

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pg. 1 Ohio's Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces 2012 Annual Report

Pg. 5 Ohio Arrest-Related Deaths in 2012

Pg. 7 Victim Recantation: New Insights for Practice and Policy



A bulletin of the Ohio
Statistical Analysis Center

This document was supported by Award #2012-BJ-CX-K008, State Justice Statistics Program, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice.

August 2013

Volume 2, Issue 3

OCJS Research Brief

Ohio's Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces - 2012 Annual Report

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The Office of Criminal Justice Services provides federal and state grant funds to Ohio's multi-jurisdictional task forces. Ohio's multi-jurisdictional task forces generally consist of representatives from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and prosecutors. They tend to target mid- to upper-level drug trafficking and organized criminal activity for which it would be difficult for any one jurisdiction to build a case. In this way, they are not duplicative of individual agencies, but are seen as a crucial addition to local law enforcement.

This report documents the activities and accomplishments of 32 task forces during CY 2012. This report focuses on street (i.e., non-pharmaceutical) drug activity, pharmaceutical drug diversion, seizures and forfeitures, and other non-drug task force activities.

Street Drug Activity

New Cases

Thirty-two task forces worked a total of 8,600 new cases in 2012. A case is defined as having a significant potential for prosecution. For this report, cases are based on individuals, not charges.

Search Warrants

The task forces executed a total of 2,862 search warrants. This includes paper search warrants, paper warrants on cars, vehicle searches in which drugs are found, and property consent searches.

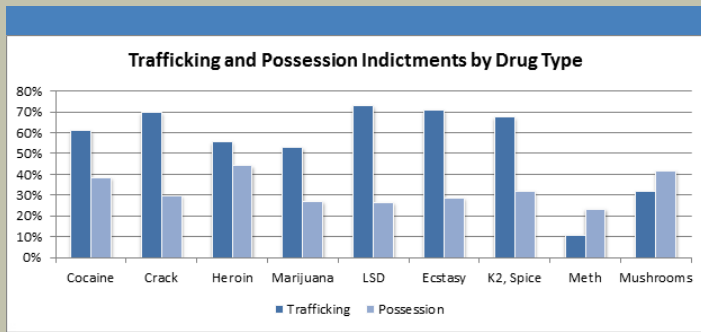
Indictments

The task forces indicted 4,186 individuals. Of these, 3,878 were non-federal indictments and 308 were federal indictments.

Indictments were also reported by felony level. Eighty-six percent of indictments were for felonies. Across all indictments, 44 percent were Felony 1, Felony 2, or Felony 3 indictments, suggesting that in general the task forces were focused on upper-level criminal activity.

Indictments were broken down by type of drug and type of drug crime (cultivation, manufacturing/chemical assembly, possession, trafficking). Lower-level charges are often part of building a case for more severe charges. Task forces were asked to report on all indictments, not just the highest charge. The majority of indictments were for trafficking (N=2,257), followed by possession (N=1,512). Manufacturing/chemical assembly accounted for approximately 10 percent of illegal drug indictments (N=459), but was specific primarily to methamphetamine. Likewise, cultivation (N=196) was solely tied to marijuana.

The following chart identifies the two main types of illegal drug indictments, trafficking and possession, by drug type. With the exception of methamphetamine and mushrooms, trafficking made up between 50 percent and 75 percent of indictments across the remaining drugs.



Drugs Removed by Task Force

Task forces reported on the total amount of drugs they took off the streets in 2012. The following table shows that the greatest quantity of drug seized was marijuana (processed and plants). This was followed by cocaine. In addition, there were 437 meth labs dismantled during the year.

