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Substance Abuse and Treatment of Adults on Probation, 1995

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In the first national survey of adults on probation, conducted in 1995, nearly 70% of probationers reported past drug use; 32% said they were using illegal drugs in the month before their offense; and 14% were on drugs when they committed their offense. More than 20% were on probation for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and 25% of other probationers said they had been drinking at the time of their offense.

When the survey was conducted, 17% of probationers reported having participated in a drug treatment program while serving their current sentence; 32% said they had received treatment for alcohol abuse. Overall, 38% had received some treatment for substance abuse since beginning their probation.

These findings are based on personal interviews with a nationally representative sample of over 2,000 adult probationers under active supervision. These interviews followed an earlier study of administrative records of a larger sample of probationers. While the interviews addressed a broad range of issues, this report focuses on items dealing with probationers' histories of drug and alcohol use and treatment.

Highlights

Half of probationers were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the offense for which they were convicted

Offense type	Percent of probationers under the influence at the time of offense: Alcohol	Drugs*
All probationers	40%	14%
Non-DWI offenders	25	16
Severity of offense		
Felony	28%	18%
Misdemeanor	58	8
Type of offense		
Violent	41%	11%
Property	19	10
Drug	16	32
Public-order	75	6

*Includes marijuana/hashish, cocaine/crack, heroin/opiates, barbiturates, stimulants, hallucinogens, and other illegal drugs.

- Over two-thirds of probationers reported using drugs in the past; nearly a third reported use in the month before the current offense.
- A third of probationers reported a prior binge drinking experience; a quarter exhibited indicators of past alcohol dependence or abuse; a fifth were on probation for a DWI offense.
- Overall, about two-thirds of probationers may be characterized as alcohol- or drug-involved offenders.

While on probation, 32% were treated for alcohol, 17% for drugs

Treatment type and past use	Percent of probationers who received treatment: Ever	On current sentence
Any treatment	48%	38%
Alcohol treatment	41%	32%
Binge drinkers[a]	63	50
Alcohol dependent[b]	78	65
Used at time of offense	73	62
Drug treatment	22%	17%
Ever used	32	25
In month of offense	51	42
Used at time of offense	61	53

[a]Defined as consuming the equivalent of a fifth of a gallon of liquor in a single day.
[b]Based on self-reported indicators

- Among those probationers who said they used drugs in the month before their offense, 42% had received drug treatment on their current sentence. Nearly a third had received outpatient care; a quarter participated in a self-help group.
- Nearly two-thirds of probationers who said they were under the influence of alcohol during the offense had been treated for alcohol abuse while on probation; half had participated in Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Half of probationers surveyed said they had been tested for drug use while on probation.

Probationers over half of the Nation's correctional population

Probationers are criminal offenders who are sentenced to supervised release into the community. (Parolees are also supervised in the community, but only after serving an incarceration sentence.) Probation represents a more moderate sanction than incarceration. It is generally given to those offenders with few or no prior convictions or to those guilty of less serious offenses. Restrictions placed on probationers' lives in the community can range from a monthly phone call for verifying their residence and employment status to the use of electronic bracelets to enforce house arrest.

On December 31, 1996 (the most recent data available), there were nearly 3.2 million adult U.S. residents sentenced to probation. This represented 58% of the national population of adults under correctional supervision, which includes State and Federal prisoners, local jail inmates, and parolees. About 78% of probationers were classified as actively supervised, being required to make contact with their probation officer at regular intervals.

Since 1990, the probation population has increased by over 500,000 persons, which represents a 19% increase. The remainder of the Nation's correctional populations recorded a 40% increase over the same period. As a result, the probation population represents a declining share of the Nation's correctional population, despite its own substantial growth. (See *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1995,* BJS report, May 1997, NCJ-163916.)

Year	Number of adult probationers*	Probationers as percent of adults under correctional supervision
1990	2,670,234	61.4%
1991	2,728,472	60.2
1992	2,811,611	59.0
1993	2,903,061	58.7
1994	2,981,022	58.0
1995	3,077,861	57.7
1996	3,180,363	57.6

The Survey of Adults on Probation, 1995, the first of its kind

The 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation, conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), was the first national survey to gather information on the individual characteristics of probationers. The initial component of this survey, a review of the administrative records of 5,867 adult probationers, provided detailed information on current offenses and sentences, criminal histories, levels of supervision and contacts, and disciplinary hearings and outcomes. (See *Characteristics of Adults on Probation, 1995,* BJS Special Report, December 1997, NCJ-164267.)

From the records-check sample, 4,703 probationers were selected for personal interviews, which made up the second survey component. Because probationers on inactive supervision were excluded from the personal interview sample, the personal interview component represents a somewhat smaller share of the Nation's probationers (2,065,896) than the records check (2,620,560). (See *Methodology,* page 13, for additional details.)

Conducted in probation offices, these interviews covered a broad range of issues, including current offenses and sentences, socioeconomic characteristics, criminal histories, and mental health treatment. This report draws exclusively on the items concerning experiences with alcohol and drug abuse and treatment programs. (See figure 1 for some of the interview items used in this report.)

Results from the personal interview component of the Survey of Adults on Probation represent the first national data collected on drug abuse and treatment in the probation population. The items regarding prior experiences with alcohol and drug abuse and treatment programs drew on earlier work conducted by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Items on treatment programs were organized by 19 different types of programs, whether the treatment was for alcohol, drugs, or both and whether it was received before, during, or both before and during the current sentence.

Key survey items on drug and alcohol abuse

Drugs (items were asked for each of 12 drug types)

Have you ever used (drug type)?	1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
Have you ever used (drug type) regularly — that is, once a week or more for at least a month?	1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
Did you use (drug type) during the month before your arrest?	1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
Were you under the influence of (drug type) at the time of the (current offense)?	1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

Alcohol

During the year before the (current offense) did you drink any alcohol?	1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
Were you under the influence of alcohol at the time of the (current offense)?	1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
In your entire life, have you ever had as much as a fifth of liquor in one day, that would be about 20 drinks, or 3 bottles of wine, or as much as 3 six-packs of beer in one day?	1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

Note: See box on page 4 for a description of the CAGE diagnostic indicator of alcohol dependence, another key measure of alcohol abuse used in this report.

Figure 1

Almost half of probationers were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their offense

An estimated 47% of all adult probationers said they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their offense (table 1). Probationers sentenced for driving while intoxicated (DWI) made up a fifth of all probationers, and 98% confirmed they committed the offense while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In contrast, the reported percentage among all non-DWI offenders was 33%.

With the exclusion of DWI probationers, violent offenders (44%) were the most likely to have used alcohol or drugs at the time of offense. The percentage for drug offenders was slightly lower (38%), while the reported alcohol and drug use of property offenders (23%) was about half that of violent offenders.

After DWI offenders, probationers sentenced for burglary (49%) and assault (48%) reported the highest incidence of alcohol or drug use at the time of the offense. Probationers sentenced for fraud (13%) and larceny/theft (21%) were the least likely to report such drug and alcohol use.

