

Distribution of **Substance-Specific** Need for Treatment

- A majority of the adult SANTA sample appears to need substance abuse treatment according to the criteria developed here. Fully 62% of the sample needs some form of substance abuse treatment. The majority of those needing treatment--31% of the total sample--need treatment for both drug and alcohol abuse. Twenty-one percent of the total sample need treatment for alcohol abuse alone, and 10% of the total sample need treatment for drug abuse alone. These figures are particularly striking, when one considers that the usual estimates of need for treatment in the general population of the United States are typically that about 10% of the population needs treatment for alcohol abuse and about 1% for other forms of substance abuse.
- The proportion of arrestees needing treatment climbs steadily from just under 40% of arrestees under twenty and plateaus at around 70% of arrestees in all age-groups from 30-34 and beyond. The proportion of arrestees needing treatment for alcohol not only climbs much more gradually, but jumps precipitously among those aged forty and over. Among these older arrestees, nearly half (45%) need treatment for alcohol abuse alone; 22% need treatment for alcohol in combination with other drug abuse and dependence.
- The prevalence of need for drug treatment alone peaks in the age-group 30-34 at 17% and declines after that. Only 4% of SANTA arrestees aged 40 and over need treatment for drug abuse alone. It appears that persons who abuse drugs “burn out” as they age or “die out” over time faster than those who abuse alcohol only.
- A higher proportion of male than female arrestees are in need of treatment. The prevalence of need for alcohol treatment alone or with treatment for other substance abuse is much higher among men than women, no matter what their race. However, a higher proportion of female than male arrestees need treatment for drug abuse alone. These gender differentials persist when controls are introduced for race.
- White arrestees are more likely to need this type of treatment than other arrestees, even controlling for gender.
- The highest prevalence of treatment need (96%) is found among arrestees whose most serious arrest charge is alcohol-related--violations of liquor laws, illegal possession of alcohol, driving under the influence, or public drunkenness.

-- Of those arrested for an alcohol-related charge, about two-thirds (63%) need treatment for alcohol alone; the remaining third (34%) need treatment for both alcohol and other drug abuse.