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*D.C. PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY*

*JUVENILE DRUG TESTING REPORT*

1988

*DRUG USE TRENDS AND FINDINGS*

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126534

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National Institute of Justice

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## FOREWORD

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The facts and figures contained in this report are the product of hard work and dedication on the part of the Juvenile Drug Testing Supervisors, JoAnn Waterfield and LaVon Harris, and the entire staff of the unit. They share a mutual commitment to supply accurate and timely substance abuse information to the Court as well as maintaining a personal interest in the clients they assist. The charts, graphs and statistical data included in this report are the result of the creativity and talent of the Agency's Research Analyst, Matthew McCauley, and Research Assistant, Victor Hickman.

## **PREFACE**

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The Agency acknowledges the support and contributions of the many individuals and organizations who helped make juvenile drug testing possible. With initial funding from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), under the direction of James K. Stewart, comprehensive drug testing services were made available to the Family and Social Services Divisions of Superior Court. On June 30, 1989, after 2 1/2 years of federal funding and thousands of drug tests, the grant concluded with no interruption in services.

Continuation of the juvenile drug testing program was due in large part to the support of the Honorable Mayor Marion Barry, the personal sponsorship of the Chairperson of the Judiciary Committee, Councilmember Wilhelmina Rolark, and through the endorsement given the program by all the members of the Judiciary Committee. At a time of many competing demands, the Agency and the City found the resources to maintain juvenile drug testing.

This report is the second annual summary of juvenile drug use trends as measured by 1988 initial test results.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

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The Pretrial Services Agency instituted an adult drug detection program in March 1984. The program's success soon became apparent. At the time, the late Chief Judge Moultrie expressed his concern that services to screen juveniles (those whom he felt most in need of early substance abuse identification and intervention) were not available. He requested that the Pretrial Services Agency examine the possibility of replicating the adult drug testing program for juvenile arrestees. With the full support of Chief Judge Fred B. Ugast, the judges of the Family Division and other juvenile court agencies, a comprehensive drug testing and monitoring program was designed for juveniles. On October 21, 1986 the Pretrial Services Agency expanded its drug testing program to include juvenile arrestees.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

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The Juvenile Drug Detection and Monitoring Program has three principal goals. The first is to supply the court with confirmed drug abuse information for use in determining appropriate release conditions. The second is to offer follow-up monitoring services for juveniles pending adjudication, including referrals to treatment and counseling. The third goal is to apprise the court of updated test information and program performance data.

Currently, the program tests new arrestees in two locations. Juveniles held overnight are tested in the court cellblock prior to their arraignment hearing. Juveniles released by the police or from the Receiving Home are given a referral form with instructions to report to Pretrial Services for a drug test within 48 hours.

Drug abuse information is viewed as an essential element of the juvenile's social file by the judges, commissioners, Corporation Counsel attorneys and Social Services intake counselors. A complete record of drug test results is supplied to the Court at the initial release hearing and for all subsequent proceedings. Also included in these drug status reports is information concerning drug treatment, counselling referrals as well as any other material relevant to a juvenile's contact with the program.

## **SELF-REPORTED DRUG USE**

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In the past, self-reported substance abuse information was the standard. The benefit of an objective and scientific test result versus self-reported data was evaluated during a three month period. This study, initiated by Toborg Associates, (the research firm awarded a companion NIJ grant to evaluate the juvenile program) compared self-reported drug use with actual test results. The survey found only 6% of the respondents testing positive for cocaine admitted use. Furthermore, only 32% of the juveniles with any positive result self-reported use.