Local jail inmates (36%) and State prisoners (31%) were nearly twice as likely as probationers (14%) to report drug use at the time of offense. However, the percentage of probationers reporting alcohol use at the time of offense (40%) was comparable to those of both jail (41%) and State prison (32%) inmates.

Table 1. Alcohol or drug use at the time of offense, for adults on probation, by type and severity of offense, 1995

Offense	Number of probationers	Percent of probationers who had used at the time of offense — Alcohol	Drugs	Alcohol or drugs
Total	2,064,145	39.9%	13.5%	46.8%
Non-DWI offenses	1,637,769	24.7	16.1	33.4
Severity of offense[a]				
Felony	1,192,915	28.1%	17.5%	38.0%
Misdemeanor	788,335	57.9	8.0	60.4
Type of offense[b]				
Violent offenses	413,200	40.7%	10.7%	43.5%
Sexual assault	95,200	31.8	10.9	33.0
Assault	226,284	45.5	9.3	47.5
Property offenses	589,729	18.5%	9.8%	23.0%
Burglary	95,189	38.5	23.3	49.4
Larceny/theft	168,273	16.3	9.6	20.8
Fraud	196,913	9.7	8.2	13.3
Drug offenses	414,832	16.3%	31.7%	38.4%
Possession	216,710	14.4	26.6	33.5
Trafficking	181,438	16.2	36.6	42.2
Public-order offenses	631,571	75.1%	6.4%	77.0%
Driving while intoxicated[c]	426,376	98.3	3.3	98.5
Other public-order	205,196	26.8	12.8	32.0

[a]Excludes probationers for whom information on severity of offense was not reported and those probationers sentenced for an offense other than a felony or misdemeanor. [b]Some detailed offenses were not shown due to the small number of probationers represented. [c]Includes probationers sentenced for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Table 2. Prior drug use of adults on probation, by type of drug, 1995

Type of drug	Percent of probationers: Who had ever used drugs	Who had used drugs in the month before their offense	Who were under the influence of drugs at the time of offense
Any drug	69.4%	31.8%	13.5%
Marijuana/hashish	66.5	25.3	9.5
Cocaine/crack	31.0	9.2	3.8
Heroin and other opiates	8.1	1.5	.9
Barbiturates	15.4	2.0	.6
Stimulants	25.3	4.8	1.8
Hallucinogens	19.7	2.7	.6

Note: Excludes 11,712 probationers for whom information on drug use was not provided.

	Percent who said they used drugs at the time of offense: Adult probationers	Jail inmates	State prisoners
Total	14%	36%	31%
Violent	11	28	28
Property	10	37	35
Drug	32	59	36
Public-order	6	19	18

Note: Data drawn from the 1996 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails (unpublished) and the 1991 Survey of Inmates in State

Over two-thirds of probationers said they used drugs in the past

While 14% of probationers said they had used drugs at the time of offense, 69% had used drugs at some time in the past (table 2). Marijuana was the most commonly used drug, with two-thirds of probationers reporting use in the past. Marijuana was also the drug most commonly used by probationers in the month before the offense (25%), as well as at the time of the offense itself (10%).

Cocaine-based drugs, including crack, and stimulants, such as methamphetamine, were the next most commonly used drugs, with roughly a third and a quarter of adults on probation, respectively, reporting past use. At the time of offense, 4% of probationers said they had used cocaine-based drugs, while 2% used stimulants. For all other types of drugs, less than 20% reported past use, and less than 1% reported use at the time of offense.

For all types of drugs, and for all time periods prior to the offense, probationers reported lower levels of drug use than local jail and State prison inmates. For instance, 79% of State prisoners and 82% of local jail inmates had used drugs in the past, with roughly half of each group (50% and 55%) having used drugs in the month before the offense.

The greatest differences were seen in the use of cocaine-based drugs. While 1 in 10 probationers said they had used cocaine or crack in the month prior to the offense, the same was true for 1 in 4 local jail and State prison inmates. About 1 in 25 probationers said they were under the influence of cocaine or crack at the time of offense, compared to 1 in 7 local jail and State prison inmates.

	Percent using cocaine/crack		
	Ever	In the month before offense	At the time of offense
Probationers	31%	9%	4%
Jail inmates	50	24	15
State prisoners	49	25	14

Note: Data drawn from the 1996 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails (unpublished) and the 1991 Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities.

Responses from a quarter of adults on probation indicated past alcohol abuse or dependence

According to the CAGE diagnostic instrument (see box), 24% of probationers reported experiences which are consistent with a history of alcohol abuse or dependence (table 3). The incidence of alcohol abuse varied somewhat by offense type, with DWI (41%) and other public-order (26%) offenders most likely to provide three or more positive CAGE responses. Assault (24%) and burglary (22%) offenders also reported higher levels of alcohol abuse. Percentages were lower for offenses such as drug trafficking (12%) and larceny/theft (15%).

Excluding public-order offenders, violent offenders (22%) were the most likely to exhibit signs of alcohol abuse, followed by property (18%) and drug (16%) offenders. For all three offense types, about half reported at least one positive CAGE response.

Past experiences of alcohol abuse, by number of positive CAGE responses of probationers

	Percent of probationers reporting past experience, by the number of positive CAGE responses				
	0	1	2	3	4
Under the influence of alcohol at the time of offense	14.3%	38.7%	57.4%	72.5%	79.9%
Ever had a binge drinking experience*	12.4	36.6	43.4	61.5	84.1
Ever gotten into a physical fight because of drinking	11.8	27.8	47.8	53.5	73.8
Number of probationers	914,484	319,249	337,230	281,229	213,703

*Binge drinking is defined as having consumed as much as a fifth of liquor in a single day, equivalent to 20 drinks, 3 bottles of wine, or as many as 3 six-packs of beer.

The CAGE questionnaire is a diagnostic instrument for detecting a person's history of alcohol abuse or dependence. CAGE is an acronym for the four questions used by the instrument — attempts to (C)ut back on drinking, (A)nnoyance at others' criticism of one's drinking, feelings of (G)uilt about drinking, and needing a drink first thing in the morning as an (E)ye opener to steady the nerves. The CAGE instrument determines a person's likelihood of alcohol abuse by the number of positive responses to these four questions.

In a clinical test involving hospital admissions, three or more positive CAGE responses carried a .99 predictive value for alcohol abuse or dependence.

In addition, there is a strong relationship of positive CAGE responses to other self-reported indicators of prior alcohol abuse from the survey of adults on probation (table above). While 12% of probationers with no positive CAGE responses reported a past "binge drinking" episode, the same was true of 84% of those with four CAGE responses. In this report, only those probationers with three or more positive responses are categorized as alcohol abusive or dependent.

Data on the predictive values of the CAGE instrument are taken from the article "Screening for Alcohol Abuse Using the CAGE Questionnaire" by B. Bush and others, *The American Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 82, February 1987, pp. 231-35.

