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Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

Drugs and Jail Inmates, 1989

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Money for illegal drugs was cited by 13% of convicted jail inmates as a reason they had committed their offense. Among inmates who had used drugs in the month before the offense for which they were convicted, 27% said that they had committed the crime to get money for drugs. Nearly 1 in 3 robbers and burglars said they had committed their crimes to obtain money for drugs. Responding to other questions about their drug-use histories, more than a quarter of all convicted jail inmates said they were under the influence of drugs at the time of the crime. At least 4 in every 10 convicted inmates in local jails said they were using drugs during the month before the crime; 1 in 4 said they were using cocaine or crack.

This report describes the characteristics of persons held in local jails throughout the United States. It focuses on inmates who were charged with or convicted of a drug offense or who had used drugs. This study primarily uses data from the 1989 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails. The survey was sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and was carried out by the Bureau of the Census. It entailed interviews with a representative sample of 395,554 inmates held in 3,312 city and county jails. Data for 1983 are derived from a similar survey sponsored by BJS.

Other findings include the following:

- Persons charged with drug offenses accounted for 23% of all persons held in local jails in 1989. In 1983 about 9% of those held in local jails were charged with drug offenses as their most serious charge. Drug offenses included possession,

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This Special Report makes clear the effect of illegal drugs on the lives of persons accused or convicted of committing crimes. Its descriptions and conclusions come primarily from analysis of responses to the Survey of Inmates in Local Jails.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) sponsored nationally representative surveys of jail inmates in 1983 and 1989. The findings from these surveys thereby describe changes across 6 years — in the criminal histories, drug-use patterns, and personal characteristics of drug offenders and other offenders.

BJS extends its gratitude to the administrators of local jails. Their cooperation made possible the collection of data reported here, in the *Profile of Jail Inmates, 1989*, and in several reports to come.

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trafficking, importation, manufacturing, and other illegal drug activities.

- Among those in local jails charged with a drug offense, the percentage of blacks, Hispanics, and women rose between 1983 and 1989. The number of black inmates increased from 35% to 48% of all jail inmates charged with a drug offense, the number of Hispanic inmates increased from 20% to 25%, and women from 9% to 14%.

- Half the offenders convicted of a drug offense and sentenced to a local jail had a sentence of 9 months or less, the same as in 1983.

- More than 70% of those in jail for a drug charge had served at least one prior sentence of probation or incarceration. About 1 in 6 had been previously convicted of a violent crime, and about 1 in 3 had been previously convicted of a drug offense.

- While about three-quarters of all jail inmates in 1989 had used at least one illegal drug during their life, over half (55%) reported having used a major drug — cocaine, crack, heroin, PCP, LSD, or methadone outside a treatment program.

- About 50% of the inmates held in local jails in 1989 had used cocaine or crack, compared to 38% in 1983. Cocaine and crack were the only drugs that had a higher percentage of users in 1989 than in 1983.

- An estimated 30% of convicted offenders in local jails had been using drugs daily in the month before their offense. About 50% of these daily users had been using cocaine or crack.

- In 1989 convicted women in local jails were more likely than convicted men to report having used a major drug every day in the month preceding their offense.

- Drug use in general, and use of major drugs in particular, was the most prevalent among jail inmates reporting that their parents had abused drugs. These jail inmates also reported substantially younger ages of first drug use.

- About 48% of convicted jail inmates who were daily users of a major drug in the month before their current offense had participated in a drug treatment program; 15% were taking part in one while incarcerated.

The 1989 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails

The 1989 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails included interviews with a nationally representative sample of 5,675 jail inmates in 424 jails across the Nation. Interviews were conducted for BJS by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in July, August, and September 1989. Inmates responded to questions about their current detention status, current and previous offenses, prior drug and alcohol use, and various personal, social, and family characteristics. (See *Methodology* for further information.)

Inmates in jail with drug charges

The percentage of jail inmates charged with drug offenses more than doubled between 1983 and 1989 (table 1). The proportion of inmates in jail with drug charges as their most serious offense increased from 9% in 1983 to 23% in 1989. When multiple charges against each inmate were considered, the percentage of inmates with at least one drug charge rose from 11% in 1983 to 26% in 1989. This growth occurred as the total number of inmates held in local jails increased by 77%. The number of inmates with a drug charge as their most serious offense rose from 20,479 in 1983 to 87,551 in 1989, a 328% increase. Over the same period, the number of persons held for all other offenses rose from 199,094 to 292,649, a 47% increase.

Table 1. Jail inmates charged with drug offenses, 1989 and 1983

Status and drug offenses of jail inmates	Percent of jail inmates	
	1989	1983
Drugs, most serious charge		
Total	23.0%	9.3%
Convicted	22.5	10.0
Unconvicted	23.8	8.3
Drugs, any charge		
Total	25.8%	11.0%
Convicted	25.5	11.4
Unconvicted	26.1	10.3
Number of jail inmates	380,160	219,573

Note: Excludes an estimated 15,394 inmates in 1989 and 3,979 inmates in 1983 because their offense was unknown.

Characteristics of inmates charged with drug offenses

Among inmates held for drug charges, the percentage of women increased from an estimated 9% in 1983 to almost 14% in 1989 (table 2). In 1989 an estimated 13,426 women were charged with drug offenses, an almost sixfold increase from the 2,243 reported in 1983. In 1989, about 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men in local jails were held for drug charges.

The increase in the number of women in local jails for drug charges is reflected in the statistics on arrests for drug violations. Women accounted for less than 14% of adult arrests for drug offenses in 1983 but nearly 17% of the arrests in 1989. Over the same period, the number of arrests of women for drug violations increased at a rate exceeding that for men:

	Adult arrests for drug violations*		Percent change
	1983	1989	
Total	583,500	1,247,800	114%
Female	79,800	208,300	161
Male	503,600	1,039,500	106

*The number of adult drug arrests was estimated by applying the sex and age distributions from reported arrests to the total estimated number of arrests. Adults are defined as persons age 18 or older.