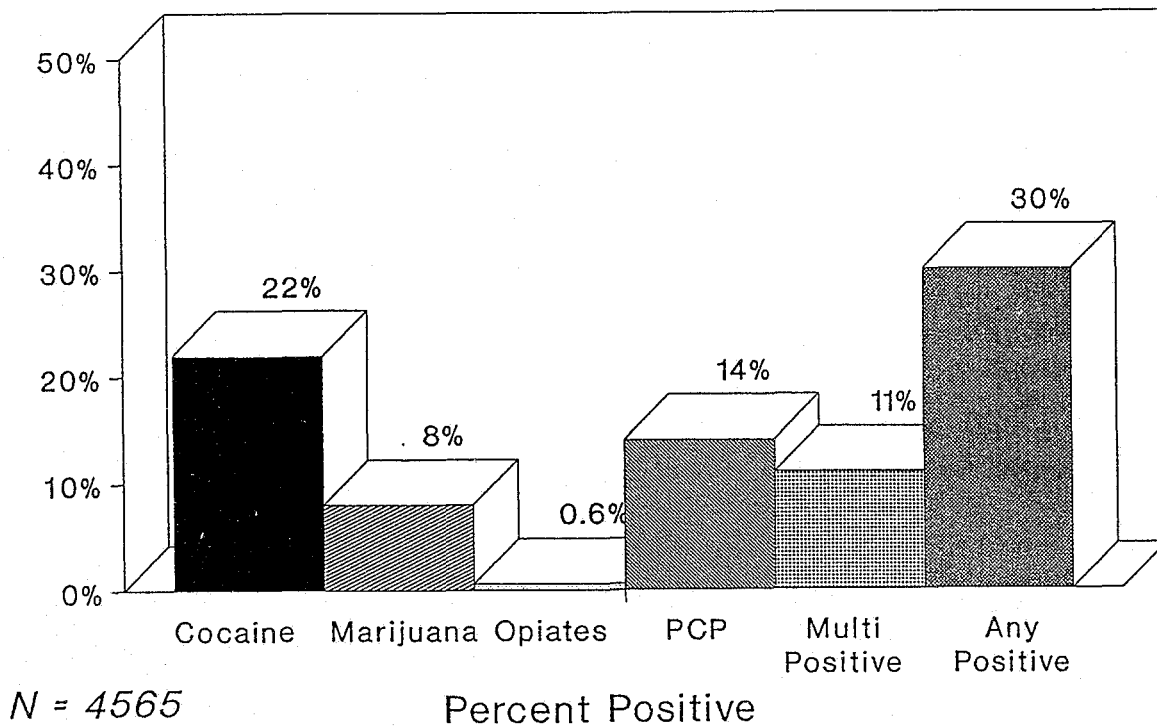
A year later, a follow-up survey was conducted by Agency staff who asked every respondent, "Have you used any drug or drugs within the last week?" Self-reported drug use information was found to be even less reliable than the results of the original study. During the questioning period, 46 juveniles tested positive for cocaine but only one, or 2%, admitted use. Of the 310 lock-up and community cases who were tested and asked about recent drug use, only 2 of the 73, also 2%, with positive results acknowledged use. These surveys clearly support the value of supplying the court with corroborated juvenile substance abuse information.

# OVERALL DRUG USE

In 1988 the juvenile program tested 4,565 juveniles charged as delinquents prior to their first appearance in court. The total number of juveniles with an initial positive test equaled 30%. This figure represents a decrease of 5% from 1987 statistics. Although there was an overall reduction in drug use, cocaine positives increased from a yearly average of 14% in 1987 to 22% in 1988. Data from the first 6 months of 1989 substantiate that this trend continues. Overall drug use is at 25% in 1989 with cocaine or crack remaining the drug of choice at 19%.

The breakdown of positive results shown on the chart below represents 1,368 respondents who tested positive, which equaled 30% of the total number tested. Both annual percentages by substance and the overall positive rate for 1988 are displayed.