Table 3. Number of positive CAGE responses for adult probationers, by type of offense, 1995

Type of offense	Number of probationers	Percent of probationers, by the number of positive CAGE responses			
		1 or more	2 or more	3 or more	4
Total	2,064,145	55.8%	40.3%	24.0%	10.4%
Violent offenses	413,200	55.2%	41.5%	21.8%	9.7%
Sexual assault	95,200	53.0	39.6	18.7	4.7
Assault	226,284	53.1	43.2	23.7	13.6
Property offenses	589,729	43.6%	28.9%	18.3%	8.9%
Burglary	95,189	52.5	39.4	22.2	14.6
Larceny/theft	168,273	41.6	25.8	15.2	4.5
Fraud	196,913	37.8	26.7	16.7	7.9
Drug offenses	414,832	47.6%	28.1%	15.7%	6.4%
Possession	216,710	47.6	27.3	17.9	7.4
Trafficking	181,438	46.1	27.1	11.7	4.7
Public-order offenses	631,571	72.9%	58.2%	36.1%	14.7%
DWI	426,376	83.1	67.6	40.9	16.3
Other public-order	205,195	51.7	38.6	26.3	11.3

Nearly two-thirds of probationers said they had driven while under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Probationers reported high levels of dangerous and troubled behavior associated with past drug and alcohol use. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of all probationers admitted to having driven while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including 57% that had done so while drunk (table 4). Half of all probationers had also experienced drug- or alcohol-related domestic disputes (51%) or had been arrested as a result of using alcohol or drugs (50%). In addition, a third had gotten into physical fights related to drinking or drug use (35%), or had engaged in "binge drinking," the equivalent of consuming a fifth of liquor in a single day (35%).

When looking at experiences associated with drug abuse, more recent drug use was related to higher reported levels of such behavior (table 5). While 53% of probationers having any past drug use said they had driven while under the influence of drugs, the percentage rose to 74% among probationers using drugs in the month prior to the offense. For every listed behavior, the percentages reported by probationers increased as the level of prior drug use went from "ever in the past" to "in the month before the offense." Fewer than two-thirds of probationers with any prior drug use reported any of these experiences, but over 85% of those using drugs in the month of the offense had engaged in at least one of these troubled behaviors.

Table 4. Experiences while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, reported by adults on probation, 1995

	Percent of adults on probation		
Past experience	Alcohol	Drugs	Alcohol or drugs
Have you ever driven a car or any other vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. . .drugs?	56.7%	36.5%	63.9%
Have you ever had arguments with your spouse, family, or friends while or right after drinking. . .using drugs?	46.5	25.3	51.4
Have you ever lost a job because of your drinking. . .using drugs?	7.5	6.7	10.9
Have you ever had job or school trouble because of your drinking. . . using drugs (such as demotion at work or dropping out of school)?	12.9	12.7	18.5
Have you ever been arrested or held at a police station because of your drinking. . .using drugs?	41.7	17.3	49.8
Have you ever gotten into a physical fight while or right after drinking. . . using drugs?	32.3	13.3	34.5
Have you ever had as much as a fifth of liquor in one day (20 drinks, 3 six-packs of beer, or 3 bottles of wine)?	35.3	--	--
Number of probationers*	2,059,834	2,045,915	2,062,456

*The number of probationers providing valid data varied across these experiences. The numbers listed here reflect the experience for which the most probationers provided a valid response.
--Not applicable.

Table 5. Experiences associated with the drug use of adult probationers, by prior drug use, 1995

	Percent of adults on probation			
		Probationers with prior drug use		
Past experience	All	Ever in the past	Regularly*	In the month before offense
Any experience mentioned	43.0%	62.1%	82.7%	85.2%
Driven a vehicle under the influence of drugs	36.5	52.7	72.7	74.3
Argued with family, friends, spouse, or boyfriend/girlfriend under the influence of drugs	25.3	36.5	53.5	56.0
Lost job because of drug use	6.7	9.6	15.3	17.5
Problems at work or school because of drug use	12.7	18.3	28.0	30.3
Arrested or detained by police because of drug use	17.3	25.0	35.6	41.3
Involved in physical fights under the influence of drugs	13.3	19.2	28.0	31.2
Number of probationers	2,065,896	1,425,528	892,108	653,327

*Regular use is defined as once a week or more for at least a month.

Hispanic probationers reported the lowest levels of prior drug use

There were few differences between men and women in the percentages of reported drug use (table 6). Nearly equal percentages of men (70%) and women (68%) had used drugs in the past as well as at the time of offense (14% and 12%, respectively). However, men reported consistently higher percentages for measures of prior alcohol abuse. Men were more likely than women to report alcohol influence at the time of offense (44% compared to 26%) and a prior binge drinking experience (40% compared to 16%).

Prior drug use patterns varied little across racial or ethnic groups. While Hispanics reported lower drug use on all measures, non-Hispanic whites and blacks reported higher levels of use. Roughly 7 in 10 whites and blacks said they had used drugs in the past, and 1 in 7 of both groups said they had used drugs at the time of their offense. On the three measures of prior alcohol abuse, white adults on probation had higher percentages than black and Hispanic adults. Nearly half of whites reported alcohol influence at the time of offense, compared to a third of Hispanics and a quarter of blacks.

Prior drug use dropped dramatically among probationers age 45 or older

Adults on probation in the age categories under 45 (87% of all probationers) reported similar levels of prior drug abuse, and their incidence of drug use was consistently higher than that of older probationers. Over 70% of probationers under 45 reported some prior drug use, compared to 37% of those 45 or older. Thirty-five percent of probationers under 45 — but 9% of older probationers — reported drug use in the month before their offense.

Measures of prior alcohol abuse displayed little variation across age groups. For example, between 30% and 38% of all age groups reported a binge drinking experience. About equal percentages of probationers under 45 (24%) and older probationers (27%) fit the CAGE profile of alcohol dependence or reported alcohol influence at the time of offense (39% and 46%, respectively).

Over 80% of probationers with a GED reported past drug use

Probationers with a GED (a General Equivalency Diploma, or the equivalent to a high school degree) consistently reported the highest levels of prior drug use when compared to those with other educational attainments. Over 80% of the probationers with a GED said they had used drugs, and 58% reported regular drug use in the past. However, probationers with a GED reported levels of prior alcohol abuse similar to those of other probationers.