The racial and ethnic composition of the jail population held on drug charges also changed significantly from 1983 to 1989. Hispanic inmates, who could be of any race, were 20% of those charged with drug offenses in 1983 but 25% in 1989. The percentage of black, non-Hispanic inmates increased from 35% of persons in jail for drugs to 48%, while the percentage of white, non-Hispanic inmates decreased

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of jail inmates, by type of offense, 1989 and 1983

Demographic characteristic	Percent of jail inmates charged with			
	Any drug offense		A nondrug offense	
	1989	1983	1989	1983
Sex				
Male	86.3%	90.7%	92.1%	93.3%
Female	13.7	9.3	7.9	6.7
Race and Hispanic origin				
White non-Hispanic	25.5%	43.7%	43.3%	46.8%
Black non-Hispanic	48.3	34.6	39.6	37.8
Hispanic	24.7	19.9	14.6	13.6
Other*	1.6	1.9	2.6	1.8
Age				
17 or younger	.7%	.2%	1.8%	1.5%
18-24	33.6	32.0	32.4	41.4
25-29	25.4	30.2	23.0	22.3
30-34	19.9	19.6	19.0	15.0
35-44	15.9	14.0	17.0	12.2
45-54	3.3	3.0	5.0	5.0
55 or older	1.2	.9	1.8	2.6
Median age	28 yrs.	27 yrs.	28 yrs.	26 yrs.
Education				
8th grade or less	15.2%	14.8%	15.7%	18.0%
Some high school	39.0	36.7	38.3	42.1
High school graduate	32.7	33.3	33.2	28.6
Some college or more	13.0	15.2	12.8	11.4
Number of jail inmates	97,999	24,118	282,161	219,573

Note: Excludes an estimated 15,394 inmates in 1989 and 3,979 in 1983 because their offense was unknown. In 1989 data were missing on education for 0.5% of cases. In 1983 data were missing on race and Hispanic origin for 0.2% of cases and on education for 1.1% of cases.

*Includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Aleuts, Eskimos, and other racial groups.

from 44% to 26%. In 1989 nearly three-fourths of those confined in local jails for drug charges were either black or Hispanic, while slightly over half of those charged with nondrug offenses were black or Hispanic. For nondrug offenses the racial and ethnic composition of the population in jail remained stable during the period.

Just as drug arrests of women paralleled the increase of women in jail for drugs, statistics on arrests for drug violations reflected an increase in the percentage of black arrestees from 1983 to 1989. In 1983, 32% of persons arrested for drug violations were black, while in 1989, 42% were black:

Race	Percent of adult arrests for drug violations	
	1983	1989
White	67.5%	57.7%
Black	31.5	41.5
Other	1.0	.7

Despite the dramatic increase in the number of persons in local jails for a drug offense, the age distribution of these inmates remained relatively unchanged between 1983 and 1989. In both years roughly a third of these inmates were between ages 18 and 24; however, the median age rose from 27 in 1983 to 28 in 1989.

Jail inmates charged with nondrug offenses were significantly older in 1989 than in 1983, so that in 1989 the distribution of their ages resembled that of persons with drug charges. An estimated 32% of the inmates charged with nondrug offenses were between ages 18 and 24 in 1989, compared to 41% in 1983. The percentage of those age 35 to 44 rose from 12% in 1983 to 17% in 1989.

More than half of jail inmates in both 1983 and 1989 had not received a high school diploma or its equivalent. Those in jail for drugs were as likely as other inmates to have failed to complete high school.

Sentences

Some convicted and sentenced offenders in local jails serve the incarceration portion of their sentence only in jail, while others are moved to a State prison. Among convicted offenders in local jails in 1989, an estimated 19% of drug offenders and 13% of all other offenders were expected to serve their sentences in a prison. In 1983, 26% of convicted drug offenders in local jails were to serve their sentence in prison.

Table 3. Where jail inmates were sentenced to serve their sentence, by type of offense and median maximum sentence, 1989 and 1983

Location of sentence to be served	Percent of jail inmates convicted of			
	Any drug offense		Other offenses	
	1989	1983	1989	1983
Prison	18.9%	11.8%	12.8%	10.7%
Jail	65.9	73.4	74.4	76.2
Not known	15.2	14.8	12.8	13.1
Median maximum sentence				
Prison	60 mos.	48 mos.	84 mos.	48 mos.
Jail	9	9	6	6
Not known	60	36	36	36

Note: Inmates sentenced for any drug offense, even if the offense was not the most serious of multiple offenses, were categorized as being convicted of a drug offense. The maximum sentence length is for the most serious offense. The table excludes 331 cases in 1989 and 623 cases in 1983 because of missing data for offense or location where the sentence was to be served. Data were missing on sentence length for 4.7% of cases in 1989 and 4.0% of cases in 1983.

Table 4. Criminal history of jail inmates, by the most serious current offense, 1989

Criminal history	Most serious current offense				
	Total	Drug	Violent	Property	Public-order
First offense	22.6%	28.4%	28.0%	19.0%	15.3%
Previous offense	77.4%	71.6%	72.0%	81.0%	84.7%
Drug	18.6	36.7	12.6	12.5	14.5
Violent	19.5	15.8	29.8	16.9	16.7
Property	42.9	31.4	39.4	62.9	32.8
Public-order	41.1	31.9	33.3	35.3	66.8
Number of jail inmates	373,349	85,837	84,306	111,963	85,278

Note: Excludes an estimated 22,204 inmates for unknown present or prior offense. Types of previous offense do not add to total previous offenses because inmates may have had more than one type of offense. Criminal history includes offenses for which inmates received probation or served time in a correctional facility.

The sentences that drug offenders in jail were serving in 1989 were the same on average as the sentences of drug offenders in 1983. Half the drug offenders sentenced to jail in both 1983 and 1989 were to serve 9 months or less, according to the maximum sentence that they reported (table 3). In 1989 those drug offenders awaiting transfer to a State prison reported maximum sentences with a median of 60 months, not a statistically significant increase from the 48-month median in 1983.

Drug offenders received longer sentences to jail on average than other types of offenders. In 1989 the median jail sentence for a drug offense was 9 months; for other offenses, 6 months. Among offenders to be transferred to State prison, however, drug offenders had a somewhat shorter median prison sentence (60 months) than other offenders (84 months).¹

¹The difference between medians was significant at the 90-percent confidence level.

Criminal histories

Overall, 77% of inmates in local jails had previously served time in a jail, prison, or other correctional facility or had been sentenced to probation in the past (table 4). Those charged with drug crimes were about as likely as those charged with violent crimes to have had a prior record as a juvenile or as an adult: about 72% had been on probation or incarcerated in the past.

More than a third of those held for drug offenses had prior convictions for drug law violations. About 1 of 8 inmates charged with nondrug offenses had a prior conviction for drugs. Overall, about 1 in every 3 jail inmates in 1989 were either currently in jail for a drug law violation or had a prior sentence for a drug law violation.

Current drug offenders were about as likely as property and public-order offenders to have a prior sentence for a violent crime (16%); however, they were considerably less likely than current violent offenders

to have past convictions for violent crime. Nearly 30% of jail inmates charged with a violent offense in 1989 had previously been on probation or incarcerated for a violent offense.

Inmates charged with drug offenses were more likely than those charged with property or public-order offenses to have never before been sentenced for a crime (28%, compared to 19% and 15%). Inmates charged with drug offenses and those charged with violent offenses were equally likely (28%) to have never been sentenced in the past.

