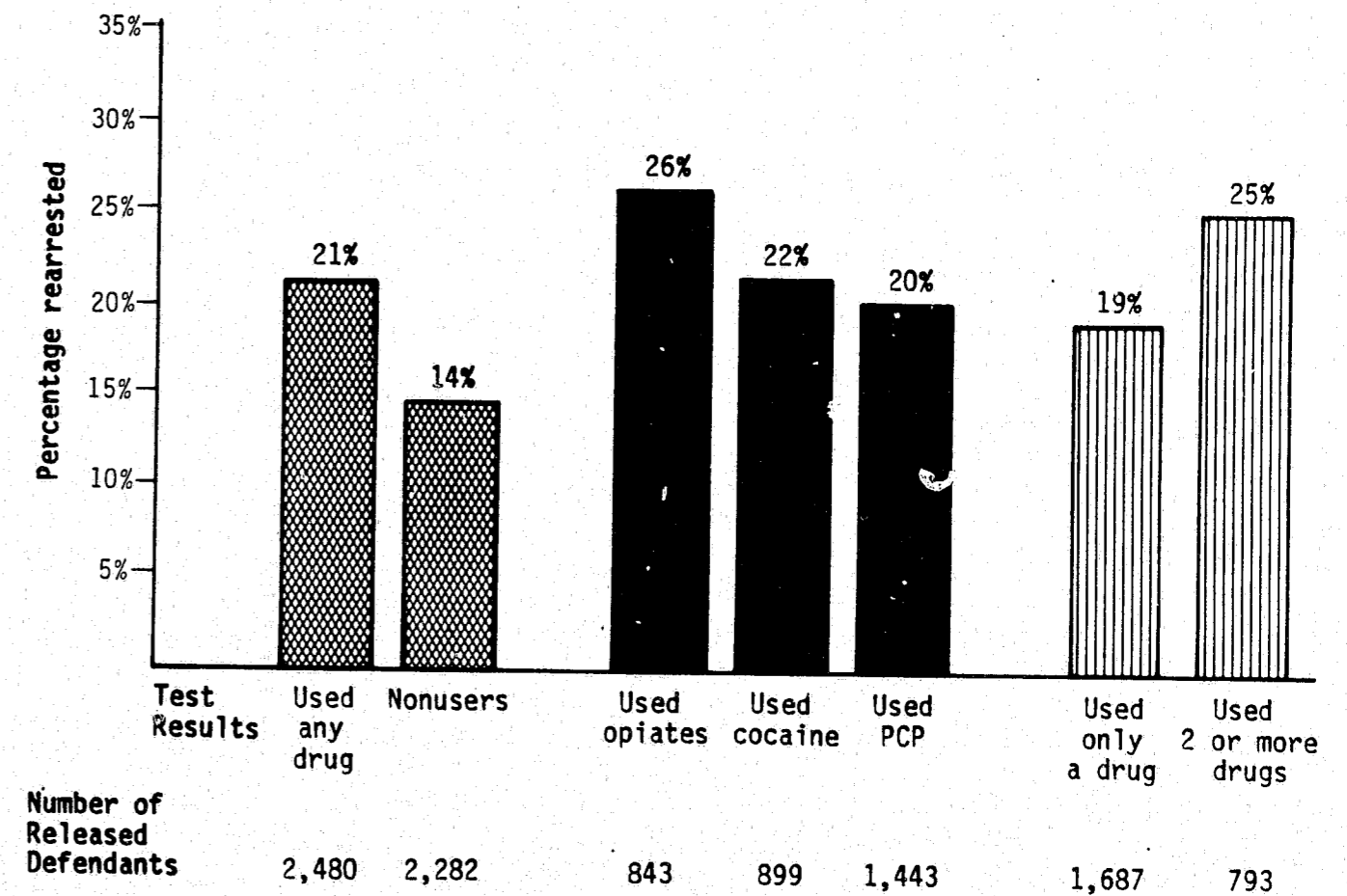
Exhibit 5
Drug Use by Charge
(June 1984–January 1985)

- A substantial percentage of defendants in all charge categories were drug users. For example, more than half the defendants charged with robbery were drug users; two-fifths of the defendants charged with burglary were drug users; and about one-third of the defendants charged with assault were drug users.

Offense Charged	Number	Percent Positive
Drug possession or sale	2,118	71.3%
Receiving stolen property	151	53.0
Robbery	340	51.8
Flight or escape	128	49.2
Auto theft	305	46.9
Larceny	371	43.9
Weapons	214	43.0
Burglary	356	40.2
Prostitution	399	37.1
Destruction of property	174	34.5
Assault	644	32.5
Other offenses	317	41.3
TOTAL	5,517	52.9%

Exhibit 6
Pretrial Rearrest Rates of Released Arrestees,
by Urine Test Results
(June 1984–January 1985)

- Drug users were 50 percent more likely than nonusers to be rearrested before trial.
- Users of opiates were more likely to be rearrested before trial than were users of cocaine or PCP.
- Users of two or more drugs were more likely to be rearrested before trial than defendants who used only one drug.



END