Street Drugs Removed		
	Amount	Median Price/Unit
Cocaine	384,090 grams	\$100/gram
Crack	5,710 grams	\$100/gram
Heroin	89,037 grams	\$130/gram
	1,360 unit dose	
Marijuana - processed	118,552 pounds	\$1,350/pound
Marijuana - plants	18,002 plants	\$1,000/plant
LSD	729 unit dose	\$9/unit dose
Ecstasy	1,606 unit dose	\$13.75/unit dose
	16.9 grams	
Methamphetamine	6,280 grams	\$100/gram
Psilocybin mushrooms	89,736 grams	\$28.71/gram
Bath salts	50,542 grams	\$33.77/gram
Synthetic hallucinogen (K2, spice)	144,069 grams	\$12.21/gram

Pharmaceutical Diversion

Diversion is defined as any criminal act involving a prescription drug. It is called 'diversion' because the drugs are being redirected from their intended use and are instead being used for recreational purposes.

Fourteen of the 32 task forces reported having a dedicated diversion unit or diversion officer(s) as of December 31, 2012. The median number of officers assigned full-time to a diversion unit was one.

Across all task forces, only five task forces did not initiate at least one diversion investigation during the year. During 2012, 1,231 pharmaceutical cases were initiated. Unsurprisingly, task forces with a dedicated diversion unit/officer worked more pharmaceutical investigations than those without a dedicated unit/officer. The median number of cases for those with a dedicated diversion unit/officer was 28.5, whereas the median number of cases for those without a dedicated diversion unit/officer was 2.

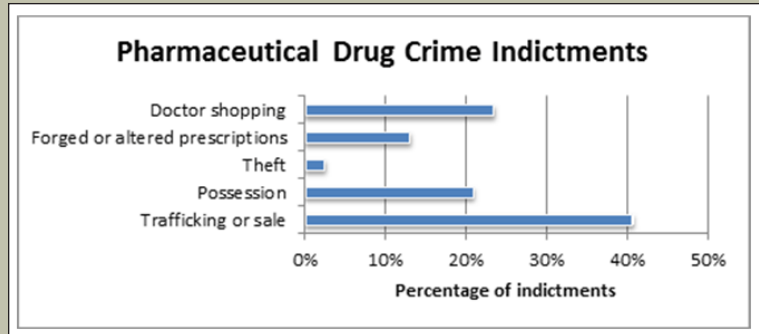
Investigations and Indictments

Task forces were asked to identify different types of health care professionals investigated and indicted. During 2012, there were 73 identified health care professionals investigated and 42 health care professionals indicted for pharmaceutical crimes.

Investigated and Indicted Health Care Professionals		
	Investigated	Indicted
Physicians	19	4
Pharmacists	6	9
Nurses	45	29
Dentists	3	0
Veterinarians	0	0

Task forces indicated indictments by felony level. Thirty-five percent were Felony 1, Felony 2, or Felony 3 indictments.

Individuals were indicted for a variety of crimes, including possession, trafficking or sale, theft, forged or altered prescriptions, and doctor shopping. All crimes (not just the most serious crime) in which the individual was indicted were reported. The majority of indictments were for the trafficking or sale of prescription drugs.



Looking at indictments by crime type and drug type, the data show that overall, Oxycodone-IR, Hydrocodone, and Oxycodone-ER were the three drugs for which there were the most indictments.¹

Indictments by Crime Type and Drug Type					
	Trafficking	Possession	Theft	Forgery	Doctor Shop
Hydrocodone	68	32	10	44	90
Oxycodone - ER	60	58	4	8	10
Oxycodone - IR	194	63	5	43	89

Drugs Removed

The following table identifies the most commonly reported drugs removed upon indictment. Task forces distinguished between drugs seized and diverted. Diverted reflects the amount of prescription drugs that have been identified as diverted dosage units during an investigation, but never seized. Dosage units are reported, with the number of task forces reporting the amounts seized and diverted in parentheses. Oxycodone-IR, hydrocodone, oxycodone-ER, and alprazolam had the highest seizures as well as the highest number of task forces reporting seizures. The same four drugs were reported for the highest amount of drugs diverted.