In 1989 about a quarter of the inmates charged with drug offenses and a third

of the violent and property offenders had juvenile records (table 5). About 65% of the drug offenders had been convicted as adults, almost the same percentage as those charged with violent offenses but lower than the 81% for public-order offenders and the 71% for property offenders.

Drug offenders had somewhat shorter criminal records than other offenders. About 12% of the drug offenders, 14% of the violent offenders, 20% of the property offenders, and 23% of the public-order offenders had at least six prior sentences to probation or incarceration. Overall, 17% of all jail inmates in 1989 had six or more sentences to probation or incarceration before their arrest for their current offense.

Prior drug use by jail inmates

About 78% of all jail inmates in 1989 reported that they had used at least one illegal drug during their life, and 58% reported they had used drugs regularly, that is, once or more a week for at least 1 month (table 6). Among convicted inmates, 44% had used drugs in the month before their current offense: 30% daily or almost daily and 27% under the influence when they committed their current offense.

Jail inmates were twice as likely as persons in the general population to have ever used drugs and 7 times more likely than those in the general population to have been current users of drugs. (For jail inmates *current use* refers to the month before the arrest; for the general population, to the month before the interview.) Based on estimates from the 1990 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 37% of all persons age 12 or older had used some illicit drug at some time, and more than 6% were current users.²

About half the inmates in local jails in 1989 had used cocaine or crack; in 1983, 38% reported having used these drugs. Cocaine and crack were the only drugs for which proportionately more inmates reported use in 1989 than in 1983. By every measure applied — ever using the drugs, ever using them regularly, using them in the month preceding the offense, and using them at the time of the offense — use of cocaine and crack increased.

²National Institute on Drug Abuse, *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Population Estimates 1990*, 1990, table 2-A.

Table 5. Prior sentences of jail inmates, by the most serious current offense, 1989

Prior sentence	Most serious current offense				
	All inmates	Drug	Violent	Property	Public-order
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
None	23.2%	28.9%	29.0%	19.4%	15.9%
Juvenile only	7.6	6.2	9.6	10.1	3.3
Adult only	46.3	45.7	38.6	45.3	56.7
Both	23.0	19.2	22.8	25.3	24.1
Number of times					
0	23.2%	28.9%	29.0%	19.4%	15.9%
1	20.5	24.0	19.6	20.5	17.4
2	16.5	15.5	16.8	16.3	17.7
3-5	22.9	19.6	20.8	24.3	26.2
6-10	10.7	7.6	10.2	11.3	14.1
11 or more	6.3	4.4	3.6	8.2	8.7
Number of jail inmates	363,443	84,311	81,618	109,679	82,112

Note: Total includes "other offenses" not shown separately. Excludes an estimated 32,111 inmates whose offense or prior status was unknown.

Table 6. Drug use history of jail inmates, by type of drug, 1989 and 1983

Type of drug	Percent of jail inmates who had used drugs				Percent of convicted jail inmates who had used drugs					
	Ever		Regularly		In the month before the offense		Daily in the month before the offense		At the time of the offense	
	1989	1983	1989	1983	1989	1983	1989	1983	1989	1983
Any drug	77.7%	76.1%	58.1%	60.8%	43.9%	46.1%	29.7%	32.9%	27.0%	29.6%
Major drug	55.4%	46.2%	37.4%	30.5%	27.7%	18.6%	17.3%	11.0%	18.2%	12.1%
Cocaine or crack	50.4	38.0	30.7	17.8	23.6	11.8	14.2	6.4	13.7	5.5
Heroin	18.2	22.4	11.4	16.0	7.0	7.9	5.1	5.8	4.6	5.6
LSD	18.6	22.3	6.3	8.5	1.6	3.0	.2	.9	.4	1.3
PCP	13.9	15.6	4.6	6.3	1.7	3.0	.6	1.2	1.3	1.9
Methadone	4.8	6.9	1.9	3.1	.6	.8	.2	.4	.5	.6
Other drug	71.9%	74.5%	49.8%	57.9%	31.3%	41.8%	18.9%	28.2%	12.0%	22.8%
Marijuana	70.7	73.0	47.9	55.0	28.1	38.6	16.8	25.6	9.1	16.9
Amphetamines	22.1	32.8	12.1	19.6	5.4	9.4	3.2	5.1	2.2	4.2
Barbiturates	17.2	27.8	7.2	13.9	3.3	5.9	1.4	2.8	.9	2.9
Methaqualone	14.7	23.0	4.2	8.8	.8	3.8	.2	1.5	.3	1.7
T's and blues*	11.0	10.9	5.4	5.9	2.4	3.0	1.3	1.8	.2	1.7

*A combination of amphetamines and barbiturates.

The use of drugs other than cocaine or crack declined from 1983 to 1989. In the latter year, lower percentages of inmates reported the use of heroin, LSD, PCP, methadone taken outside a treatment program, marijuana, amphetamines, barbiturates, and methaqualone. Only the reported use of amphetamines and barbiturates taken together, often referred to as "uppers and downers" or "T's and blues," remained the same between 1983 and 1989.

Characteristics of drug users

Among convicted offenders in local jails in 1989, female inmates were more likely than male inmates to report that they had used a drug during the month preceding their offense (table 7). Fifty-five percent of all convicted women and 43% of the men had used a drug in the month before their offense; 44% of the convicted women and 26% of the men had used a major drug

(heroin, cocaine or crack, LSD, PCP, or methadone); and 32% of the convicted women, compared to 16% of the men, had used a major drug daily.

Hispanic and black, non-Hispanic inmates awaiting or serving sentences were more likely to have used major drugs in the month before the offense than white, non-Hispanic inmates. More than 30% of the convicted Hispanic and black, non-Hispanic inmates had used a major drug in the month before their offense, compared to 23% of non-Hispanic whites. About 20% of convicted Hispanics and black, non-Hispanic inmates and 15% of the white non-Hispanics had been daily users of a major drug. Convicted and unconvicted inmates of different racial and ethnic groups reported similar lifetime experience with drugs, over 71% having used drugs and over 53% having used a major drug.

Nearly 50% of convicted jail inmates between age 18 and 34 had used drugs

in the month before their current offense; about 30% had used a major drug during that month; and slightly less than 20% had been daily users. The proportion of inmates who had used any drug or a major drug at any time or in the month before their offense was lower for those older than 44.

The reported drug use of inmates with different educational backgrounds had no consistent pattern. Those inmates with less than a ninth grade education were less likely than other inmates to have used any drug (66%, compared to about 80%) or a major drug (44%, compared to about 58%). Among convicted inmates, however, similar percentages of the least educated and of those with other educational backgrounds reported drug use at any time in the month or daily in the month before their offense. Regardless of the level of education, nearly 17% of convicted jail inmates had used a major drug daily in the month before their current offense.

