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Excerpt
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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the UK government allocated £6 million of new money for research and information gathering in support of the government's strategy to reduce drug-related crime. Part of the £6 million was used to set up a national program of research to investigate drug use and crime among arrestees. In July 1999, after two developmental stages, a program of arrestee monitoring was established in the United Kingdom under the title of the New English and Welsh Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (NEW-ADAM) program.

The program was designed primarily to collect urine specimens and to conduct personal interviews with recently arrested offenders to understand better the nature of the drug-crime connection. The surveys were also to provide information on related issues, such as use of weapons and guns in crime, gang membership, and drug markets. The program was initially funded to run for three years with the view of continuing funding subject to review.

The broad aim of this book is to present the findings of the NEW-ADAM surveys. Some of the results of the NEW-ADAM program have already been published in government reports and in articles in peer-reviewed journals. However, other findings have not yet been published. As a result, the findings of the NEW-ADAM program have not been fully documented in a single source. This book brings together the results of the NEW-ADAM program in a single volume by summarizing the findings of previously published papers and presenting new findings.

To provide a context for the study, this first chapter summarizes the development of the NEW-ADAM program.

UK GOVERNMENT POLICY

The NEW-ADAM program and the earlier developmental stages of the research were closely linked to government policy on drugs. In 1994, the Conservative government issued a white paper called 'Tackling Drugs Together: A Strategy for England 1995–1998' (Cabinet Office, 1995). The paper noted that there was no reliable statistical measure of the amount of drug-related crime. It identified a need to reduce drug-related crime as one of the key aims of the strategy and proposed the development of new ways to measure the impact of drug misuse on crime to evaluate its progress.

In April 1998, the new Labour government published a parliamentary paper called 'Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain: The Government's 10-Year Strategy for Tackling Drug Misuse', based on a review conducted by the UK Anti-Drugs Coordinator (Cabinet Office, 1998). The publication identified four main elements of the strategy: (1) to help young people resist drug misuse; (2) to protect communities from drug-related, antisocial, and criminal behavior; (3) to enable people with drug problems to overcome them; and (4) to stifle the availability of illegal drugs on the streets.

The 'First Annual Report and National Plan' of the UK Anti-Drugs Coordinator (UKADCU), published in 1999, elaborated on the main objectives of the policy and presented key targets relating to them.

Key Objective 1 aimed to reduce drug use generally and drug use among young people in particular. The key performance target relating to this objective was to reduce the proportion of young people using the drugs which cause the greatest harm (heroin and cocaine) by 50 percent by 2008. Other targets included delaying the age of onset of use of Class A drugs by six months and reducing by 20 percent the numbers of 11 to 16 year olds who use Class A drugs (as defined in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as the most harmful drug types).

Key Objective 2 aimed to break the links between drugs and crime and reduce the levels of repeat offending among drug-misusing

offenders. In particular, it aimed to reduce levels of repeat offending among drug-misusing offenders by 50 percent by 2008. Other targets included reducing the proportion of arrestees who tested positive for Class A drugs.

Key Objective 3 aimed to increase the participation of problem drug misusers, including prisoners, in drug treatment programs that have a positive impact on health and crime by 100 percent by 2008. A further aim was to reduce the number of users in treatment who report injecting drugs and to reduce the number of those injecting who report sharing their equipment.

Key Objective 4 aimed to reduce the availability of illegal drugs on the streets. In particular, it aimed to reduce access to drugs which cause the greatest harm, particularly heroin and cocaine, by 50 percent by 2008. Other aims included increasing the percentage of heroin and cocaine seized that was destined for Europe and the United Kingdom.

In this document, the NEW-ADAM program was specifically mentioned as a tool that would be used to measure the progress of the government's drug strategy (UKADCU, 1999). Specifically, it stated that the government would "set up a large-scale program of urinalysis and interviewing of arrestees, NEW-ADAM, and run it in eight sites in England and Wales" (p. 15). Two of the targets it claimed were measurable by NEW-ADAM:

- To reduce the levels of repeat offending among drug-misusing offenders by 50 percent by 2008 and 25 percent by 2005
- To reduce the proportion of arrestees testing positive for Class A drugs from 18 percent (1998–9 baseline) to 15 percent by 2002

During the next three years, NEW-ADAM data were used to monitor progress in achieving these targets.

PRECURSORS TO THE NEW-ADAM PROGRAM IN THE UNITED STATES

The Drug Use Forecasting Program (DUF)

The NEW-ADAM program was strongly influenced by the procedures and general approach of the DUF Program in the United States. The

DUF Program began in New York City in 1984 with a feasibility study based at the Manhattan Central Booking Facility. The research was funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and was conducted by staff from Narcotic and Drug Research Incorporated (NDRI). As part of this research, NDRI staff interviewed and obtained voluntary urine specimens from recent arrestees. The authors concluded that the project was successful in achieving its objectives and in generating high response rates. Ninety-five percent of arrestees approached consented to be interviewed, and eighty-four percent of these provided a urine specimen (Wish and Gropper, 1990).