For other categories of educational background, reported drug use varied between 26% and 34% for the month before the offense and between 12% and 15% for the time of the offense. Probationers with an elementary education reported the lowest levels of any past drug use (50%). Across the educational categories, from 35% to

Table 6. Levels of prior drug use, by selected characteristics of adult probationers, 1995

		Percent of probationers						
		Probationers' level of prior drug use				Probationers' prior alcohol abuse		
Characteristic	Number of probationers	Ever in the past	Used regularly[a]	In the month prior to offense	At the time of offense	Under the influence of alcohol at time of offense	Ever had a binge drinking experience[b]	Had three or more positive CAGE responses
All probationers	2,065,896	69.4%	43.4%	31.8%	13.5%	39.9%	35.3%	24.0%
Sex								
Male	1,636,017	69.9%	44.7%	33.7%	14.0%	43.5%	40.4%	25.5%
Female	429,879	67.7	38.4	24.6	11.6	26.2	16.1	18.1
Race/Hispanic origin								
White non-Hispanic	1,264,990	72.8%	46.0%	33.1%	13.6%	46.6%	43.3%	28.6%
Black non-Hispanic	509,919	68.1	43.8	34.7	14.7	26.2	19.2	15.8
Hispanic	228,399	56.4	32.3	23.3	10.7	32.7	27.7	15.8
Other	62,588	59.3	29.0	14.5	13.8	41.5	34.5	27.0
Age								
24 or younger	556,760	69.9%	42.3%	38.3%	16.4%	26.1%	35.0%	14.4%
25-34	713,204	76.9	47.3	34.9	14.5	42.8	35.1	24.0
35-44	523,583	75.4	52.8	32.5	14.0	47.4	37.6	32.5
45-54	191,382	44.1	22.4	11.6	5.3	41.6	33.1	32.3
55 or older	80,967	21.4	6.8	3.8	1.1	55.5	30.2	14.2
Education								
8th grade or less	114,818	49.6%	32.1%	25.8%	15.0%	42.7%	28.2%	26.4%
Some high school	509,091	71.5	43.2	33.8	14.6	35.1	35.7	21.5
GED	224,007	83.6	57.7	44.6	17.4	43.1	44.7	31.0
High school graduate	595,715	65.0	40.0	30.5	12.4	38.8	35.8	22.1
Some college or more	586,236	70.6	44.4	27.3	11.7	43.8	33.0	25.6

[a]Regular use is defined as once a week or more for at least a month.
[b]Binge drinking is defined as having consumed a fifth of liquor in a single day, equivalent to 20 drinks, 3 bottles of wine, or 3 six-packs of beer.

44% of probationers committed their offense under the influence of alcohol.

Two-thirds of probationers can be characterized as alcohol- or drug-involved offenders

About two-thirds of probationers reported at least one type of involvement with alcohol or drug abuse in the time leading up to their current offense. The largest group of alcohol- or drug-involved probationers were those who were under the influence at the time of their current offense (47%). Also included in this category were those probationers reporting drug use in the month before the offense (32%), those fitting the CAGE profile for alcohol dependence (24%), and those under a probation sentence for DWI (21%) and drug (20%) offenses.

	Percent of probationers
Current drug offense	20.1%
Current DWI offense	20.7
Alcohol/drug influence at the time of offense	46.8
Drug use in the month prior to offense	31.8
Three or more positive CAGE responses	24.0
Alcohol- or drug-involved probationers	67.3%

Among the probationers interviewed, men (71%) were more likely than women (54%) to report involvement in alcohol or drug abuse before their current offense (table 7). Among racial groups, white non-Hispanics (71%) reported the highest incidence of alcohol or drug involvement, followed by black non-Hispanics (64%) and Hispanics (59%). The reported levels of involvement with alcohol or drug abuse varied little among age groups, with probationers between ages 25 and 44 having slightly higher levels than those in other age groups.

While on probation, half of probationers tested—but less than a fifth treated—for drug use

Nearly half of all probationers (49%) reported having been tested for drug use while on their current probation sentence (table 8). The percentage of probationers tested for illegal drugs consistently rose among those with more severe drug use histories. Two-thirds of probationers using drugs in the month of the offense had been tested for drug use. Three-quarters of those who committed their offense to obtain drug money had been tested.

Seventeen percent of all probationers reported participation in a drug treatment program during their probation sentence. The percentage rose as the severity of prior drug use increased. Of those with any past drug use, 25% had received treatment, and the percentage grew to 42% of those using drugs in the month before the offense. A majority of those using drugs at the time of offense reported participation in drug treatment during their current sentence.

However, a substantial percentage of probationers with severe drug use histories had not been tested or received treatment. About half of probationers who committed their offense to obtain money for drugs had received drug treatment while on probation. Two-fifths of intravenous drug users had not received any drug treatment during their probation sentence. In every group of probationers with prior drug use, between 26% and 45% did not report being tested for drug use.

Table 7. Selected characteristics of alcohol- or drug-involved probationers, 1995

	Percent of probationers reporting alcohol or drug involvement
All probationers	67.3%
Sex	
Male	70.9%
Female	53.7
Race/Hispanic origin	
White non-Hispanic	70.6%
Black non-Hispanic	64.0
Hispanic	58.8
Other	59.1
Age	
24 or younger	57.5%
25-34	72.5
35-44	73.4
45-54	60.2
55 or older	66.6

Table 8. Drug testing and treatment of adult probationers, by level of prior drug use and time served, 1995

		Percent of probationers tested for drug use during probation sentence			Percent of probationers receiving drug treatment during probation sentence		
			Time served on probation			Time served on probation	
Level of prior drug use	Number of probationers	Total	Less than 1 year	1 year or more	Total	Less than 1 year	1 year or more
All probationers	2,065,896	49.0%	40.5%	56.3%	17.4%	15.9%	18.7%
Used drugs—							
Ever	1,425,528	54.8	45.4	63.2	24.7	21.9	27.1
Regularly*	892,108	61.2	52.7	68.4	35.8	32.5	38.7
In the month before offense	653,327	65.2	55.5	72.7	42.2	38.0	45.3
At the time of offense	277,778	69.8	58.6	77.2	52.6	51.2	53.3
Committed offense to get drug money	136,892	73.3	51.4	84.0	47.9	48.8	47.5
Ever used a needle to inject drugs	142,687	74.4	69.0	76.5	62.0	71.7	58.2

*Regular use is defined as once a week or more for at least a month.

Table 9. Drug treatment history of adult probationers, by prior drug use, 1995

Participated in a drug treatment program	Percent of probationers			
		Probationers with prior drug use		
	All	Ever in the past	Regularly*	In the month prior to offense
Ever	22.1%	31.6%	45.9%	51.2%
While incarcerated	3.8	5.5	7.8	9.2
Before current sentence	14.6	21.1	31.2	33.9
During current sentence	17.4	24.8	35.9	42.2
Currently in program	8.1	11.6	17.5	20.6
Number of probationers	2,065,896	1,425,528	892,108	653,327

Note: Probationers may have received treatment at multiple times in the past.
*Regular use is defined as once a week or more for at least a month.

Comparing first-year probationers with those who had already served a year or more of their sentence suggests that the amount of time on probation affects the chances of having been tested for drugs. Among first-year probationers, 41% had been tested for drugs during their probation sentence, compared to 56% of those who had served at least a year on probation. For all levels of prior drug use, the percentage of probationers tested for drugs was higher for those having spent a year or more on probation. For example, 45% of first-year probationers with past drug use had been tested for drugs, compared to 63% of those having served a year or more.