Table 7. Drug use history of jail inmates, by selected demographic characteristics, 1989

Characteristic	Number of jail inmates	Percent of jail inmates who had ever used		Number of convicted jail inmates	Percent of convicted jail inmates who had used			
		Any drug	A major drug		Drugs in the month before the offense		Drugs daily in the month before the offense	
					Any drug	Major drug	Any drug	Major drug
Sex								
Male	357,515	77.3%	54.1%	196,620	42.7%	25.9%	28.6%	15.7%
Female	37,293	82.0	67.8	21,782	55.1	43.9	40.1	31.8
Race and Hispanic origin								
White non-Hispanic	152,170	81.4%	57.9%	92,738	43.6%	23.3%	31.4%	14.7%
Black non-Hispanic	164,841	76.8	52.7	81,236	44.8	30.2	28.9	19.1
Hispanic	68,762	71.6	55.7	38,168	44.0	34.4	27.8	20.0
Other ^a	9,035	79.9	60.0	6,260	36.9	19.2	26.2	15.1
Age								
17 or younger	5,825	68.5%	39.0%	2,428	37.5%	11.3%	21.2%	3.3%
18-24	128,816	80.2	53.2	67,422	48.7	28.4	32.7	16.1
25-29	93,646	83.8	61.3	54,266	48.0	30.3	31.5	18.8
30-34	75,772	81.7	62.3	41,743	48.0	32.1	35.1	20.9
35-44	66,146	74.4	57.0	37,265	37.3	26.4	24.5	18.4
45-54	18,037	46.4	25.2	10,929	16.6	11.0	11.4	9.1
55 or older	6,566	22.6	14.3	4,350	6.7	4.9	4.2	0.4
Education^b								
8th grade or less	61,460	66.1%	44.3%	34,735	37.2%	25.4%	27.6%	16.7%
Some high school	149,921	82.2	58.1	82,727	48.2	30.2	31.0	18.0
High school graduate	129,828	79.4	58.3	69,715	46.1	27.0	31.7	16.9
Any college	51,228	76.6	55.3	29,839	36.6	25.8	25.0	17.6

Note: Major drug includes heroin, crack, cocaine, PCP, LSD, and methadone. Any drug includes the major drugs, marijuana or hashish, amphetamines, barbiturates, and methaqualone. Data were missing on drug use for 0.2% of cases and on education for 0.5% of cases.

^aIncludes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Aleuts, Eskimos, and other racial groups.

^bEducation is categorized by the last completed year.

Being out of work at the time of arrest accounted for a higher percentage of drug users than nondrug users among convicted jail inmates (table 8). About 46% of the jail inmates who had used a major drug during that month and 50% who had used a major drug daily were unemployed, while 31% of those who had never used drugs were unemployed.

About 30% of convicted inmates who used a major drug daily in the month before their offense said illegal activities were a source of income. In comparison, about 5% of convicted inmates who had never used drugs had income from illegal sources.

Parental abuse of drugs and alcohol

Jail inmates who reported that their parents had abused drugs or alcohol were more likely to use drugs themselves, to use major drugs, and to use major drugs regularly than were inmates whose parents had not abused drugs (table 9). An estimated 87% of the inmates who reported parental abuse of drugs or alcohol said they had used drugs at some time; 48% said they had used a major drug regularly. In contrast, 75% of the inmates who reported no parental abuse of drugs or alcohol said they had used drugs, and 34% said they had used a major drug regularly.

Over half of convicted inmates who reported their parents abused drugs said they had used a major drug in the month before their current offense, compared to about a quarter of those whose parents had not abused either drugs or alcohol.

Jail inmates whose parents had abused drugs also reported substantially younger ages of first use of drugs than other jail

inmates. Among inmates whose parents abused drugs, the median age of first use of any drug was 13; of first use of a major

Table 8. Employment status, source of income, and monthly income of jail inmates, by drug use history, 1989

	Percent of jail inmates who had used drugs		Percent of convicted jail inmates who had used a major drug			
	Never	Ever	Never used any drug	Ever	In the month before the offense	Daily in the month before the offense
Employment status at time of arrest or admission						
Employed	67.8%	63.5%	69.1%	61.1%	54.1%	49.8%
Full time	57.3	51.9	59.6	49.9	43.4	39.5
Part time	10.5	11.6	9.5	11.2	10.7	10.3
Unemployed	32.1%	36.5%	30.9%	38.9%	46.0%	50.2%
Looking for work	17.1	22.6	16.7	23.5	26.2	28.9
Not looking for work	15.0	13.9	14.2	15.4	19.8	21.3
Source of income						
Wages or salaries	77.3%	75.8%	77.8%	74.7%	69.2%	65.6%
Benefits	18.5	18.4	18.2	19.5	21.0	21.0
Family or friends	13.7	21.9	14.2	19.9	21.4	21.8
Illegal income	4.3	13.1	4.7	16.9	24.7	29.4
Other	2.7	3.1	2.8	3.3	2.0	1.9
Average monthly income						
Less than \$500	42.7%	43.8%	38.3%	39.4%	40.7%	39.2%
\$500-\$999	27.4	24.0	28.3	24.3	22.2	23.1
\$1,000 or more	29.9	32.2	33.4	36.3	37.2	37.7
Number of jail inmates	87,826	306,427	46,878	122,228	60,289	37,607

Note: Major drug includes heroin, crack, cocaine, PCP, LSD, and methadone. Any drug includes the major drugs, marijuana or hashish, amphetamines, barbiturates, and methaqualone. Data were missing on employment status for 0.7% of cases, on income sources for 3.6% of cases because they were free less than 1 month, and on income for 12.3% of cases.

Table 9. Drug use history of all jail inmates and convicted jail inmates, by whether parents abused drugs or alcohol, 1989

Drug use history	Percent of jail inmates whose parents abused			
	Drugs	Alcohol	Drugs or alcohol	Neither
All jail inmates				
Ever used drugs	93.6%	87.4%	87.2%	75.0%
Ever used a major drug	83.9	68.0	68.3	51.0
Ever used a major drug regularly	65.6	47.3	47.5	33.9
Number of jail inmates	15,445	100,779	105,343	282,388
Convicted jail inmates				
Used any drug in the month before the offense	71.8%	52.0%	52.1%	41.0%
Used a major drug in the month before the offense	51.7	34.6	34.5	25.3
Used a major drug daily in the month before the offense	35.6	24.2	24.2	14.8
Number of jail inmates	7,368	58,647	60,921	153,316

Note: Major drug includes heroin, crack, cocaine, PCP, LSD, and methadone. Any drug includes the major drugs, marijuana or hashish, amphetamines, barbiturates, and methaqualone.

drug, 16; and of regular use of a major drug, 17 (table 10). Among inmates whose parents had not abused drugs or alcohol, the corresponding medians were 3 to 4 years higher: age 16 for first use of any drug, age 19 for first use of a major drug, and age 21 for first regular use of a major drug.