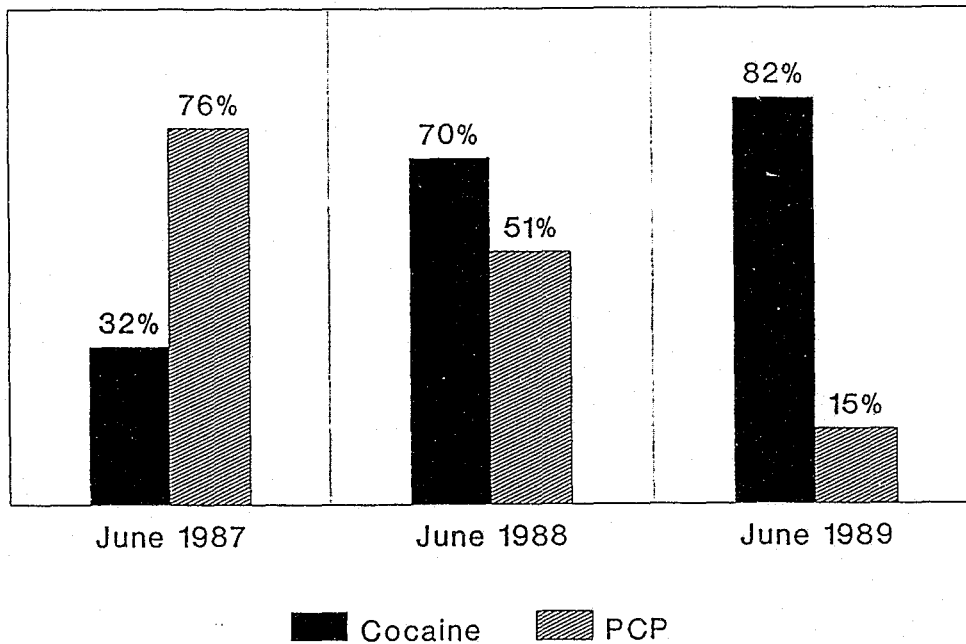
*Juvenile Drug Testing  
Overall Rates of Drug Use  
1988*



# COCAINE & PCP - A THREE YEAR COMPARISON

Juvenile drug testing data shows PCP use has continued to decrease from the one month high of 34% registered in June 1987 to the low of 4% reported in May and June 1989. As the chart reveals, of those juveniles testing positive, cocaine or crack remains the drug most frequently used in 1988 and 1989.

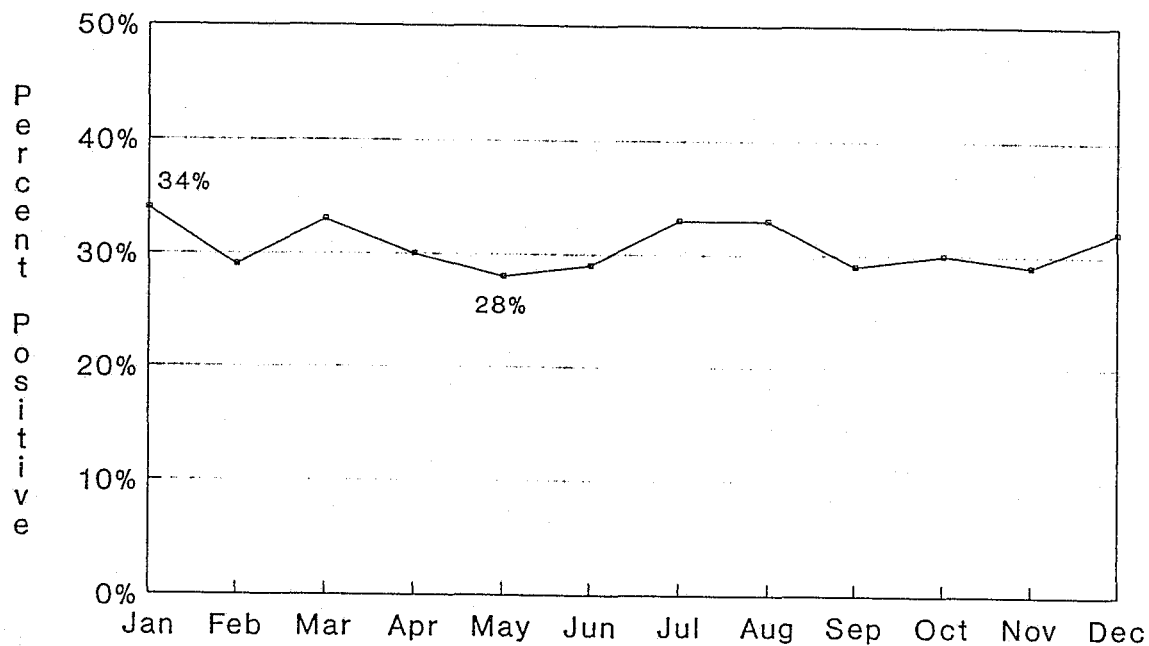
*3 Year Drug Use Trends:  
Cocaine and PCP Use Among  
Drug Positive Juveniles*