The amount of time served on probation had a smaller impact on the reported levels of drug treatment. While 16% of first-year probationers had been treated for drug abuse during their sentence, 19% of those probationers with at least a year served had been treated. For most levels of prior drug use, first-year probationers were only slightly less likely to have received drug treatment while on probation. Of those using drugs at the time of offense, 51% of first-year probationers had been treated, compared to 53% of those with a year or more served.

Table 10. Types of drug treatment ever received by adult probationers, by prior drug use, 1995

Drug treatment program	Percent of probationers			
		Probationers with prior drug use		
	All	Ever in the past	Regularly*	In the month prior to offense
Any kind of treatment	22.1%	31.6%	45.9%	51.2%
Crisis/emergency care	7.9	11.4	17.1	19.3
Self-help group	13.7	19.8	30.2	33.9
Counseling	8.4	12.0	18.3	19.1
Outpatient care	16.5	23.7	34.7	40.5
Inpatient care	7.9	11.3	17.7	20.7
Number of probationers	2,065,896	1,425,528	892,108	653,327

Note: Probationers may have received more than one type of treatment in the past.
*Regular use is defined as once a week or more for at least a month.

Types of drug treatment varied little among probationers with differing severity of past drug use

Over a fifth of all probationers had received drug treatment at some time in the past, with the percentage rising to a third of those with prior drug use and half of those using drugs in the month of the offense (table 9). An estimated 17% of probationers had received drug treatment while on their current sentence; 15% had received prior treatment; and 4% had received treatment while in prison or jail. About half of those who received drug treatment during their current sentence reported that they were enrolled in a treatment program at the time of the survey (8%).

Although some probationers had received drug treatment more than once, they may not have been in the same kind of treatment program each time. Probationers had participated in several different types of drug treatment programs, with outpatient care (17%) and self-help groups (14%) being the most common (table 10). Nearly equal percentages of probationers had received counseling (8%), crisis or emergency care (8%), and inpatient care (8%) at some time in the past.

The percentage of probationers reporting participation in each type of program rose with the severity of prior drug use, but outpatient care and self-help groups remained the most common types of treatment. Among those reporting drug use in the month prior to the offense, 41% had received outpatient care, and 34% had been in self-help groups. Nearly equal percentages of these probationers had received inpatient care (21%), crisis or emergency care (19%), and counseling (19%).

The percentage of probationers receiving drug treatment during their current probation sentence rose with higher levels of prior drug use (table 11).

While 25% of those probationers with any prior drug use had received drug treatment during their current probation sentence, this figure rose to 42% for those using drugs in the month before the offense. Among all probationers, outpatient care (12%) and self-help groups (11%) were the most common types of treatment received during probation, with fewer probationers receiving counseling (6%), inpatient care (4%), or crisis/emergency care (4%). Among probationers who used drugs in the month of the offense, outpatient care (30%) and self-help groups (28%) remained the most popular types of programs.

Table 11. Types of drug treatment received by adult probationers during their current sentence to probation, by prior drug use, 1995

	Percent of probationers			
		Probationers with prior drug use		
Type of drug treatment	All	Ever in the past	Regularly*	In the month prior to offense
Any type	17.4%	24.8%	35.9%	42.2%
Crisis/emergency care	3.7%	5.4%	8.0%	9.8%
Detoxification ward	3.4	5.0	7.3	9.1
Crisis center	.4	.6	.9	1.3
Emergency room	.8	1.2	1.9	2.4
Self-help group	10.8%	15.7%	23.9%	27.6%
Narcotics/Cocaine Anonymous	10.5	15.2	23.3	27.1
Al-anon	1.5	2.1	3.2	3.3
Adult Children of Alcoholics	.3	.5	.7	.5
Counseling	5.7%	8.1%	12.5%	14.0%
Private physician	.9	1.3	2.0	2.4
Therapist/social worker	4.1	5.8	9.2	10.5
Family/social service agency	1.1	1.6	2.5	3.1
Employee assistance program	.1	.1	.1	0
Clergy	1.7	2.5	3.6	4.2
Outpatient care	11.9%	16.9%	24.5%	29.9%
Outpatient clinic	6.1	8.7	12.7	17.0
Drug rehabilitation	7.6	10.8	15.7	19.5
Day/partial care program	2.0	2.9	4.6	5.7
Methadone maintenance program	.3	.5	.7	1.0
Community mental health center	3.9	5.7	8.8	9.6
Inpatient care	4.1%	5.9%	9.0%	11.8%
Inpatient unit of psychiatric/ general hospital	1.6	2.2	3.4	4.4
Residential treatment/ halfway house	3.4	4.8	7.5	9.9
Number of probationers	2,065,896	1,425,528	892,108	653,327

*Regular use is defined as once a week or more for at least a month.

Of the individual drug treatment programs, the most common among all probationers were Narcotics/Cocaine Anonymous groups (11%), drug rehabilitation (8%), and outpatient clinics (6%). The types of treatment programs did not differ according to the level of the probationers' past drug use. For probationers using drugs in the month of the offense, the most common programs were still Narcotics/Cocaine Anonymous (27%), drug rehabilitation (20%), and outpatient clinics (17%). Regardless of prior drug use, the least common drug treatment programs were employee assistance and methadone maintenance programs, Adult Children of Alcoholics groups, emergency rooms, and crisis centers.

A third of all probationers received alcohol treatment during probation

While 22% of all probationers had received any type of drug treatment in the past, almost twice as many probationers (41%) reported having ever received treatment for alcohol abuse (table 12). Past treatment was reported by nearly two-thirds of those probationers who had engaged in alcohol-related fights and by over three-quarters of those fitting the CAGE profile of alcohol abuse.

Table 12. Types of alcohol treatment ever received by adult probationers, by prior alcohol use levels, 1995

	Percent of probationers				
Type of alcohol treatment program	All	Under the influence of alcohol at time of offense	Ever had a binge drinking experience*	Ever gotten into physical fight because of drinking	Had three or more positive CAGE responses
Any kind of treatment	40.6%	72.5%	62.9%	65.3%	78.1%
Crisis/emergency care	12.0	23.1	23.3	26.2	36.7
Self-help group	31.5	56.8	52.6	55.3	67.9
Counseling	12.4	22.8	24.2	23.4	33.5
Outpatient care	25.5	48.3	43.0	45.3	55.9
Inpatient care	8.1	14.9	15.9	18.1	24.7
Number of probationers	2,065,896	821,030	727,253	665,300	494,933

*Binge drinking is defined as having consumed as much as a fifth of liquor in a single day, equivalent to 20 drinks, 3 bottles of wine, or 3 six-packs of beer.

Compared to probationers with past drug use, a larger share of probationers with a history of alcohol abuse had received treatment. For example, less than half (46%) of those probationers who had used drugs regularly had ever received drug treatment. Among probationers reporting past incidents of "binge drinking," 63% had received treatment for alcohol abuse in the past. Among probationers under the influence of alcohol at the time of their offense, even higher percentages of past treatment were reported (73%).