In September 1986, the researchers returned to the Manhattan Central Booking Facility to obtain specimens and conduct interviews with a second sample of male arrestees. The second survey was also successful in achieving similarly high response rates from among the arrestees. However, the study was also successful in another unexpected way. The timing of the study was in a sense fortuitous because between 1984 and 1986, New York City experienced a substantial increase in the use of cocaine, especially crack cocaine. The study detected this and showed that the prevalence of cocaine use among arrestees almost doubled over the two-year period from the first to the second survey (42% in 1984 to 83% in 1986). The results of the comparison were striking and identified a trend in cocaine use over a year before it was detected by any of the other indicators of drug misuse (e.g., new treatment admissions, overdose deaths, and emergency room admissions; Wish and Gropper, 1990).

In 1987, the NIJ established the DUF Program in 12 large cities across the United States. This was soon expanded to 23 adult and 12 juvenile sites. Over the next decade, DUF staff conducted quarterly surveys of arrestees held in the booking facilities covering the research sites. The data were collected and analyzed centrally by DUF staff at NIJ who published quarterly and annual reports of the results. The reports contained prevalence trends of the percentage of positive tests for arrestees for each DUF site for 3 of the 10 main drug types analyzed (cocaine, opiates, and marijuana), along with 'any drug' and 'multiple drugs'. The early reports included breakdowns of the urinalysis results in terms of age, sex, and race of the arrestee, and later reports included additional breakdowns based on the type of charged offense.

The ADAM Program

The ADAM program was launched in 1997 by the NIJ as a successor to the DUF program. The main aim of the ADAM program was to maintain and eventually improve the DUF system of interviewing and drug testing arrestees. In particular, it was intended that the new program would expand in size to cover up to 75 urban areas and would include more detailed data collection (NIJ, 1997). A revised program was launched in 2000 which increased the number of sites covered by the scheme from 23 to 38. This included a revised sampling and data-collection method. In the past, sites and arrestees were selected using a form of convenience or nonprobability sampling. In 2000, a new method of probability sampling was introduced.

In practice, the larger version of the ADAM program, envisaged in the 1997 report, never happened. In 2004, the ADAM program was disbanded, and arrestee data collection ceased (see Chapter 16 for a discussion). Nevertheless, it achieved its broader aims of geographic expansion and improvement in the sophistication of data collection and analysis. It also achieved its aim of setting up the I-ADAM program as the first stage in the process of generating a global surveillance system that could monitor drug trends worldwide.

The I-ADAM Program

The I-ADAM program (International Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring program) was based on a partnership of countries involved in conducting research based on interviewing and drug testing arrestees. The program was modeled on the US ADAM program. I-ADAM was launched in 1998 at an international conference in Miami attended by representatives of eight countries including Australia, Chile, England, The Netherlands, Panama, Scotland, South Africa, and Uruguay. The main aim of I-ADAM was to generate standardized data on drug use among arrestees to compare patterns and trends in drug use over time. It also aimed to provide an international research base for coordinating drug research and drug control policies. NIJ provided technical assistance to I-ADAM countries in initiating and operating the program. ADAM-type programs were eventually set up in nine countries: Australia, Chile, England, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Scotland, South Africa, Taiwan, and the United States. However, I-ADAM was by default

disbanded in 2004 at the same time as the ADAM program. Although I-ADAM researchers still keep in contact with one another, the system of annual international conferences funded and organized by NIJ has ceased.

PRECURSORS TO THE NEW-ADAM PROGRAM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In 1995, the Home Office (the government department responsible for national policy) funded a small feasibility study to determine whether it would be possible and useful to interview and collect voluntary urine specimens from arrestees. The aim of the research was to examine methods of determining drug use prevalence among offenders and to understand more fully the links between drug misuse and crime. The report of the study reviewed the research on interviewing and drug testing in the United States and concluded that it was feasible to develop such a study; furthermore, it urged implementation of a similar program in England and Wales (Bennett, 1998). In the same year, the Home Office commissioned the first stage of developmental research. The research was conducted in five police areas in England and Wales over 18 months during 1996 and 1997. The results of the research were published in 1998 (Bennett, 1998).

In 1998, a second developmental stage of research was commissioned by the Home Office with the aim of building on the earlier developmental research and moving closer toward a research design that might be used as a basis for a national program. The research was based in three police force areas and included two new sites and one repeat site surveyed previously in the first developmental stage. The aim of including a repeat site was to test some of the principles involved in measuring trends in drug misuse among arrestees over time. The results of the second developmental stage were published in 2000 (Bennett, 2000).