## OVERALL MONTHLY POSITIVE TRENDS

Overall drug use trends showed no significant variance throughout 1988. During the summer months in 1987 drug use increased to a record high level of 43%. This trend was not detected in 1988. In fact, the 28% positive rate recorded in May and June were the lowest monthly statistics for the year. January registered the yearly high with 34% testing positive.

### 1988 Juvenile Drug Testing Results *Overall Positive by Month*



N = 4558

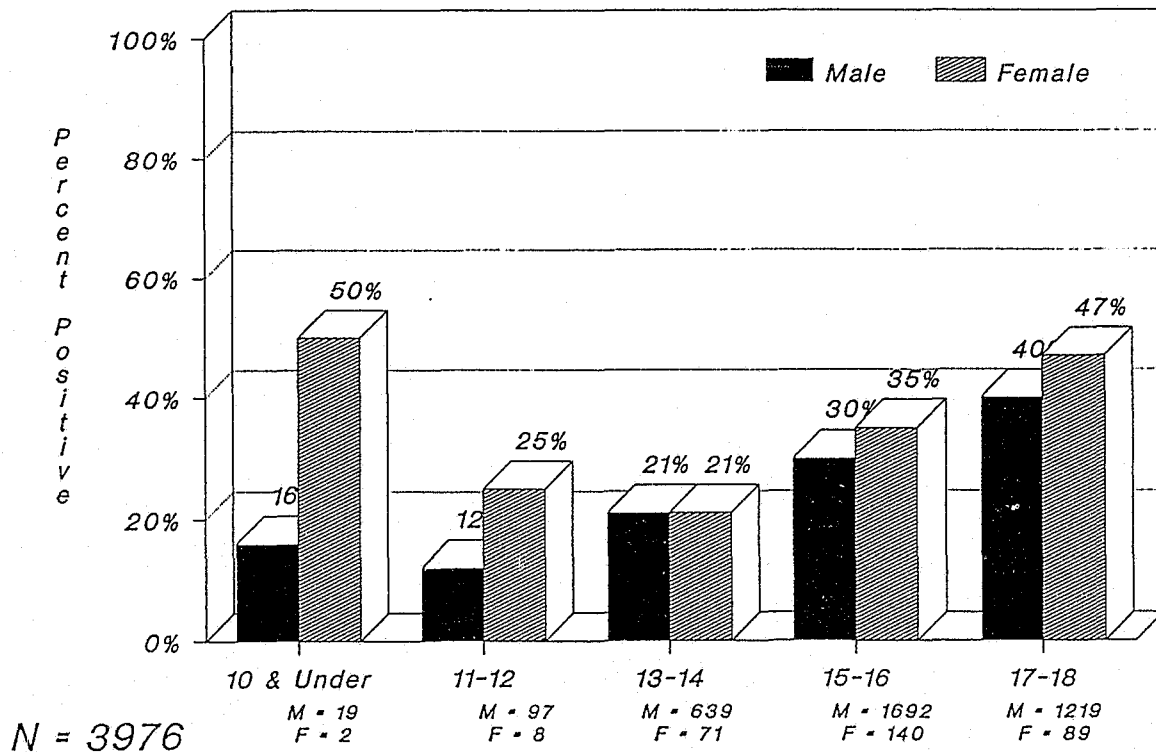


## TRENDS BY SEX AND AGE

As the chart exhibits, females consistently test positive at a higher rate than their male counterparts, a trend also found among adult arrestees. However, any inferences drawn from this data should weigh the fact that the number of females tested is quite small, only 310 compared to 3,666 males. (Sex and age data is not available on all arrestees.)