As was the case with probationers' participation in drug treatment programs, self-help groups (32%) and outpatient care (26%) were the most common types of past alcohol treatment. Equal percentages of probationers had received counseling (12%) and crisis/emergency care (12%) in the past, while inpatient care (8%) was the least common type of treatment.

While the incidence of alcohol treatment rose with more severe levels of alcohol abuse, the most common types of treatment programs remained the same. Among those probationers fitting the CAGE profile of alcohol abuse, the percentage reporting any type of past alcohol treatment rose sharply to 78%, but self-help groups (68%) and outpatient care (56%) were still the most common types of treatment. Likewise, similar percentages of probationers reported past emergency care (37%) and counseling (34%), while inpatient care (25%) remained the type of treatment least often received.

During their current sentence to probation, a third of all probationers had received some type of alcohol treatment (table 13). Twenty-four percent of probationers had participated in a self-help group on their current probation sentence, while 18% received outpatient care.

Treatment was most often reported by those with more severe histories of abuse. The incidence of treatment during the current sentence rose to nearly two-thirds for those probationers fitting the CAGE profile for alcohol abuse (65%) and those using alcohol at the time of offense (62%). For all levels of prior alcohol abuse, self-help groups and outpatient care were the most common types of alcohol treatment, followed by counseling and nearly equal percentages of emergency and inpatient care.

Table 13. Types of alcohol treatment received by adult probationers during their current sentence, by level of prior alcohol use, 1995

Type of alcohol treatment during the current sentence	Percent of probationers				
	All	Under the influence of alcohol at time of offense	Ever had a binge drinking experience*	Ever gotten into physical fight because of drinking	Had three or more positive CAGE responses
Any type of alcohol treatment	32.3%	62.2%	49.5%	51.8%	64.6%
Crisis/emergency care	4.3%	8.5%	8.0%	9.6%	13.5%
Detoxification ward	4.0	7.9	7.5	9.1	12.4
Crisis center	.4	1.0	.8	.7	1.3
Emergency room	1.1	2.0	2.5	2.5	4.2
Self-help group	24.3%	47.6%	39.6%	42.4%	54.0%
Alcoholics Anonymous	24.0	47.5	39.5	41.9	53.7
Al-anon	2.9	4.9	4.8	5.8	6.4
Adult Children of Alcoholics	.6	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.7
Counseling	7.7%	14.3%	15.2%	14.0%	22.1%
Private physician	1.6	3.6	3.4	3.7	4.6
Therapist/social worker	5.5	9.9	10.9	9.8	16.8
Family/social service agency	1.1	2.0	2.7	2.7	3.2
Employee assistance program	.5	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.9
Clergy	2.1	4.3	5.3	4.9	6.6
Outpatient care	18.1%	37.5%	29.8%	31.9%	40.3%
Outpatient clinic	8.2	17.2	14.3	15.2	20.9
Alcohol rehabilitation	11.3	23.7	18.1	20.3	26.6
Day/partial care program	2.8	5.7	5.4	5.6	6.4
Community mental health center	5.3	11.1	10.7	10.2	14.6
Inpatient care	4.0%	7.8%	8.2%	8.6%	12.8%
Inpatient unit of psychiatric/ general hospital	2.0	3.9	4.7	4.3	6.6
Residential treatment/halfway house	3.1	6.3	6.4	7.4	10.7
Number of probationers	2,065,896	821,030	727,253	665,300	494,933

*Binge drinking is defined as having consumed as much as a fifth of liquor in a single day, equivalent to 20 drinks, 3 bottles of wine, or 3 six-packs of beer.

Table 14. Profile of sentencing, supervision, and treatment of current drug users on probation, 1995

	Percent of probationers using drugs in the month before offense
Tested for drug use on current sentence	65.2%
Special conditions	
Any	99.7%
Fees, fines, court costs	81.8
Restitution to the victim	26.9
Confinement/monitoring	12.7
No contact with victim, felons	10.7
Other restrictions	10.8
Community service	28.5
Alcohol/drug restrictions	55.5
Substance abuse treatment	49.5
Other treatment	10.3
Employment and training	47.0
Other special conditions	15.4
Contacts with probation officer in last 30 days	
None	8.6%
Any	91.4
Personal	85.4
Office	83.7
Field	21.1
Other contact	31.0
Mail	7.4
Telephone	24.3
Drug treatment received on current sentence	
Any	42.2%
Crisis/emergency care	9.8
Self-help group	27.6
Counseling	14.0
Outpatient care	29.9
Inpatient care	11.8
Drug treatment ever received	
Any	51.2%
Crisis/emergency care	19.3
Self-help group	33.9
Counseling	19.1
Outpatient care	40.5
Inpatient care	20.7
Current offense type	
Violent	14.8%
Property	23.4
Drug	42.1
Public-order	18.9
Prior sentences for drug offenses	
Any	13.4%
1	8.0
2+	5.4
Committed offense to get money for drugs	17.6%
Number of probationers	653,327

Note: Current drug users are defined as those probationers who reported drug use

Of the individual treatment programs, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) was the most commonly used. A quarter of all probationers (24%) had enrolled in AA during their current sentence to probation, followed by alcohol rehabilitation (11%) and outpatient clinics (8%). Across all levels of prior alcohol abuse, participation in AA was nearly twice as high as any other alcohol treatment program. Among those probationers fitting the CAGE profile for alcohol abuse, a majority (54%) had enrolled in AA on their current probation sentence.

Over 80% of current drug users had personal contact with their probation officer in the past 30 days

Nearly 100% of all current drug users — defined as those who reported drug use in the month before the offense — reported having some kind of special condition included in their sentence to probation (table 14). Monetary conditions such as fees, fines, and court costs were the most common condition (82%), and 27% reported an obligation to pay restitution to the victim of their offense. A majority of current drug users also reported restrictions against the use of alcohol and drugs (56%). Half of current drug users had sentences requiring some kind of substance abuse treatment, and 42% reported receiving drug treatment on their current sentence.

Almost all current drug users (91%) had been contacted by their probation officer in the past 30 days. Personal contacts made in the probation office were the most common form of reported contact (84%), followed by telephone contacts (24%) and personal contacts made in the field (21%). Contacts made through the mail, reported by 7% of current drug users, were the least common type of reported contact. Overall, personal contacts with the probation officer (85%) were much more common than those made through the mail or by telephone (31%).

Fewer than 1 in 7 current drug users on probation reported a prior drug offense sentence

Among those probationers reporting drug use in the month before their offense, violent offenders (15%) made up the smallest current offense category. Current drug users were most likely to be under sentence for drug offenses (42%), followed by property (23%) and public-order (19%) offenses. Less than a fifth of current drug users reported committing their current offense to obtain money for drugs. Thirteen percent of current drug users reported prior sentences for a drug offense; 8% had a single past drug offense sentence, and 5% reported multiple prior drug sentences.