First use of drugs and first arrest

A majority of drug users reported starting to use drugs before they were arrested for the first time; however, a majority of those who used a major drug regularly began regular use after their first arrest (table 11). Fully 70% of jail inmates who had ever used a drug had used it a year or more before their first arrest; 42% of those who had used a major drug used it before their first arrest; and 32% who used a major drug regularly began regular use before their first arrest.

More than half of inmates in local jails who reported regular use of major drugs said that their first arrest for a crime preceded their first use of drugs by an average of 2 years.

Drug use and family background

Jail inmates who grew up with both parents during most of their childhood had a lower rate of ever using drugs or using drugs regularly than inmates reared by single parents (table 12). Among those who grew up in two-parent households, 75% had used drugs, and 55% had used drugs regularly at some time in the past. Among inmates from single-parent households, 82% had used drugs, and 62% had used them regularly.

Inmates who had ever lived in a foster home or institution, nearly 14% of all jail

inmates in 1989, were more likely than other inmates to report any or regular past use of drugs. More than 87% of inmates who had ever in a foster home or institution as a child had used drugs.

Drug use by inmates who had been physically or sexually abused

Jail inmates who had been physically or sexually abused were more likely than other inmates to have used drugs in the past and to have used them regularly. About 86% of those who had been abused, compared to 77% of those who had not been abused, said they had used drugs in the past (table 13). Among inmates who had been abused, 72% said they had been regular drug users; among those who had not been abused, 56% had been regular drug users.

Table 10. Median age at which jail inmates began using drugs, by whether parents abused drugs or alcohol, 1989

Jail inmates	Median age for jail inmates whose parents abused			
	Drugs	Alcohol	Drugs or alcohol	Neither
First use of any drug	13 yrs.	15 yrs.	15 yrs.	16 yrs.
First use of a major drug	16	17	17	19
First regular use of a major drug	17	19	19	21

Note: Major drug includes heroin, crack, cocaine, PCP, LSD, and methadone. Any drug includes the major drugs, marijuana or hashish, amphetamines, barbiturates, and methaqualone.

Table 12. Drug use of jail inmates, by childhood living arrangements, 1989

Who jail inmates lived with most of their childhood	Number of jail inmates	Percent of jail inmates who used drugs	
		Ever	Regularly
Single parent	167,248	82.2%	62.1%
Both parents	172,931	74.6	55.0
Other relatives	39,869	78.7	58.2
Foster home or institution	7,889	80.5	62.8
Other	4,016	59.0	50.9
Jail inmates who lived in foster home or institution			
Ever	53,875	87.3%	71.3%
Never	338,079	76.8	56.4

Table 11. Initial drug use in relation to first arrest, by drug use history of jail inmates, 1989

First drug use	Percent of jail inmates using drug			
	Any drug		Major drug	
	Ever	Regularly	Ever	Regularly
Before first arrest				
More than 1 year	60.1%	50.7%	32.3%	22.9%
One year	9.8	10.2	9.4	9.0
In same year as first arrest				
	11.2	12.1	12.6	12.9
After first arrest				
One year	5.6	7.9	8.6	7.8
More than 1 year	13.3	19.2	37.0	47.3
Number of inmates	302,377	225,226	215,448	145,127
Median age of first drug use	16	16	18	20
Median age of first arrest	18	18	18	18

Note: Major drug includes heroin, crack, cocaine, PCP, LSD, and methadone. Any drug includes the major drugs, marijuana or hashish, amphetamines, barbiturates, and methaqualone. Regular use is defined as ever using a drug once a week or more for at least a month.

Table 13. Drug use of jail inmates, by whether they were physically or sexually abused before admission to jail, 1989

	Number of jail inmates	Percent of jail inmates who	
		Ever used drugs	Used drugs regularly
All offenders			
Physical or sexual abuse	62,395	86.4%	71.5%
No physical or sexual abuse	322,484	77.0	56.2
Men			
Physical or sexual abuse	46,198	85.0	69.9
No physical or sexual abuse	302,281	76.9	56.0
Women			
Physical or sexual abuse	16,197	90.3	76.3
No physical or sexual abuse	20,203	77.1	59.5

Jail inmates who had used cocaine or crack, 1989

Convicted jail inmates reported relatively widespread use of cocaine and crack only after 1983. In that year, 12% of the convicted inmates said they had used cocaine or crack during the month before their offense; within 6 years the percentage doubled. Cocaine and crack were the only types of drugs that proportionately more jail inmates used in 1989 than in 1983. In several ways these offenders differed as a group from other drug users and from offenders who were using no drugs.

How many jail inmates used cocaine or crack in the month before their arrest?

- Nearly 1 in every 4 convicted jail inmates in 1989 were users of cocaine or crack in the month before they were arrested for their current offense.

What are the characteristics of inmates who used cocaine or crack in the month before their offense?

- Users of cocaine or crack were more likely to be female and black non-Hispanic than were inmates who used other drugs or had not used drugs in the month before their offense. Cocaine and crack users were more likely to be under age 30 than were inmates who had used no drugs.
- About 57% of cocaine and other drug users had failed to complete high school, compared to 54% of those who were not using drugs in the month before their offense.
- Users of cocaine or crack were more likely to be unemployed (47%) than other drug users (34%) or those who did not use drugs (29%).
- A third of cocaine and crack users had been convicted of drug trafficking or possession.
- Cocaine or crack users were 3 times more likely than other drug users to have committed their current offense to obtain money for drugs — 39% of the users of cocaine or crack said they were trying to get money for drugs when they committed their crime.
- Cocaine or crack users were more likely to have prior criminal records than inmates who used other drugs or did not

Characteristics of convicted jail inmates who had used cocaine or crack, other drugs, or no drugs in the month before their offense, 1989