The Juvenile Drug Testing Program collects age data from the court and correlates it with test information. The age of the juvenile at the time the case is petitioned, not the age at the time the offense was allegedly committed, is recorded. Age statistics in 1987 showed a gradual upward slope, reflecting very little use by younger juveniles, less than 10%, with increasing use up to 51% positive by the age of eighteen. In 1988 a significant and disturbing change in previous age patterns occurred, indicating a trend toward earlier drug use. Whereas in 1987, 9% of the thirteen year olds had a positive result, 1988 statistics report 21% positive

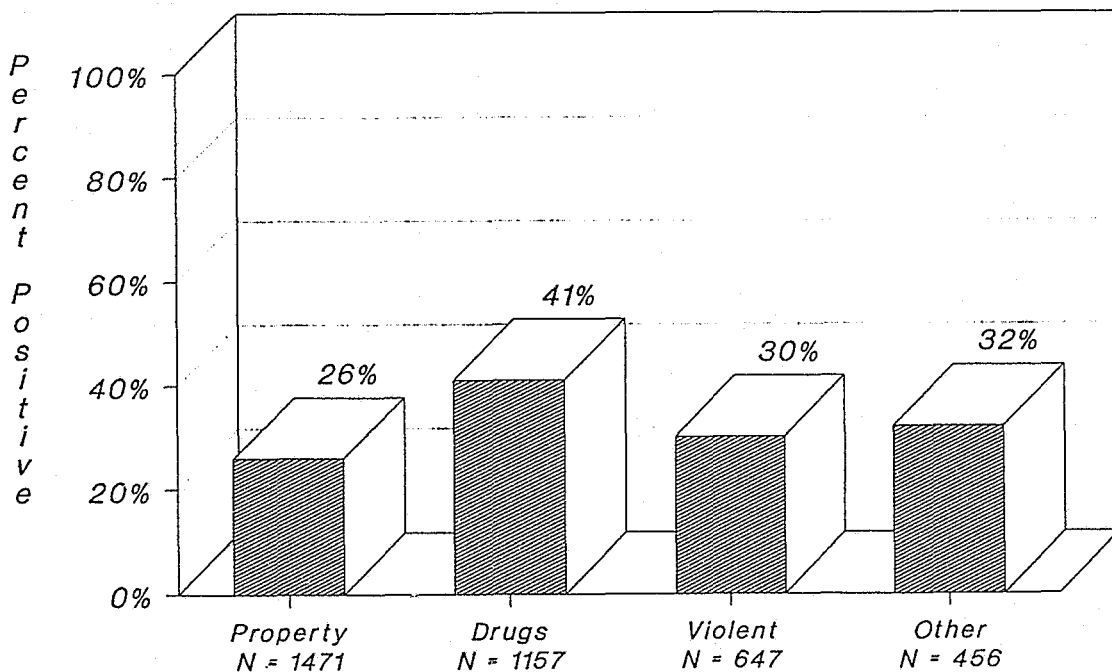
### 1988 Juvenile Drug Testing Results: Overall Positive by Age and Sex



# DRUG USE AND CRIME <sup>1</sup>

One topic subject to frequent inquiries is the association between drug use and arrest charge. Family Division Judges and Commissioners were concerned and alarmed by the growing rate of juveniles charged with drug offenses who were involved solely in the economic aspects of drugs and were not users themselves. These juveniles present the Court with even more difficult release and adjudication decisions. The chart below represents the positive rate by arrest category and reveals that 41% of the juveniles charged with drug offenses tested positive, or 59% had not recently ingested drugs. 1988 drug crime patterns for each charge classification show no significant changes from 1987.