Half of alcohol- or drug-involved probationers received treatment on their current probation sentence

Nearly a third of alcohol- or drug-involved probationers were currently enrolled in an alcohol or drug treatment program when interviewed (table 15). Half of alcohol- or drug-involved probationers said they were treated on their current sentence to probation, and about two-thirds had been treated at some time in their lives.

Table 15. Treatment history of alcohol- or drug-involved probationers, 1995

Participated in an alcohol or drug treatment program	Percent of alcohol- or drug-involved probationers
Ever	64.2%
While incarcerated	10.2
Before current sentence	39.8
During current sentence	53.6
Currently in program	30.1
Number of probationers	1,390,572

Note: Probationers may have received treatment at multiple times in the past.

Methodology

The 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation (SAP) was conducted for the Bureau of Justice Statistics by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. It was the first nationally representative survey to collect information on the individual characteristics of adult probationers.

The SAP was comprised of two components: (a) a review of probationers' administrative records and (b) personal interviews with probationers. The information in this report was gained from personal interviews conducted by Census Bureau representatives in probation offices between February 1995 and September 1995.

Sample design

The sample for the survey was drawn from all 2,627 State, county, and municipal probation agencies with a total of 2,618,132 formally sentenced probationers (appendix table 1). The universe came from the 1991 Census of Probation and Parole Agencies.

The sample design was a stratified two-stage selection in which probation agencies were sampled in the first stage and individual probationers were sampled in the second stage.

In the first stage, probation agencies were stratified into 16 strata defined by government branch (executive or judicial), level of government (State or local), and census region (Northeast, Midwest, South, or West). A total of 206 agencies were selected. Excluding 19 agencies subsequently determined to be out of scope and 20 which refused to participate resulted in a final total of 167 agencies selected for the administrative records-check component. (See *Characteristics of Adults on Probation, 1995.*)

For the personal interview sample, 122 of the originally selected agencies were chosen. The largest 43 self-representing agencies were selected with certainty. Of the 122 clusters of agencies that were not self-representing, 79 were selected using a systematic sample. Excluding agencies in the sample that would only participate in the records checks resulted in a total of 101 probation offices in which interviews were conducted.

Bureau of the Census field representatives visited each agency selected for the records check and systematically selected a sample of probationers using predetermined procedures. Only persons age 18 and older who were formally sentenced to probation and who were not absconders were included. Excluded were persons supervised by a Federal probation agency, those only on parole, persons on presentence or pretrial diversion, and juveniles.

At agencies that had also been selected for inclusion in the personal interview component, field representatives developed a list of persons eligible for a personal interview by further excluding those probationers not on active probation (defined as being required to make office visits at any interval), those incarcerated, and those in residential treatment. Using predetermined procedures, a systematic sample of probationers was selected for personal interviews.

Appendix table 1. Summary of the sample for the 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation

Type of agency and region	Census universe		Sample selections			
			Records check		Personal interview	
	Number of field offices	Number of probationers	Number of offices/ sites[a]	Number of probationers[b]	Number of offices/ sites[c]	Number of probationers[d]
Total	2,627	2,618,132	167	5,867	101	2,030
Executive branch, State	1,448	1,176,429	85	2,744	53	1,214
Northeast	94	39,759	2	86	1	40
Midwest	321	153,469	8	319	4	109
South	803	873,858	70	2,199	45	1,033
West	230	109,343	5	140	3	32
Executive branch, local	198	411,825	24	910	18	348
Northeast	86	134,819	8	267	6	145
Midwest	52	67,781	4	94	3	40
South	7	19,584	1	22	0	0
West	53	189,641	11	527	9	163
Judicial branch, State	370	462,020	28	1,107	13	203
Northeast	41	203,294	13	504	5	64
Midwest	188	127,418	7	321	4	90
South	63	86,152	6	220	3	34
West	78	45,156	2	62	1	15
Judicial branch, local	611	567,858	30	1,106	17	265
Northeast	78	78,124	6	258	4	73
Midwest	347	223,831	10	371	6	98
South	42	49,120	3	88	2	17
West	144	216,783	11	389	5	77

Note: The universe file for the 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation was based on the 1991 Census of Probation and Parole Agencies. In this census, agencies reported the address of their field offices and the number of adults under supervision in each office. Field offices were categorized based on the characteristics of their agencies by government branch (executive or judicial) and level of government (State or local).

[a]Of 206 offices selected for records checks, 19 were out of scope, not currently supervising adult probationers, and 20 would not participate.

[b]Of 5,922 eligible probationers selected within 167 offices/sites, completed records-check forms were received for 5,867 (or 99%).

[c]Excluding agencies which refused to participate in personal interviews from the 122 agencies originally sampled resulted in a total of 101 offices where interviews were conducted.

[d]Of 4,062 persons selected for a personal interview in participating agencies, 2,030 interviews were completed (or 50%).

Approximately 1 of every 442 probationers were selected for a records check, and a total of 5,867 records checks were completed by a probation officer or other probation agency representative. The overall response rate of 87% for the records-check component represents the combination of an agency response rate of 88% and a records-check completion rate of 99%.

A total of 4,703 probationers were selected for a personal interview. To maximize response rates, probation office personnel were asked to make initial contact with probationers regarding the SAP, to schedule personal interviews to coincide with regular office visits whenever possible, and to follow up to encourage participation. All interviews for the SAP were conducted in the probation office.

Of the 4,703 probationers selected, 641 were in agencies that refused to allow personal interviews. A total of 2,030 interviews were completed, representing a 50% response rate in participating agencies. When combined with an agency participation rate of 86% in the personal interviews and an agency response rate of 88% for records checks, the overall personal interview response rate totaled 38%.

Nonresponse adjustment

Estimates for the probation population were initially generated for the records check component, based on the completed records checks and on weighting factors derived from the original probability of selection in the sample. These factors were adjusted for variable rates of nonresponse across strata. A further adjustment was made to the 1994 yearend counts of the number of adults formally sentenced to probation — a total of 2,620,560 probationers.

Probation population estimates for the personal interview component were developed next, starting with a site base weight derived from the records check sample weights and the original probability of a site being selected for the personal interview sample.

Additional adjustments were made for agencies that only participated in the records check and for persons who were sampled but not interviewed. The estimated total personal interview population of 2,065,896 is smaller than the estimate for the records-check component because of the exclusion of probationers who were inactive, incarcerated, or in residential treatment.

Characteristics of nonresponse

Within the personal interview sample, probationers who kept in closer contact with their probation officer were more likely to complete an interview (appendix table 2). Nearly 80% of probationers interviewed had had face-to-face contact with their probation officer in the past 30 days, compared to half of those in the sample who did not complete an interview. Because all interviews were conducted in the probation offices, those probationers required to make frequent visits to the office were easier to schedule and were given more opportunities to complete an interview.