Characteristic	Percent of jail inmates who in the month before the offense used		
	Cocaine or crack	Another drug	No drug
Sex			
Male	83.6%	92.0%	92.1%
Female	16.4	8.0	7.9
Race and ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	35.2%	50.2%	42.6%
Black non-Hispanic	45.2	29.6	36.7
Hispanic	18.0	17.0	17.5
Other	1.6	3.3	3.1
Age			
17 or younger	.5%	1.5%	1.2%
18-24	31.7	37.3	28.2
25-29	28.2	26.0	23.0
30-34	22.1	19.5	17.7
35-44	15.3	13.5	19.1
45 or older	2.2	2.2	10.8
Education			
8th grade or less	14.4%	12.4%	18.0%
9th to 11th grade	42.1	41.1	35.3
High school graduate	31.3	36.1	31.1
Some college or more	12.2	10.4	15.6
Employment			
Employed	53.4%	65.8%	70.3%
Full time	43.2	55.8	58.7
Part time	10.2	10.0	11.6
Unemployed	46.6	34.1	28.7
Looking for work	27.4	20.7	17.9
Not looking for work	19.2	13.4	10.8
Sources of income			
Wages	69.6%	76.7%	79.1%
Benefits	20.1	18.8	18.2
Family or friends	21.8	18.7	17.2
Illegal income	25.2	15.8	4.9
Other	2.2	2.7	3.4
Current offense			
Violent	15.4%	15.2%	17.5%
Robbery	7.9	3.8	4.3
Assault	3.4	4.4	6.0
Property	33.7	32.4	26.2
Burglary	12.9	11.5	7.9
Larceny	9.3	10.7	7.3
Drug	34.2	28.6	15.4
Possession	16.0	16.8	6.3
Trafficking	16.4	10.4	8.5
Other drug	1.7	1.3	.5
Public-order	15.9	22.7	39.1
Other	.9	1.3	1.8
Committed current offense for money for drugs			
	38.6%	12.9%	2.6%
Incarcerated in past			
	67.3%	63.7%	52.4%
Ever convicted in past			
	84.3%	84.5%	74.1%
Received drug treatment in past			
	42.2%	36.5%	13.3%
Number of jail inmates	51,337	44,550	121,962

use drugs. About 67% of users of cocaine or crack had at least one previous incarceration, and 84% had in the past been either on probation or incarcerated.

- About 42% of cocaine users had participated in some kind of drug treatment program, compared to 36% of other drug users and 13% of those who had not used drugs in the month before their current offense.

Drug-related crime

Overall, 13% of convicted inmates said they had committed their current offense to obtain money for drugs (table 14). Almost a third of those convicted of robbery and burglary had committed their crime to obtain money for drugs, as had about a quarter of those in jail for larceny and fraud. Nearly 1 in every 5 inmates convicted of drug trafficking sold drugs to obtain money for future drug purchases.

Convicted black inmates were slightly more likely than whites to have committed offenses to get money for drugs (16%, compared to 12%). However, the percentage of inmates in jail for drug possession and trafficking were about the same for both blacks and whites.

Drug use at the time of the offense

A large percentage of jail inmates were under the influence of drugs at the time of the offense or had used drugs in the month before the offense. About 27% of the convicted inmates said they were under the influence of a drug at the time of their offense, and 18% said they were under the influence of a major drug (table 15). An estimated 44% of convicted jail inmates reported that they had used a drug in the month before their current offense, and about 28% reported they had used a major drug.

Of all convicted jail inmates, drug offenders were the most likely to report having been under the influence of drugs (39%), followed by burglars (38%) and robbers

(36%). Jail inmates who were the least likely to have been under the influence of drugs included those convicted of homicide (18%), assault (14%), driving while intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, labeled DWI (12%), and other public-order offenses (19%).

Nearly a third of the convicted robbers and a quarter of the burglars in local jails reported they were under the influence of a major drug at the time of their current offense.

Use of drugs in the month before the offense was reported by nearly 7 in 10 inmates convicted of drug possession and by more than 1 in 2 inmates convicted of robbery, burglary, larceny, and drug trafficking. Reported use of drugs during the month was lowest among violent

Table 14. Convicted jail inmates who committed their offense for money for drugs, by race and the most serious offense, 1989

Most serious current offense	Number of inmates	Percent of convicted jail inmates who committed their offense for money to buy drugs		
		All ^a	White	Black
All offenses	214,243	13.3%	11.8%	16.0%
Violent offenses	35,582	11.5%	9.4%	15.1%
Homicide ^a	4,074	2.8	1.8	4.0
Sexual assault ^c	7,242	2.2	1.6	4.4
Robbery	10,573	32.4	36.6	31.4
Assault	11,106	2.7	2.7	3.0
Other violent ^d	2,588	3.1	3.7	--
Property offenses	62,357	24.4%	24.9%	23.4%
Burglary	21,001	31.0	32.4	28.8
Larceny/theft	17,886	27.8	29.7	25.9
Motor vehicle theft	5,917	6.8	2.1	16.8
Fraud	8,954	23.1	25.5	20.5
Stolen property	4,735	15.1	20.7	10.5
Other property ^e	3,864	13.1	9.7	--
Drug offenses	48,118	14.0%	13.0%	15.0%
Possession	23,015	9.6	9.1	10.6
Trafficking	23,023	19.2	18.3	19.5
Other/unspecified	2,080	5.6	--	--
Public-order offenses	65,040	3.3%	2.7%	5.3%
DWI	29,643	.7	.8	0
Other public-order	35,396	5.4	5.0	6.3
Other offenses	3,146	--	--	--

Note: Excludes 4,554 inmates whose offense or reason for committing the offense was unknown.

--Too few cases to provide a reliable estimate.

^aIncludes jail inmates of races other than white and black.

^bIncludes murder, nonnegligent manslaughter, and negligent manslaughter.

^cIncludes rape.

^dIncludes kidnaping.

^eIncludes arson.

Table 15. Drug use of convicted jail inmates in the month before or at the time of offense, by the most serious offense, 1989

Most serious current offense	Percent of convicted inmates who			
	Had used a drug in the month before offense		Were under the influence of a drug at the time of offense	
	Any	Major	Any	Major
All offenses	43.9%	27.7%	27.1%	18.3%
Violent offenses	40.5%	23.5%	24.5%	15.7%
Homicide ^a	34.1	14.1	18.5	9.6
Sexual assault ^b	37.6	15.3	22.8	6.9
Robbery	52.4	38.6	36.0	30.5
Assault	33.5	18.9	13.6	8.2
Other violent ^c	38.2	17.6	36.3	18.8
Property offenses	49.7%	32.2%	30.9%	21.2%
Burglary	55.0	36.5	37.9	25.6
Larceny/theft	51.7	32.7	28.2	19.7
Motor vehicle theft	48.0	26.3	29.0	19.7
Fraud	41.9	31.1	30.9	21.1
Stolen property	45.4	33.5	24.5	18.2
Other property ^d	37.4	15.6	17.1	10.8
Drug offenses	61.7%	42.8%	38.9%	30.1%
Possession	67.1	46.5	46.5	34.9
Trafficking	55.5	38.4	31.7	24.7
Other/unspecified	69.3	50.8	35.5	35.5
Public-order offenses	27.7%	14.9%	15.9%	8.1%
DWI	20.7	8.5	11.8	4.0
Other public-order	33.5	20.2	19.4	11.6
Other offenses	31.7%	18.3%	29.4%	19.6%

Note: For inmates who had used a drug in the month before the offense, the table excludes 804 inmates whose offense or use of drugs were unknown. For inmates who committed the offense under the influence of any drug, the table excludes 494 inmates whose offense or use of drugs was unknown. For inmates who committed the offense under the influence of a major drug, the table excludes 1,637 inmates whose offense or use of drugs was unknown.

