

The DAWN Report

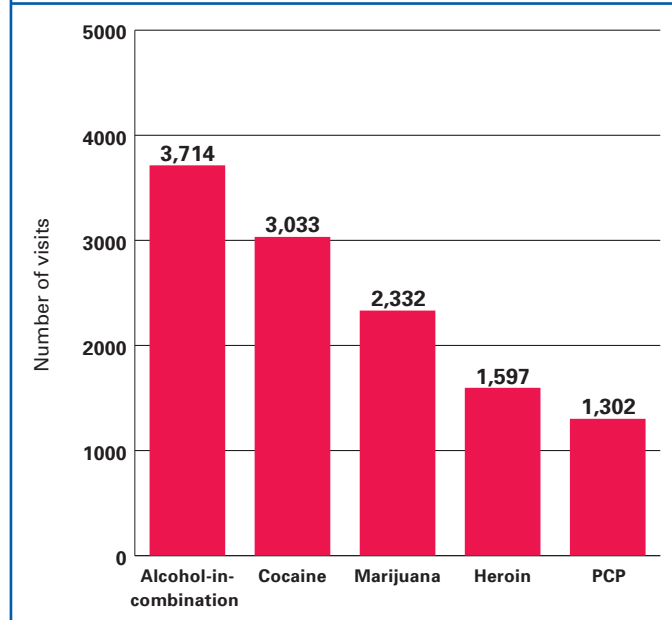
JANUARY 2004

Highlights From DAWN: Washington, DC, 2002

This special report presents findings based on data submitted by 15 hospitals in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area for 2002.

- Of the 1.3 million visits to Washington area emergency departments (EDs) in 2002, about one percent (10,554) were related to drug abuse.
- During 2002, the most common drugs involved in these ED visits were alcohol in combination with other drugs, cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and phencyclidine (PCP).
- Between 2001 and 2002, the rate of PCP-related ED visits increased 143 percent (from 13 to 31 visits per 100,000 population).
- Among the 21 DAWN areas, Washington had one of the highest rates of ED visits involving PCP in 2002.

Top 5 drugs in drug abuse-related ED visits in Washington, DC, 2002



DAWN: The Warning Network

Local information is essential to support local action, and drugs, drug use, and drug-related morbidity can differ dramatically across communities. DAWN focuses on metropolitan areas to reveal emerging drug problems before they become widespread.

DAWN detects new drugs, new drug combinations, new health consequences of drug use, and changing patterns involving old drugs. Facilities participating in DAWN can use this information to train staff and improve patient care. Communities can use this information to plan, target resources, and act more effectively.

Today, hospitals in Washington and 20 other metropolitan areas serve their communities by participating in DAWN. Expansion to other areas is underway.

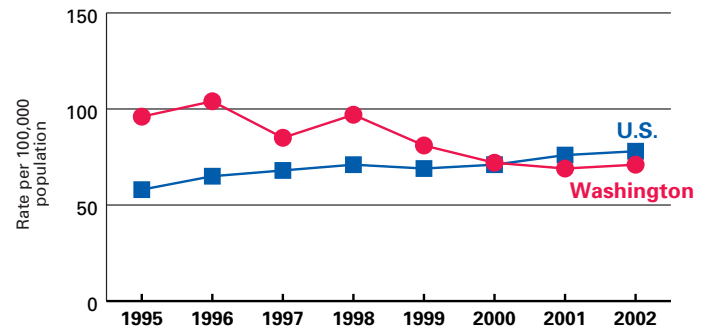


DAWN serves a diverse audience. In addition to participating facilities, users include researchers and policy analysts; pharmaceutical firms; State and local substance abuse agencies; community coalitions; and Federal agencies, including the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. For more information, go to <http://DAWNinfo.samhsa.gov/>.

Trends in Top 4 Drugs, 1995-2002

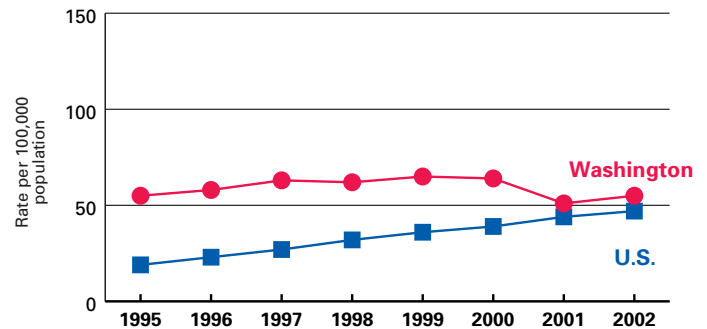
Cocaine

- From 1995 to 2002, the rate of cocaine-related ED visits in Washington remained stable (at 71 visits per 100,000 population), while the national rate increased 33 percent (from 58 to 78 visits per 100,000).
- In Washington, almost three-quarters (71%) of cocaine-related visits involved other drugs. About one-fifth of the cocaine mentions were attributed to “crack.”