Prescription Drugs Seized and/or Diverted								
	Amount Seized	Amount Diverted		Amount Seized	Amount Diverted		Amount Seized	Amount Diverted
Alprazolam (Xanax)	4,254 (24)	30,065 (14)	Fentanyl, fentanyl citrate (duragesic patches, Actiq, Fentora)	114 (7)	778 (7)	Oxycodone—ER (Oxycontin)	4,421 (21)	59,644 (12)
Amphetamine mixture (Adderall)	532 (14)	14,673 (9)	Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet)	6,245 (25)	188,735 (18)	Oxycodone—IR (Percocet, Percodan, Roxicet, Roxicodone)	8,041 (27)	134,607 (19)
Buprenorphine (Subutex, Suboxone)	421 (17)	1,539 (6)	Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	680 (11)	70 (2)	Oxymorphone (Opana)	1,402 (11)	1,260 (3)
Butorphanol Tartrate (Stadol NS)	0	631 (1)	Lorazepam (Ativan)	610 (9)	3,251 (5)	Pheneratamine (Adipex-P, Fastin, Ionamin)	167 (3)	1,676 (2)
Carisoprodol (Soma)	301 (9)	2,387 (2)	Meperidine (Demerol)	4 (1)	39 (1)	Tramadol (Ultram, Ultracet)	615 (5)	16,570 (9)
Clonazepam (Klonopin)	752 (10)	5,501 (4)	Methadone (liquid/wafers/pills)	809 (13)	6,685 (7)	Zolpidem Tartrate (Ambien)	699 (3)	6,323 (5)
Codeine (Tylenol #3, Tylenol #4, cough syrup)	183 (4)	2,003 (3)	Methylphenidate (Ritalin)	414 (7)	2,924 (3)			
Diazepam (Valium)	1,073 (13)	6,825 (8)	Morphine (MS Contin, EMBEDA, Kadian)	835 (14)	1,481 (5)			

¹ This question was added to the performance report after the start of the calendar year; therefore, not all task forces reported data on indictments by crime type and drug type.

Criminal Assets Seized and Forfeited

The following table identifies the type, number, and value of criminal assets seized and forfeited by drug task forces in 2012. Asset seizure generally refers to the seizure of drug-related assets that have been used to facilitate drug trafficking or are derived from drug trafficking. The estimated value of all assets seized was over \$10.4 million. Asset forfeiture refers to those seized assets proven in court to have been used to facilitate drug trafficking or derived from drug trafficking and are thus forfeited to government entities. The estimated value of all assets forfeited was nearly \$5.3 million.

Task Force Seizures and Forfeitures				
	Number Seized	Amount Seized	Number Forfeited	Amount Forfeited
Vehicles	307	\$1,849,909	100	\$492,248
Currency	*	\$7,869,211	*	\$4,173,217
Real Estate	6	\$226,300	10	\$443,827
Electronics	311	\$111,927	24	\$18,400
Other	204	\$347,625	34	\$158,292

* Some task forces only reported the total amount of currency seized and forfeited.

Other Task Force Activity

New Non-Drug Cases

Ohio's multi-jurisdictional task forces engaged in 1,537 investigations in which the focus was something other than drug-related crime. Examples of non-drug cases that task forces have either initiated or assisted with include abduction, internet crimes against children, counterfeiting, gambling, gangs, human trafficking, and weapons violations.

Firearms Confiscated

A total of 1,608 firearms were confiscated by the task forces in 2012.

Presentations and Trainings

Twenty-eight of the 32 task forces reported providing presentations and/or trainings on drug-related issues. A total of 563 presentations were given to 21,196 attendees, an average of 37.6 attendees per presentation.

Ohio Arrest-Related Deaths in 2012

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An arrest-related death (ARD) is defined as a death that occurs anytime a person's freedom to leave is restricted by state or local law enforcement. Arrest-related death incidents include:

- A death that occurs before law enforcement personnel establish physical custody or before a formal arrest process is initiated.
- A death that occurs while attempting to elude law enforcement personnel during the course of apprehension (e.g., police chases involving action by law enforcement personnel such as deploying tire deflation devices, and standoffs).
- A death caused by any use of force by state or local law enforcement personnel, as well as those not directly related to actions of law enforcement, such as deaths attributed to suicide, accidental injury, and illness or natural causes.
- A death that involves law enforcement assistance in restraining and transporting individuals in need of medical or mental health care.