^aIncludes murder, nonnegligent manslaughter, and negligent manslaughter.

^bIncludes rape.

^cIncludes kidnaping.

^dIncludes arson.

offenders (excluding robbers) and public-order offenders.

Alcohol and drugs

A higher percentage of convicted inmates reported being under the influence of alcohol (41%) than drugs (28%) when they committed their most recent offense (table 16). More than half (57%) of convicted jail inmates said they had been under the influence of drugs or alcohol or both at the time of their conviction offense — 15% reported drug use only, 29% reported alcohol use only, and 12% said they had been using both.

The inmates who were the most likely to have been drinking at the time of their offense were offenders convicted of DWI (93%) and assault (54%). Drug offenders were the least likely to have been under the influence of alcohol (20%).

More than a third of all convicted robbers and burglars in jail had been under the influence of alcohol; more than a sixth were under the influence of both drugs and alcohol.

Current offense and drug use

The majority of users of major drugs were in jail for drug crimes and crimes for economic gain. An estimated 65% of the inmates who had used a major drug in the month before their offense had been convicted of robbery, burglary, larceny, drug possession, trafficking, or another drug offense (table 17). In contrast, about 50% of the inmates who had used drugs at some time in the past and 31% of those who had never used any drugs were in jail for these types of offenses.

Violent and public-order offenses were more prevalent among inmates who had never used drugs than among drug users or major drug users. About 58% of those who had never used drugs had been convicted of either a violent or public-order offense, compared to 44% of those who had used drugs at some time in the past and nearly 30% who had used a major drug in the month before their current offense.

Table 16. Convicted jail inmates who committed current offense under the influence of drugs or alcohol, by the most serious offense, 1989

Most serious offense	Number of convicted jail inmates	Percent of convicted jail inmates who were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of offense			
		Total	Drugs only	Alcohol only	Both
All offenses	205,254	56.6%	15.4%	29.2%	12.1%
Violent offenses	34,188	55.6%	8.8%	30.7%	16.1%
Robbery	10,208	53.1	17.7	18.1	17.3
Assault	10,569	58.7	4.5	44.3	9.8
Property offenses	59,858	48.9%	18.2%	17.9%	12.8%
Burglary	20,172	58.3	20.4	20.4	17.5
Larceny/theft	16,905	44.7	18.4	16.5	9.8
Drug offenses	44,325	48.2%	28.6%	7.3%	12.3%
Possession	21,196	56.1	32.9	6.7	16.5
Trafficking	21,051	40.6	23.9	7.8	8.9
Other/unspecified	2,077	44.7	32.1	7.7	4.8
Public-order offenses	64,084	70.1%	6.4%	54.1%	9.6%
DWI	29,791	94.6	1.8	82.7	10.1
Other public-order	34,293	48.8	10.5	29.2	9.1

Table 17. The most serious offense of convicted jail inmates, by their drug-use history, 1989

Most serious offense	Percent of convicted jail inmates		
	Never used drugs	Used a drug any time in the past	Used a major drug in the month before the offense
All offenses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Violent offenses	19.6%	15.7%	14.1%
Homicide ^a	2.8	1.6	.9
Sexual assault ^b	5.0	2.9	1.9
Robbery	4.4	5.2	7.0
Assault	6.5	4.7	3.5
Other violent ^c	1.0	1.3	.8
Property offenses	24.6%	30.5%	34.0%
Burglary	5.6	11.0	12.9
Larceny/theft	6.5	9.0	10.0
Motor vehicle theft	3.6	2.6	2.7
Fraud	4.9	4.0	4.8
Stolen property	2.2	2.2	2.6
Other property ^d	1.7	1.8	1.0
Drug offenses	15.5%	24.5%	34.7%
Possession	7.4	11.7	18.0
Trafficking	7.8	11.6	14.9
Other/unspecified	.3	1.2	1.8
Public-order offenses	38.8%	27.8%	16.3%
DWI	20.5	12.0	4.3
Other public-order	18.3	15.9	12.0
Other	1.5%	1.4%	1.0%
Number of jail inmates	47,733	170,260	60,368

Note: For inmates who had never or ever used drugs, the table excludes 494 inmates whose offense or use of drugs was unknown. For inmates who had used a major drug in the month before the offense, the table excludes 804 inmates whose offense or use of drugs was unknown.

^aIncludes murder, nonnegligent manslaughter, and negligent manslaughter.

^bIncludes rape.

^cIncludes kidnapping.

^dIncludes arson.

Participation in drug treatment programs

Inmates who had used drugs, especially major drugs, with any regularity, were more likely than those with less involvement in drug use to have participated in a drug treatment program. About 24% of all jail inmates reported that they had taken part in a drug treatment program (table 18). Almost half of all convicted jail inmates who had used a major drug daily or almost daily in the month before their current offense had participated in a treatment program. Most inmates who reported some treatment for drug abuse had participated in only one program. Less than 10% of both convicted and unconvicted inmates who used drugs had been in a treatment program in the month before they were admitted to jail.

Jails also provided drug treatment to some inmates. Overall, about 5% of jail inmates were receiving treatment for drug abuse at the time of the survey. Inmates who had used major drugs daily before entering jail had the highest rate of participation. About 18% of these inmates had been treated while serving time, and 15% were currently in treatment. Between 10% and 15% of those inmates who had been convicted and who reported regular use of drugs, regular use of major drugs, or daily use of a major drug in the month before their offense were receiving drug treatment.

Methodology

A jail is defined as a confinement facility administered by a local government agency that holds persons detained pending adjudication and persons committed after adjudication, usually for sentences of a year or less. Convicted jail inmates are either awaiting sentencing, serving sentences to jail confinement, awaiting transfer to a prison, or serving a prison sentence in jail by arrangement with prison authorities. Unconvicted inmates are those who have been unable to obtain pretrial release, those detained pending trial, those on trial at the time the survey was being conducted, and those held for other governmental entities.

The 1989 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails was conducted for the Bureau of Justice Statistics by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Through personal interviews during July, August, and September 1989, data were collected on individual characteristics of jail

Table 18. Drug treatment of jail inmates, by past use of any drug or a major drug, 1989

Drug treatment	Percent of all jail inmates	Percent of unconvicted jail inmates who used		Percent of convicted jail inmates who used		
		Any drug regularly	A major drug regularly	Any drug regularly	A major drug regularly	A major drug daily in the month before the offense
Ever participated in drug abuse treatment program	24.0%	35.2%	42.5%	39.3%	45.7%	47.8%
Number of times*						
1	14.7%	21.0%	24.4%	23.5%	25.9%	27.1%
2	4.6	7.0	8.6	7.8	9.2	7.6
3-5	3.5	6.0	7.9	5.7	7.5	9.2
6 or more	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.9	2.8	3.6
In a program in the month before current admission	4.9%	7.3%	9.2%	8.4%	9.8%	9.7%
Most recent treatment was while incarcerated	7.0%	9.6%	11.7%	12.5%	14.7%	18.2%
Currently in treatment	5.0%	5.4%	6.5%	10.0%	12.2%	14.8%
Number of inmates	395,554	102,501	65,857	126,940	81,920	37,769

Note: Major drug includes heroin, crack, cocaine, PCP, LSD, and methadone. Any drug includes the major drugs, marijuana or hashish, amphetamines, barbiturates, and methaqualone.