## 1988 Juvenile Drug Testing Results *Overall Positive by Crime Type*



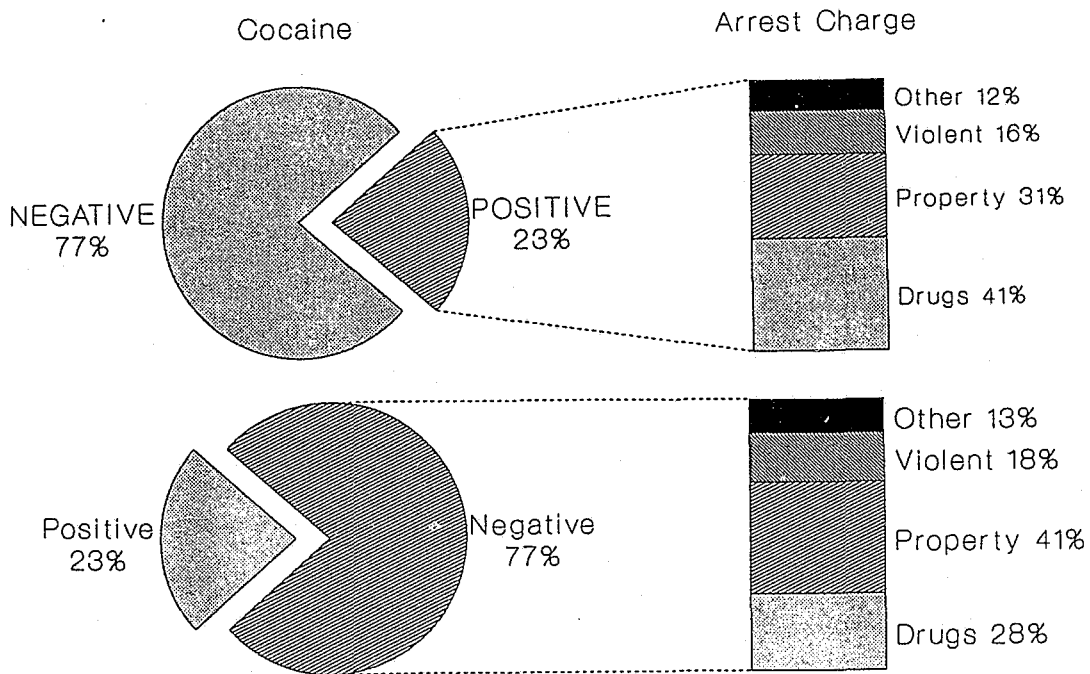
<sup>1</sup> Each category was tabulated independently, therefore, the total exceeds 100%. Also, the initial petitioned offense code used for this analysis. The chart includes 3,731 cases where charge records were available.

# CHARGE BREAKDOWNS FOR COCAINE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVES

In response to the predominant role played by cocaine or crack among juvenile drug users, a separate charge analysis was performed. The arrest charges of juveniles who tested positive for cocaine is presented with a comparison chart of the charges for those who tested negative.

As the chart displays, the categories of property and drug offenses demonstrate the most significant differences between users and non-users. As expected, cocaine positive juveniles are more likely to be charged with a drug offense. Conversely, non-users were more frequently charged with property offenses. In the District of Columbia, car thefts represent the majority (57%) of juvenile property offense arrests.