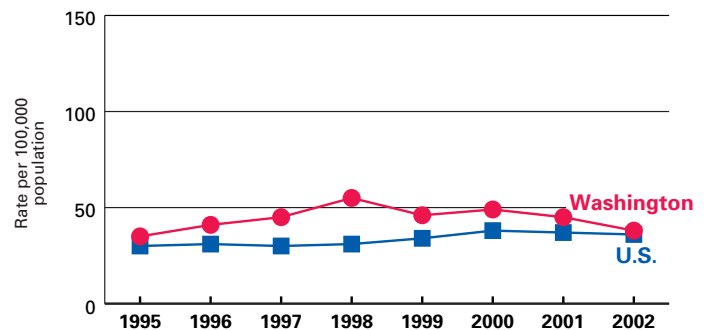
Marijuana

- In 2002, Washington's rate of marijuana-related ED visits (55 visits per 100,000 population) was near the national average (47). However, the rate in Washington was relatively stable from 1995 to 2002, while the national rate increased 139 percent.
- ED visits involving marijuana usually involve other drugs as well (74%).



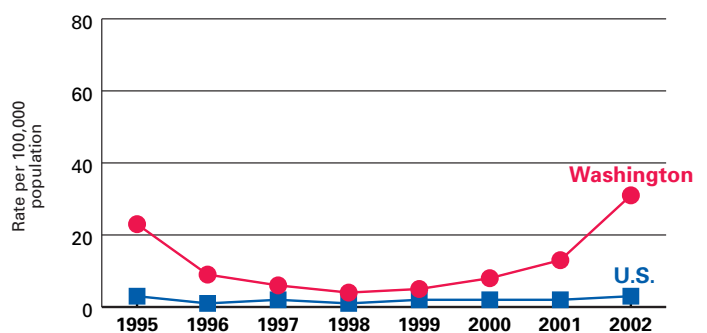
Heroin

- From 1995 to 2002, the rate of heroin-related ED visits in Washington remained stable (at 38 visits per 100,000 population). Over the same 8-year period, the national rate rose 22 percent (from 30 to 36 visits per 100,000).
- In half (50%) of heroin-related ED visits in the Washington area, heroin was the only drug reported.



PCP

- Between 2001 and 2002, the rate of PCP-related ED visits increased 143 percent in Washington (from 13 to 31 visits per 100,000 population).
- Washington's rate of PCP-related visits in 2002 was 10 times the national rate (3 visits per 100,000 population).
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of PCP-related ED visits in Washington also involved other drugs.

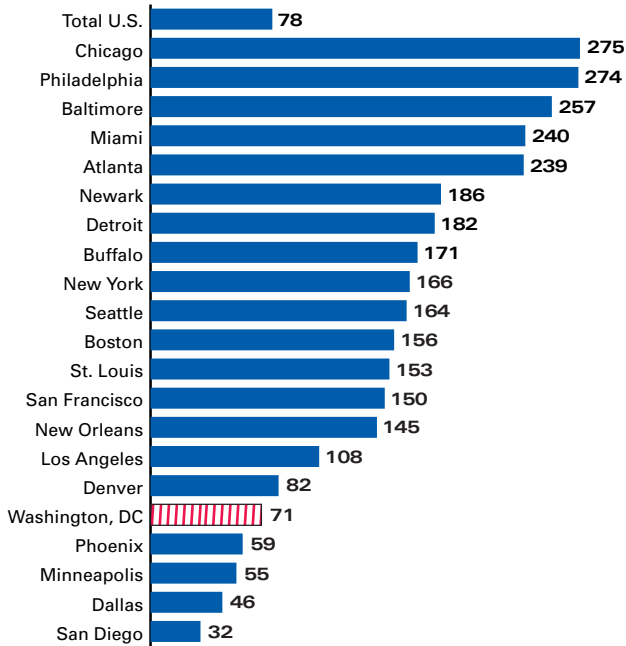


Comparisons Across 21 Metropolitan Areas

The following figures show Washington in relation to the Nation and 20 other metropolitan areas represented in DAWN for selected drugs in 2002. Comparisons across areas are possible because the number of visits for each drug is represented in terms of a rate per 100,000 population. Not all differences in rates are statistically significant.