*Excludes 1,956 inmates who did not report the number of times in treatment.

inmates, current offenses and sentences, characteristics of victims, criminal histories, jail activities and programs, prior drug and alcohol use and treatment, and health care services provided while in jail. Similar surveys of jail inmates were conducted in 1972, 1978, and 1983.

Sample design

The sample for the 1989 survey was selected from a universe of 3,312 jails enumerated in the 1988 National Jail Census. The sample design was a stratified two-stage selection. In the first stage six separate strata were formed based on the size of the male and female populations. In two strata all jails were selected; in the remaining four strata, a systematic sample of jails was selected proportional to the population size of each jail. Overall, a total of 424 local jails were selected. In the second stage, interviewers visited each selected facility and systematically selected a sample of male and female inmates using predetermined procedures. As a result, approximately 1 of every 70 males were selected, and depending on the stratum, 1 of every 14, 15, or 70 females were selected. A total of 5,675 interviews were completed, yielding an overall response rate of 92.3%.

Based on the completed interviews, estimates for the entire population were developed using weighting factors derived from the original probability of selection in the sample. These factors were adjusted for variable rates of nonresponse across strata and inmate characteristics. Further adjustments were made to control the survey estimates to counts of jail inmates obtained from the 1988 National Jail Census and the 1989 Sample Survey of Jails.

Accuracy of the estimates

The accuracy of the estimates presented in this report depends on two types of error: sampling and nonsampling. Sampling error is variation that may occur by chance because a sample rather than a complete enumeration of the population was conducted. Nonsampling error can be attributed to many sources, such as nonresponse, differences in the interpretation of questions among inmates, recall difficulties, and processing errors. In any survey the full extent of the nonsampling error is never known.

The sampling error, as measured by an estimated standard error, varies by the size of the estimate and the size of the base population. (All categories with numbers based on 20 or fewer unweighted cases were excluded because of large standard errors associated with such a small number of cases.) Estimates of the standard errors have been calculated for the 1989 and 1983 surveys of jail inmates (see Appendix table). These standard errors may be used to construct confidence intervals around percentages in this report. For example, the 95-percent confidence interval around the percentage of jail inmates who were in jail for a drug offense in 1989 is approximately 23.0% plus or minus 1.96 times 0.6% (or 21.8% to 24.2%).

These standard errors may also be used to test the statistical significance of the difference between two sample statistics by pooling the standard errors of the two sample estimates. For example, the standard error of the difference in the percentage in jail for drug offenses in 1989

compared to 1983 would be .72 (or the square root of the sum of the squared standard errors in each year). The 95-percent confidence interval around the difference would be 1.96 times 0.72% (or 1.4%). Since the observed difference of 13.7% (23.0% minus 9.3%) is greater than 1.4%, the difference would be considered statistically significant.

Self-reported information

Criminal history data are based on self-reported information provided by each respondent. Through a series of questions, inmates were asked to report on past probation sentences as juveniles and as adults and on past sentences to incarceration up to 10 prior times. For each sentence, the inmates were asked the offenses for which they were sentenced, the type of institution in which they served time, the date of admission, and the length of time actually served. From this information, a criminal history profile was constructed. A recidivist was defined as an inmate

who reported a sentence to probation or incarceration at any time in the past.

Drug use and treatment history data are also based on responses from the inmates. Inmates were asked a detailed set of questions about each of 10 types of drugs. These drugs included heroin, methadone used outside of a treatment program, amphetamines and barbiturates (alone and in combination), methaqualone (Quaaludes), cocaine or crack, LSD, PCP, and marijuana and hashish. Drug use histories were developed by examining the responses to questions for each of these drugs. Inmates who were unconvicted (awaiting arraignment, awaiting trial, or on trial) were not asked any questions about drug use during the month before the arrest for which they were currently detained or about drug use in the month before the first offense for which they had served time in the past.

Appendix table. Standard errors of the estimated percentages, all jail inmates, 1989 and 1983

Base of the estimate and year	Estimated percentages					
	98 or 2	95 or 5	90 or 10	80 or 20	70 or 30	50
1,000						
1989	4.4	6.9	9.5	12.7	14.6	15.9
1983	3.1	4.8	6.6	8.7	10.0	10.9
5,000						
1989	2.0	3.1	4.3	5.7	6.5	7.1
1983	1.4	2.1	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.9
10,000						
1989	1.4	2.2	3.0	4.0	4.6	5.0
1983	1.0	1.5	2.1	2.8	3.2	3.5
25,000						
1989	.9	1.4	1.9	2.5	2.9	3.2
1983	.6	1.0	1.3	1.7	2.0	2.2
50,000						
1989	.6	1.0	1.3	1.8	2.1	2.2
1983	.4	.7	.9	1.2	1.4	1.5
100,000						
1989	.4	.7	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.6
1983	.3	.5	.7	.9	1.0	1.1
200,000						
1989	.3	.5	.7	.9	1.0	1.1
1983	.2	.3	.5	.6	.7	.8
223,550*						
1983	.2	.3	.4	.6	.7	.8
395,553*						
1989	.2	.3	.5	.6	.7	.8

Note: The reliability of an estimated percentage depends on the size of the percentage and its base. Each standard error when multiplied by 1.96 provides a 95-percent confidence interval around an estimated percentage. To calculate the standard error of the difference between two estimated percentages, take the square root of the sum of each squared standard error for the percentages being compared.

*The total number of jail inmates in 1983 and 1989.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Reports are written principally by BJS staff. This report was written by Caroline Wolf Harlow, under the supervision of Allen Beck and Lawrence A. Greenfield. Tom Hester edited the report, and Peter Brien provided statistical review. Marilyn Marbrook supervised production, assisted by Jayne Pugh and Yvonne Boston. BJS Special Reports are produced under the direction of Michael Agopian, Deputy Director for Data Analysis.

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The Assistant Attorney General is responsible for matters of administration and management with respect to the OJP agencies: Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Office for Victims of Crime. The Assistant Attorney General further establishes policies and priorities consistent with the statutory purposes of the OJP agencies and the priorities of the Department of Justice.

Data utilized in this report are available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The data sets are archived as the Survey of Inmates in Local Jails (ICPSR 9419).