*1988 JUVENILE DRUG TESTING RESULTS:  
Comparison of Arrest Charges for  
Cocaine Positive & Negative Juveniles*

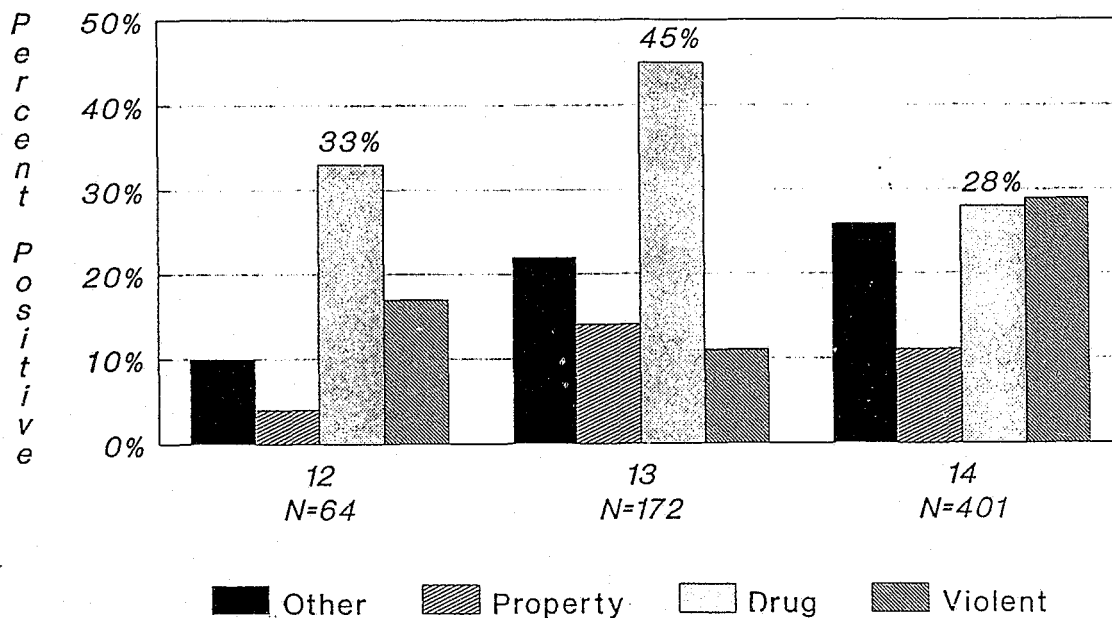


N = 3731

# CHARGE BREAKDOWNS FOR YOUNGER JUVENILES

In reaction to the trend toward increased drug use by younger offenders, the following chart examines the subject of drug crime correlations for twelve to fourteen year olds. Although the chart displays that the majority of thirteen year olds arrested on drug offenses are not drug positive, an alarming percent, 45%, are using drugs. The positive rate for thirteen year olds with a drug charge exceeds the combined rate of 41% for all ages of juveniles with a drug offense.

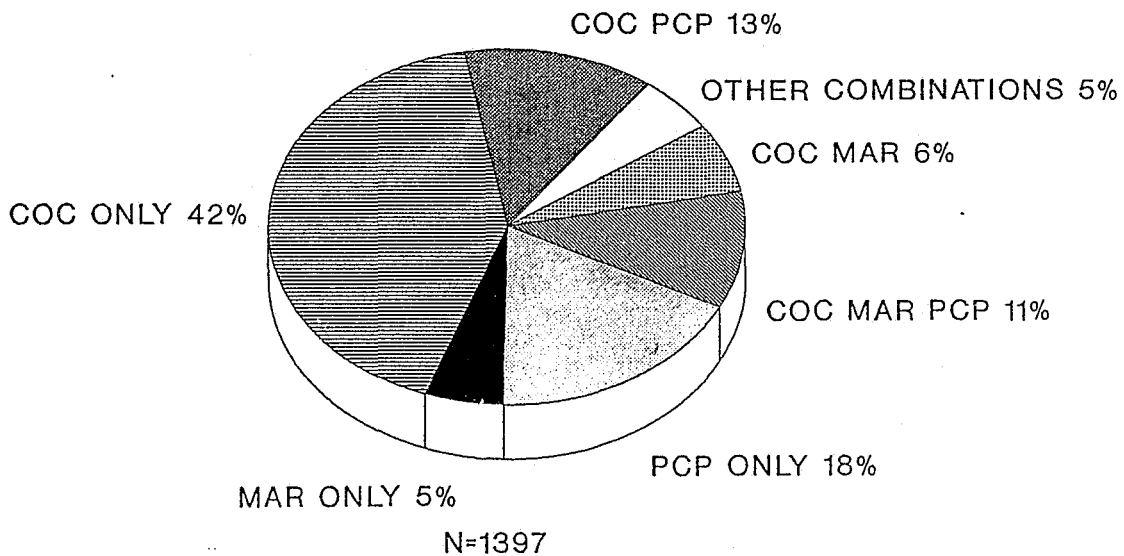
*1988 Juvenile Drug Testing Results:  
Percent Positive by Arrest Charge  
for 12, 13 and 14 Year Olds*