THE NEW-ADAM PROGRAM

The NEW-ADAM program was launched in July 1999 and was funded to run for three years in the first instance. The program was based

on financial years, with the first year (a shorter year) running from July 1999 to March 2000. The second year ran from April 2000 to March 2001 and the third year from April 2001 to March 2002. In each financial year, eight surveys were conducted in police force areas in England and Wales. In Year 1, eight sites were surveyed and in Year 2, eight additional sites were surveyed. In Year 3, the first eight sites were revisited for the first round of repeat surveys. It was originally planned, subject to funding, that in Year 4, the second eight sites would be revisited for the second round of repeat surveys. Hence, the core NEW-ADAM program was designed as a rolling program of research based on 16 locations, surveyed at two-year intervals. In practice, however, the funding for a fourth year was not available, and the NEW-ADAM program ended in March 2002 after three years of data collection (see Chapter 16 for a discussion).

There have been a number of outputs from the NEW-ADAM program. A force report was produced for each survey at each location and was made available to the local police in the months following the survey. It was originally intended that annual reports containing the findings of the previous year, plus trend analyses relating to earlier years, would be published each year. In practice, the Home Office published only summary results from the first year of the program (Bennett et al., 2001). In 2004, however, three further publications were released. Two of these presented findings relating to the first two years of the program (Bennett and Holloway, 2004a; Holloway and Bennett 2004), and one presented summary trend results comparing the first and third years of the program (Holloway et al., 2004). A more thorough trend report comparing the results collected in the first eight sites over time was written but never published. In addition to these government publications, several academic articles drawing on NEW-ADAM data have also been published (Bennett and Holloway, 2004b, 2004c, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Holloway and Bennett, in press).

Other researchers have also used the results from the NEW-ADAM. Bramley-Harker (2001), for example, used data from the program to help size the UK drug market. In this case, 'sizing the market' meant estimating the total expenditure on drugs by all drug users over a set period of time. The study concluded that the best estimate of the total value of the UK market in 1998 was £6.6 billion.

OTHER MEASURES OF DRUG USE AND CRIME IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

A key element in determining the effectiveness of government antidrug strategies is to monitor patterns and trends in drug use over time. A number of other sources of information, in addition to the NEW-ADAM program, have been used to monitor the prevalence of drug use in the United Kingdom. The major sources of information on prevalence of drug use are general population surveys, surveys of young people, school surveys, and offender surveys. In addition, surveys of users in treatment provide information about the prevalence of problematic drug use. Official data relating to the number of drug seizures and the number of convictions for drug offenses also provide some indication of the extent of drug use in the United Kingdom.

General Population Surveys

The major national self-report survey of drug misuse is the drugs component of the British Crime Survey (BCS). This component was first included in the 1996 sweep of the BCS and continues annually. In the 2002–3 sweep, additional drug questions were added to monitor changes in the frequency of drug use. The latest published figures are for the 2004–5 sweep (Roe, 2005). The survey focuses on people aged 16 years or older living in private households and provides information on drug misuse among the general population.

The 2004–5 BCS estimated that 35 percent of people aged 16 to 59 had used illicit drugs at least once in their lifetime (Roe, 2005). Eleven percent reported that they had used an illicit drug in the last year, and seven percent said they had done so in the last month. The published figures provide useful information on the spread of drug misuse across England and Wales. The 2004–5 survey results show that about half (46%) of young people aged 16 to 24 had used at least one illegal drug at some time in their lives, and 26 percent had done so in the last year. Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug, reported by 26 percent of young people aged 16 to 24. Consumption of heroin was rare (reported by less than 1 percent of respondents). However, 5

percent of young people aged 16 to 24 said that they had tried cocaine at some time in their lives.

One of the most important sets of findings of the last survey concerns trends in illegal drug use over the last few years. Over the period from 1996 to 2003–4, the surveys showed a significant increase in recent use (in the last 12 months) of cannabis from 24 percent to 31 percent and of cocaine from 3 percent to 7 percent. More recently, however, there has been a reduction in the prevalence of cannabis use from 31 percent in 2003–4 to 30 percent in 2004–5, and of cocaine from 7 percent to 6 percent.

Surveys of Young People

One source of information on drug misuse among young people in the general population is the Youth Lifestyles Survey (YLS; Goulden and Sondhi, 2001). The 1998–9 YLS was a self-report study based on 4,848 young people aged 12 to 30 living in England and Wales. The results of the survey showed a higher prevalence of drug use among young people than shown in the two surveys reviewed in the previous section. In total, 43 percent of all young people interviewed reported having used an illegal drug in their lifetime, and 27 percent said that they had used a drug in the last year (Pudney, 2002).

A second source of information on the prevalence of drug use among young people is the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS; Budd et al., 2005b). The OCJS is a national, longitudinal, self-report offending survey for England and Wales. The survey covers people living in private households and was first conducted in 2003. Its main aim is to examine the extent of offending, antisocial behavior and drug use among the household population, particularly among young people aged from 10 to 25.

The results of the 2004 sweep of the survey showed that 22 percent of people aged 10 to 25 reported having used an illicit drug in the last 12 months (Budd et al., 2005b). Cannabis was the most frequently used drug, reported by one-fifth of respondents. Just under 5 percent of people reported having used cocaine in the last year, and less than 1 percent reported having used crack or heroin. These figures closely match the results of the British Crime Survey in relation to the 16 to 24 age group.