Felony probationers were also more likely to complete a personal interview than other sampled probationers. Felons made up two-thirds of interviewed probationers, compared to half of those not interviewed. This difference is not surprising, given that felons are more likely to be placed under close supervision by their probation office. Because most public-order offenders were misdemeanants, they were less likely to be under close supervision or interviewed. (See *Characteristics of Adults on Probation, 1995.)*

Probationers who completed an interview were also less likely than other sampled probationers to have had a prior sentence to probation or incarceration. This is likely the result of the personal interview population's higher percentage of felons and lower percentage of public-order offenders. Because felons with prior criminal sentences are more likely to receive a sentence to incarceration than felons without prior sentences, many felons on probation are likely to be first-time offenders. Likewise, probationers convicted of misdemeanor public-order offenses will probably receive a probation sentence, regardless of prior sentences.

Comparing administrative records and personal interviews

After adjustment for the personal interview nonresponse discussed above, the composition of the personal interview sample closely resembled that of the records check (appendix table 3). One exception was the level of contact probationers had with their probation officer, because of the exclusion of inactive probationers from the personal interview sample. As a result, about 80% of the probationers in the personal interview sample had had face-to-face contact with their probation officer in the last 30 days, compared to 61% of those in the records-check sample. (See *Characteristics of Adults on Probation, 1995,* table 9.)

Appendix table 2. Selected characteristics of the personal interview sample of probationers, 1995

	Personal interview sample	
Characteristic	Interviewed	Not interviewed
Contact with probation officer in last 30 days		
Any*	88.2%	64.4%
Personal	79.4	50.8
Mail	9.2	11.5
Telephone	21.4	17.7
Offense type		
Violent	19.0%	14.9%
Property	30.2	26.5
Drug	21.6	19.0
Public-order	27.5	37.6
Severity of offense		
Felony	65.6%	50.9%
Misdemeanor	32.5	46.0
Prior probation or incarceration sentence		
Yes	42.1%	52.8%
No	57.9	47.2
Number of probationers	695,548	689,297

*More than one type of contact was possible.

While the composition of the personal interview sample was influenced by the probationers' level of supervision, there was no similar relationship to the amount of time served on probation. The personal interview sample included a slightly higher percentage of first-year probationers (49%) than the records-check sample (45%), but the overall distributions of time served on probation displayed little variation.

Appendix table 3. Selected characteristics of the personal interview and records-check samples of probationers, 1995

Characteristic	Personal interview sample	Records-check sample
Sex		
Male	79.2%	79.1%
Female	20.8	20.9
Race/Hispanic origin		
White non-Hispanic	61.2%	58.3%
Black non-Hispanic	24.7	27.9
Hispanic	11.1	11.3
Other	3.0	2.4
Age		
17 or younger	.7%	.5%
18-24	26.3	26.4
25-34	34.5	36.8
35-44	25.3	24.7
45-54	9.3	8.4
55 or older	3.9	3.2
Offense type		
Violent	20.0%	17.3%
Property	28.6	28.9
Drug	20.1	21.4
Public-order	30.6	31.1
Severity of offense		
Felony	59.0%	58.3%
Misdemeanor	39.0	38.7
Prior probation or incarceration sentence		
None	56.8%	49.9%
Prior sentence*	43.2	50.1
Juvenile	7.9	9.0
Adult	38.2	45.1
Time served on probation		
Less than 6 months	24.5%	21.8%
6-11 months	24.5	23.3
12-23 months	25.1	27.3
24-35 months	13.7	13.5
36 months or more	12.1	14.1
Number of probationers	2,065,896	2,620,560

*Detail may add to more than the total because some probationers had prior sentences as both an adult and a juvenile.

In terms of demographic and offense characteristics, there was also very little variation between the records-check and personal interview samples. The personal interview and records-check samples included nearly identical percentages of men and Hispanics. Overall, the sex, race/Hispanic origin, and age distributions of the probationers in the two samples displayed no significant differences.

After adjustment for nonresponse, the personal interview and records-check samples had similar offense distributions and about equal percentages of felons. However, the personal interview sample did include fewer probationers with a prior sentence to probation or incarceration.

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 the 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 the inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, the inability to obtain correct information from the probationers, 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. Estimates of the standard errors have been calculated for the 1995 survey (appendix table 4). These estimates may be used to construct confidence intervals around percentages in this report. For example, the 95-percent confidence interval around the percentage of adults who said they committed the offense for which they were on probation while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is approximately 46.8% plus or minus 1.96 times 1.2% (or 44.4% to 49.2%).

These standard errors may also be used to test the 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 between white and black adults on probation who reported having been under the influence of alcohol at the time of their offense would be 2.6% (or the square root of the sum of the squared standard errors for each group). The 95-percent confidence interval around the difference would be 1.96 times 2.6% (or 5.2%). Since the difference of 20.4% (46.6% minus 26.2%) is greater than 5.2%, the difference would be considered statistically significant.

The standard errors reported should be used only for tests on all probationers. Comparisons of male and female probationers require different standard errors.

Appendix table 4. Standard errors of the estimated percentages for adults on probation, 1995

Base of the estimate	Estimated percentages					
	98 or 2	95 or 5	90 or 10	80 or 20	70 or 30	50
50,000	2.2	3.4	4.7	6.2	7.1	7.8
75,000	1.8	2.8	3.8	5.1	5.8	6.4
100,000	1.5	2.4	3.3	4.4	5.0	5.5
200,000	1.1	1.7	2.3	3.1	3.6	3.9
300,000	0.9	1.4	1.9	2.5	2.9	3.2
400,000	0.8	1.2	1.7	2.2	2.5	2.8
500,000	0.7	1.1	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.5
750,000	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.6	1.8	2.0
1,000,000	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.4	1.6	1.7
1,500,000	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.4

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Christopher J. Mumola wrote this report under the supervision of Allen J. Beck. Thomas P. Bonczar produced the methodology section of the report. Paula M. Ditton and Thomas Bonczar provided statistical assistance and review. Tom Hester edited the report. Yvonne Boston and Jayne Robinson, under the supervision of Marilyn Marbrook, prepared the report for publication.

Allen Beck and Thomas Bonczar designed the survey, developed the questionnaire, and monitored data collection, production of weights, and variance estimates.

LaTerri D. Bynum, Kenneth B. Dawson, and Marita K. Perez, Demographic Surveys Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, carried out data collection and processing under the supervision of Kathy Creighton, N. Gail Hoff, and Gertrude B. Odom. Larry Altmayer, under the supervision of Stephen T. Phillips, provided programming assistance. Denise Lewis, under the supervision of Michael Roebuck and Thomas Moore, designed the sample and weighting specifications. Cynthia Eurich, Field Division, coordinated the field operations, under the supervision of Michael McMahon. The affiliations date to the time of the survey.

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This report and many of its data, as well as other reports and statistics, can be found at the Bureau of Justice Statistics World Wide Web site: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/

Characteristics of Adults on Probation, 1995, can be found at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cap95.htm

The data from the 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation can be obtained from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The archive can also be accessed through the BJS Web site. When at the archive site, search for data set ICPSR 2039.