

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission



Arizona Youth Survey 2008 Methamphetamine Fact Sheet

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona

February 2009

The 2008 Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) collected information from 54,734 students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grade from all 15 counties in Arizona. Among the information collected in the 2008 AYS were responses to questions about lifetime substance use and past 30-day substance use.

Table 1. Percentage of Youth Reporting Having Used Meth in Their Lifetime by County 2002-2008**

	2002	2004	2006	2008
Apache	5.9	12.8	8.9	2.7 *
Cochise	5.2	5.4	4.6	2.6
Coconino	5.8	8.8	6.0	3.9
Gila	6.4	7.2	5.6	2.9
Graham	11.7	8.6	8.6	3.8
Greenlee	12.8	10.6	4.7	4.3
La Paz	11.1	8.9	6.2	4.0
Maricopa	4.9	4.5	3.9	2.6
Mohave	9.3	7.3	8.0	3.1
Navajo	7.9	11.8	9.2	5.9
Pima	5.8	4.3	4.3	3.1
Pinal	6.7	10.1	7.7	3.1
Santa Cruz	3.0	4.5	3.3	1.6
Yavapai	5.9	7.1	4.1	2.9
Yuma	5.7	5.2	4.8	2.3
Arizona	6.3	5.6	4.6	2.9

* Apache County only surveyed 8th graders in 2008.

** Age of first meth use was used to calculate lifetime data.

According to the data from the 2008 survey, methamphetamine is now the 11th most prevalent drug used by junior and high school students in Arizona behind alcohol, marijuana, prescription pain relievers, inhalants, over-the-counter drugs, prescription sedatives, cocaine, prescription stimulants, hallucinogens, and ecstasy. In this report, the results from the 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 surveys on youth substance use, with an emphasis on methamphetamine use, are summarized. All lifetime trend data is calculated using the age of first meth use question.

Youth Lifetime Use of Methamphetamine

Table 1 contains data on the percentage of youth who reported trying methamphetamine at least once in their lifetimes from the 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 Arizona Youth Surveys.

From 2002 to 2004, the percentage of youth reporting meth use in their lifetimes increased in eight of the 15 counties in Arizona. From 2004 to 2006, the percentage of youth who reported using meth during their lifetimes decreased in 12 of Arizona's 15 counties. From 2006 to 2008, the percentage of youth reporting meth use in their lifetimes decreased in all 15 counties of Arizona. The percentage decrease throughout the state from 2006 to 2008 was 1.7%, the greatest decrease over the entire 2002 to 2008 period. Nonetheless, state data has shown that the average age of initial meth use has held at 14 years old from 2002 to 2008.

The data in Table 1 also reveals significant variation in meth use by county in 2008, ranging from 1.6 percent to 5.9 percent of youth that reported trying meth in their lifetimes. This suggests that not all Arizona youth are equally at risk for meth use, with youth from Navajo, Greenlee, and La Paz Counties at the greatest risk, and youth from Santa Cruz and Yuma Counties at less risk than youth in other counties. Despite Maricopa County's low per capita rate of meth use among youth, it is likely that the county has the largest total number of youth having tried meth.

Youth 30-day Use of Methamphetamine

Table 2 contains data on the percentage of youth who reported using methamphetamine at least once in the 30 days prior to completing the survey from the 2002, 2006, and 2008 administrations. The question about 30-day methamphetamine use was not asked in the 2004 administration of the survey.

Looking at the 2008 data, only two counties, Apache and La Paz, reported more than 1% of youth that have tried meth within the 30 days prior to the survey. It is important to note that Apache County only surveyed 8th graders in 2008.

Variation across counties can also be seen in the percentage of youth reporting meth use in the 30 days prior to completing the survey. Also consistent with the lifetime meth data, 30-day use declined in all of Arizona's counties from 2006 to 2008. Statewide, a percentage decrease of 0.7% occurred for youth reporting use of meth 30 days prior to the survey, and the 2008 reported percentage of 0.6% is the lowest recorded percentage of 30 day meth use over all three reporting years.

Table 2. Percentage of Youth Reporting Past 30-Day Use of Meth by County 2002, 2006, and 2008

	2002	2006	2008
Apache	0.8	2.5	1.1 *
Cochise	2.2	1.7	0.3
Coconino	2.1	1.1	0.4
Gila	2.2	2.0	0.9
Graham	6.1	3.8	0.8
Greenlee	4.7	0.5	0.0
La Paz	5.7	3.1	1.8
Maricopa	1.8	1.1	0.5
Mohave	3.4	2.5	0.6
Navajo	1.8	3.0	0.8
Pima	1.9	0.9	0.4
Pinal	2.8	2.1	0.6
Santa Cruz	1.9	1.1	0.4
Yavapai	3.0	1.3	0.5
Yuma	2.0	1.4	0.9
Arizona	2.4	1.3	0.6

* Apache County only surveyed 8th graders in 2008.

Youth Meth Use by Gender

Table 3 contains data on lifetime meth use by gender and county of residence. Generally speaking, male and female youth statewide have relatively similar percentages of lifetime meth use. Yet, in 2004, 2006, and 2008, a slightly higher percentage of females reported lifetime meth use than males. In 2008, a higher percentage of female youth reported lifetime meth use than their male counterparts in 10 of Arizona's 15 counties. In Gila County, the percentage of females reporting lifetime meth use was more than three times higher than that of males.