Deaths that occur in a jail or other long-term holding facility and deaths that occur in the custody of federal law enforcement officers are outside the scope of the ARD program and are not collected by OCJS.¹

Methodology

The data collection cycle begins January 1 and ends December 31. OCJS researchers rely on multiple sources to collect ARD data; however media reports are often used for initial identification. Official autopsy reports are then requested via fax from the appropriate county coroner or medical examiner. Once these reports are received four weeks to six months following the death, final incident reports are completed.

Summary

Decedent Characteristics

- Four of the arrest-related deaths were females.
- Whites accounted for 50% of incidents while Blacks made up approximately 43%.
- Individuals aged 18 – 34 accounted for 45% of arrest-related deaths. Decedents aged 35 – 54 accounted for 50%.
- Twenty-three percent of decedents had documented cases of mental illness.²

Manner of Death and Decedent Characteristics

- Decedents between the ages of 18 – 24 accounted for approximately 29% of reported arrest-related homicides.
- Fifty percent of reported arrest-related suicides were White decedents; 37.5% were Black.
- Female decedents represented 25% of all suicides.

Table 1. Number of reported arrest-related deaths, by manner of death and demographic characteristics, 2012

Demographic Characteristics	All Manners	Homicide	Suicide	Accidental Alcohol/ Drug Intoxication*	Accidental Injury to Self	Other
Total	40	28	8	1	2	1
Gender						
Male	36	26	6	1	2	1
Female	4	2	2	-	-	-
Race/Ethnicity						
White	20	13	4	1	2	-
Black	17	13	3	-	-	1
Hispanic	1	1	-	-	-	-
Two or more races	1	1	-	-	-	-
Unknown	1	-	1	-	-	-
Age						
18-24	11	8	2	-	1	-
25-34	7	5	1	1	-	-
35-44	10	7	2	-	-	1
45-54	10	7	2	-	1	-
55 +	2	1	1	-	-	-

* Accidental alcohol/drug intoxication refers to unintentional overuse of alcohol or drugs for recreational purposes.

1 The federal Deaths in Custody Reporting Program quarterly collects inmate death records from the nation's state prison systems, state juvenile correctional authorities, and 3,000+ local jail jurisdictions.

2 Coroners' reports in addition to law enforcement accounts of the incidents were used to determine if the decedent had a history of mental illness. Care should be taken not to assume the other decedents were not experiencing mental illnesses at the time of their death.

Ohio Counties

- At least one arrest-related death occurred in 18 Ohio counties.
- Northeast Ohio counties accounted for 35% of arrest-related death incidents. Southwestern and Central Ohio counties made up the next largest portion with 28% each.

Incident Circumstances

- In 80% of incidents charges were intended to be filed against the decedent. An additional 13% of decedents had charges filed against them at their time of death.
- Firearms were used in 95% of arrest-related death incidents.³
- Sixty percent of decedents expired at the scene while 35% died at a medical facility.
- Approximately 38% of arrest-related incidents took place during the summer months with 23% occurring in July.
- The majority of arrest-related incidents occurred between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 1:59 a.m.

Table 2. Reported arrest-related deaths, by incident circumstances, 2012

Incident Circumstances	Number	Percent
Total	40	100.0%
Violent Offenses	24	60.0%
Homicide	7	17.5%
Robbery	1	2.5%
Assault	9	22.5%
Other	7	17.5%
Property Offenses	8	20.0%
Burglary	5	12.5%
Larceny	3	7.5%
Drug Offenses	1	2.5%
Public-order Offenses	14	35.0%
Weapons	7	17.5%
Traffic violations, OVI	7	17.5%
No Criminal Charges Intended	1	2.5%
Mental health call	1	2.5%

Note: In many arrest-related death incidents, decedents were allegedly involved in more than one particular offense, therefore, details do not sum to total. "Other Violent Offenses" include incidents of domestic violence, standoffs and kidnappings.