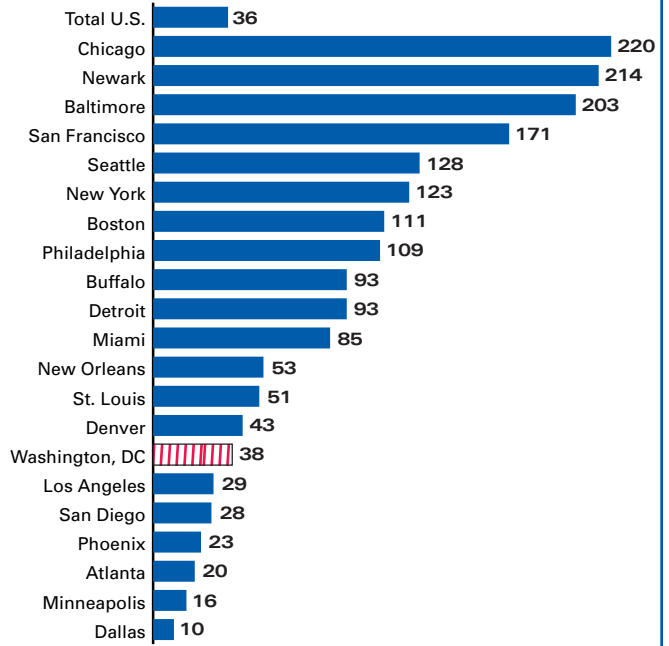
Cocaine visits

Rate per 100,000 population, 2002



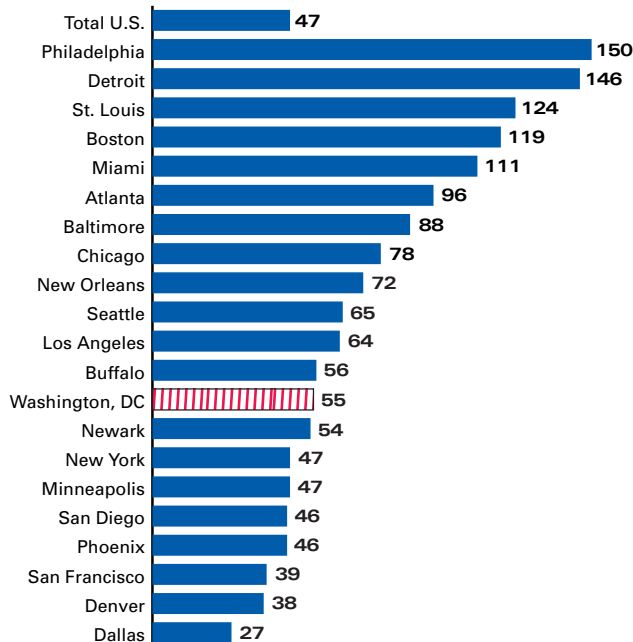
Heroin visits

Rate per 100,000 population, 2002



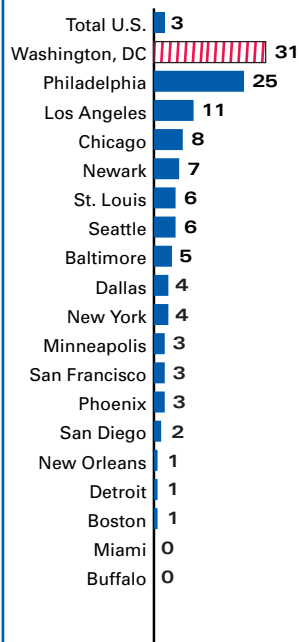
Marijuana visits

Rate per 100,000 population, 2002



PCP visits

Rate per 100,000 population, 2002



About DAWN

The **Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN)** is a national surveillance system that monitors drug-related morbidity and mortality. Section 505 of the Public Health Service Act assigns this responsibility to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Act requires SAMHSA to report annually on drug-related visits to hospital emergency departments and on drug-related deaths reviewed by medical examiners and coroners. SAMHSA has a contract with Westat, a private research firm based in Rockville, MD, to operate the DAWN system.

DAWN collects data from a scientific sample of hospital emergency departments and a set of medical examiners and coroners from across the U.S., with concentrations in selected metropolitan areas. Each participating facility has a DAWN Reporter who is specially trained to identify DAWN cases by retrospectively reviewing emergency department medical records or death investigation case files. No patient, family member, or physician is ever interviewed. No direct identifiers for individual patients or decedents are collected.

Beginning in 2003, DAWN cases include any emergency department visit or death that was related to drug use. Reportable cases include drug abuse, misuse, overmedication, accidental and malicious poisonings, and adverse drug reactions. For each case, the DAWN Reporter submits a case report detailing the specific drugs involved, and characteristics of the patient or decedent and event (visit or death). Patient and decedent characteristics include demographics (age, gender, race/ethnicity) and ZIP code. Other data items include date/time, chief complaint, diagnoses, and disposition for each emergency department visit; and date, cause, manner, and place of death for each decedent.



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