When looking at 30-day meth use by gender and county (Table 4), the same trend found in lifetime meth use is discovered. A slightly higher percentage of females than males statewide reported 30-day meth use in 2008, and nine of the 15 counties in Arizona reported a higher percentage of female 30-day methamphetamine use.

Table 4. Percentage of Youth Reporting Meth Use in the Last 30 Days by Gender and County 2002, 2006, and 2008

	2002		2006		2008	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Apache	0.6	1.2	1.9	3.2	1.5 *	0.8 *
Cochise	3.6	1.0	2.1	1.4	0.6	0.0
Coconino	2.5	1.7	1.5	0.8	0.2	0.5
Gila	2.9	1.2	1.5	2.3	0.3	1.4
Graham	8.1	4.0	3.3	4.0	0.5	1.0
Greenlee	4.3	5.4	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0
La Paz	6.7	4.6	4.4	2.3	0.5	2.7
Maricopa	1.8	1.7	1.1	1.1	0.6	0.5
Mohave	4.7	2.2	1.6	3.4	0.5	0.7
Navajo	1.4	2.1	2.3	3.6	0.7	1.0
Pima	2.0	1.8	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.3
Pinal	1.6	4.1	1.3	2.9	0.3	0.8
Santa Cruz	2.3	1.6	1.7	0.6	0.6	0.2
Yavapai	2.9	3.3	1.8	0.8	0.5	0.6
Yuma	2.5	1.7	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.1
Arizona	2.6	2.1	1.2	1.4	0.5	0.6

* Apache County only surveyed 8th graders in 2008.

Table 5. Percentage of Youth Reporting Lifetime Meth Use and Other Anti-Social Behavior, 2008

	Has Used Meth	Never Used Meth
Carried a Handgun in the Last 12 Months	24.4	7.0
Sold Drugs in the Last 12 Months	48.5	6.3
Stolen a Vehicle in the Last 12 Months	16.4	2.9
Attacked Someone in the Last 12 Months	43.0	15.3
Currently Belong to a Gang	13.9	3.1

Methodology

The 2008 Arizona Youth Survey is a biennial school-based, self-reported survey that uses the Communities that Care Risk and Protective framework as its core data elements. The data collected through this framework allows for state and local delinquency prevention efforts to better understand those factors that put Arizona youth at risk for delinquency, drug use, and anti-social behavior.

	2002		2004		2006		2008	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Apache	7.6	4.1	11.0	14.3	8.4	9.6	2.6 *	2.1 *
Cochise	5.7	5.0	5.0	5.9	4.8	4.5	1.7	3.2
Coconino	7.4	4.1	8.2	9.2	4.5	7.7	3.0	4.7
Gila	6.9	6.0	7.5	6.7	4.6	6.4	1.3	4.2
Graham	16.0	7.4	9.8	7.9	6.9	9.6	2.8	4.3
Greenlee	7.1	20.4	7.3	13.6	1.9	7.6	4.3	4.5
La Paz	12.1	9.2	11.2	6.7	5.0	7.7	3.2	4.6
Maricopa	4.8	5.1	4.2	4.6	3.9	3.9	2.5	2.7
Mohave	9.2	8.5	6.4	7.9	6.3	9.4	3.2	2.6
Navajo	8.4	7.7	11.2	12.4	5.8	12.1	4.3	7.4
Pima	5.5	6.0	4.4	4.1	4.4	4.3	3.3	3.0
Pinal	5.9	7.7	9.0	11.1	4.9	10.1	2.5	3.9
Santa Cruz	2.6	3.6	4.4	4.4	3.8	2.7	2.1	1.2
Yavapai	4.3	7.6	4.8	9.6	3.5	4.7	2.0	3.8
Yuma	6.6	5.2	5.0	5.0	4.3	5.0	2.5	2.2
Arizona	6.5	6.1	5.3	5.8	4.2	4.9	2.6	3.1

* Apache County only surveyed 8th graders in 2008.

** Age of first meth use was used to calculate lifetime data.

Meth, Anti-Social Behavior, and Other Drug Use

Table 5 contains data from the 2008 Arizona Youth Survey showing the relationship between meth use and involvement in other anti-social behaviors. Youth who reported using meth in their lifetimes reported higher levels of carrying a handgun, drug sales, stealing a vehicle, attacking someone, and current gang membership. In fact, youth reporting lifetime meth use were more than seven times more likely to sell drugs within 12 months prior to the survey.

Table 6 contains data on the percentage of youth who reported having used meth in their lifetimes and lifetime use of eight other substances. Over 90% of youth who reported meth use in their lifetimes also reported using alcohol or marijuana. Greater than 75% of youth who reported lifetime meth use also reported trying prescription drugs or cocaine.

Following the same trend found in Table 5, youth who reported having tried meth in their lifetimes reported higher levels of other lifetime substance use for all other drugs than youth who reported no meth use.

Table 6. Percentage of Other Drug Use by Lifetime Meth Use, 2008

	Has Used Meth	Never Used Meth
Alcohol	97.7	58.6
Marijuana	90.9	25.8
LSD	54.8	3.2
Cocaine	76.6	4.3
Heroin	32.8	1.1
Prescription	77.3	21.1
Ecstasy	47.2	3.2
Inhalants	49.8	11.7

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