# DRUG COMBINATIONS

Along with the changes in drug preferences that occurred between 1987 and 1988, so also were differences in drug combinations recorded. Although the testing technology does not distinguish between cocaine and crack, the data demonstrates a dramatic change in how cocaine or its derivatives were used. In 1987 12% of the juveniles with a positive result tested for cocaine alone. In 1988 this figure jumped to 42%. The continued reduction in PCP use is also evidenced by comparing rates of "single" drug use. In 1987 36% of the positives were for PCP only, in contrast to 18% in 1988.

*1988 Juvenile Drug Testing Results:  
Combinations of Drugs Used  
for Drug Positive Juveniles*



COC=COCAINE MAR=MARIJUANA OPI=OPIATES PCP=PHENCYCLIDINE

## **SAMPLE POPULATION**

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One factor often mentioned as a performance measure of initial drug screening is how effective a program is at making contact with the arrestees and obtaining samples. The following is an accounting of lock-up and community release cases referred by Social Services, broken down by whether we obtained a sample and if not the reason why. The office's location next to the cell-block allows staff the opportunity to give morning arrestees several chances to submit a sample. The majority of juveniles with no test results are those brought to court late in the day who proceed directly to arraignment and lock-up cases that are unable to submit before their initial hearing.

	<u>Community</u>	<u>Lock-up</u>
Unable to submit	17	183
Refused to submit	2	60
Failed to report	51	n/a
No sample taken	7	157
No test/No answer	2	60
Other reason		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>460</b>

Number Tested      1,219 (93%)    +    3,339 (86%) = 4,558\*

\* 8 test results have missing reasons

## SUMMARY

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Although 1988 data on the percentage of juveniles testing positive at arrest showed an overall reduction of 5% from 1987 figures, this fact alone represents only a small measure of success in the battle to end juvenile drug abuse. Several factors occurred in 1988 that darken what might have been construed as a brighter picture. Where we once observed extreme concern on the part of most parents and guardians over their childrens' use of PCP, we now see a changed attitude. Anger over PCP has been replaced by either despair or acceptance with crack cocaine. The drug use preferences and behavior of younger juveniles have shifted substantially in the last 18 months. In 1987 6% of the twelve year olds and 9% of the thirteen year olds were found to be drug positive. In 1988 the numbers jumped to 14% and 21%, respectively. Moreover, this disturbing trend has persisted in 1989. In March of this year, 35% of the thirteen year olds arrested were drug positive.

The drug distribution trade has invaded the lives of young people under the age of eighteen, as has the violence associated with it. In 1988 the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) reported arresting 1,913 juveniles for sale or possession of drugs. MPD arrest statistics for the first seven months of 1989 show 1,259 juveniles being charged with narcotics violations. Where it once was unusual to read a newspaper account of a juvenile involved as either the victim or perpetrator of a drug related murder, articles now appear with almost routine frequency. Neither do the facts presented in this report depict the toll drugs take on the lives and families of these young people. We know of thirteen juveniles from our program having lost their lives in drug related homicides.

The Juvenile Drug Testing Program remains committed to supplying the Court and the City with factual information on drug use by juveniles involved in the criminal justice system, in hopes of assisting in the early identification and intervention of drug abuse.