



DATA SHORTS

Revisiting Arrest and Police Encounter Data Using Outcomes Measurement System (OMS) Data

Data Short 2-2, February 2013, examined annual data for the most recent Outcomes Measurement System (OMS) results on arrests and police encounters for adults and adolescents. Given the continuing attention on mental health issues and criminal justice, the current data short extends the earlier analysis for adults and adolescents (ages 13-17) to include the results for consumers completing an OMS in calendar year 2013 and also examines the relationship of arrests to OMS Substance Use Disorder (SUD) indicators.

The first graph displays the percentage of adults and adolescents who were not arrested in the six months prior to their most recent OMS. Note that adult percentages appear above the lines while adolescent percentages are below the lines. More than 90% of both groups report no recent arrests each year. Furthermore, the general trend has been that an increasing percentage of adults and adolescents in service report no arrests in the preceding six months; the sole exception to this trend was that the adult 2012 percentage was identical to the 2013 number.

A similar trend is observed in the second graph which displays negative police encounters in the six months prior to the most recent OMS. The percentage of adults and adolescents in this group who report no recent negative police encounters has increased steadily over the last four years. Over 90% of adults report no recent police encounters in 2010 and this increased to 93% in 2013. While 85% of adolescents reported no such encounters in 2010, this number increased to slightly over 90% in 2013.

Because substance use can be associated with arrests, and because both the adolescent and adult versions of the OMS contain questions designed to identify potential substance use issues, an analysis of the those indicators of potential SUD issues by recent arrests was undertaken. For adults, at least one "always" or "often" response to one of the four items on the BASIS 24® substance abuse subscale was considered an indicator of a potential SUD issue. As shown in the third chart, while 8.2% of those individuals who were not arrested had this indicator, 22.4% of those who had been arrested had this indicator. Although it is not displayed here, the results that contrast individuals with and without negative police encounters were very similar.

For adolescents, the OMS measure used to identify potential SUD issues is the CRAFFT, a scale with six YES/NO items, with YES being indicative of a possible problem. For adolescents, at least one YES response on a CRAFFT item was considered an indicator of a potential SUD issue. Of those adolescents who had no recent arrests, 13.7% had an indicator of a possible SUD issue; for the group that had been arrested, 45.5% had an indicator of a possible SUD issue. As with adults, the results for negative police encounters, although not shown, were very similar to the arrest results.

Arrests and police encounters are relatively rare among both adults and adolescents participating in the OMS. Those adults and adolescents who have been arrested recently or who have had a recent negative police encounter are more likely to respond positively to indicators of a possible SUD issue than those who did not have an arrest and those who did not have a recent negative police encounter.