Law Enforcement Agency Characteristics

- Four reported arrest-related incidents involved law enforcement personnel from multiple agencies.
- Local police departments were involved in approximately 93% of reported incidents.
- Of the 29 law enforcement agencies involved in reported incidents, 19 employed between 1-99 full-time sworn personnel. Law enforcement personnel from these agencies were involved in approximately 48% of arrest-related incidents.⁴
- Law enforcement agencies employing more than 1,000 full-time sworn personnel were involved in approximately 48% of arrest-related incidents.

Table 3. Law enforcement agency size and percent involved in reported arrest-related deaths, 2012

Number of full-time sworn agency personnel	Number	Percent
Total	29	100.0%
1-9	1	2.5%
10-24	7	17.5%
25-49	5	12.5%
50-99	6	15.0%
100-249	1	2.5%
250-499	2	5.0%
500-999	2	5.0%
1,000 or more	4	47.5%
Unknown	1	2.5%

Note: The numbers listed are the unduplicated count of law enforcement agencies involved in reported arrest-related incidents. Details do not sum to total due to multiple agencies participating in some incidents.

³ This percentage includes both the decedents' and law enforcement use of firearms (not included in the table).

⁴ This percentage represents how often agencies, grouped by size, were involved in the 40 arrest-related death incidents.

Victim Recantation: New Insights for Practice and Policy

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Our study used live telephone conversations between domestic violence perpetrators and victims to answer questions about how and why victims arrive at their decision to recant and/or refuse prosecution efforts. Our analysis revealed a five-stage process of victim recantation.

The first stage, accusation, typically began with a heated argument between the parties about the abusive event and their resistance to each other's accounts. *The perpetrator minimized the abuse* and tried to convince the victim that what happened was not that serious.

This was followed in *stage 2* by the perpetrator's further *minimization of the abuse and appeal to the victim's sympathy* by describing how much he was suffering in jail, how depressed he was, and how much he missed her and their children. This tactic of appealing to the victim's sympathy reversed the roles in the couple's relationship. The perpetrator assumed the role of "victim" and the victim assumed the role of his caretaker. In one couple, the victim initially refused to help the perpetrator and even threatened to talk to the police about previous incidents of violence. However, her stance softened when the perpetrator became increasingly anxious and threatened suicide. He screamed: "You're making me go crazy ... They're telling me they're gonna press charges then, damn ... You wanna see a motherfucker suicidal?" His panic was evident as the victim continued to threaten him with pressing charges. Finally, he asked in a distressed tone: "Can I say goodbye? Can I say something? Nobody loves me though, right?" This was a crucial point where the victim's tone changed drastically; she sounded concerned that he may actually have harmed himself. The remaining conversations revolved around the victim trying to assuage the perpetrator's anxiety and promising to do her best to help him get out of jail.

Stage 3 involved *bonding*, that is, the couple's invoking images of life without each other and bonding over love, dreams and memories. At the same time, they positioned themselves as a unit in opposition to others who "don't understand them." When reminding each other of life alone and/or bonding over love, dreams and memories, both the perpetrator and victim tended to express sadness and regret, but also relief that they were connecting over common ground.

Stage 4 was followed by *solicitation*, that is, the perpetrator's fervent requests begging the victim to recant. Once the victim agreed to recant, the final stage (*stage 5*) consisted of *collusion*, that is, the couple collaborated to construct the recantation plan that they would present to the court. That plan involved their redefinition of the abuse in a manner that absolved the perpetrator.

Our findings advance knowledge through identifying strategies perpetrators used to persuade their victim and strategies the couple used to preserve their relationship. Our study points to the need for recantation frameworks that recognize both the abusive behavioral tactics used by perpetrators and the interplay of emotions between members of violent couples. The perpetrator's use of sympathy appeals was successful in manipulating the victim's emotional state—shifting her from a place of moving forward with prosecution to resuming caretaking of the perpetrator. Perpetrators' sympathy appeals were typically accompanied by displays of their distressed emotional state, which augmented the appeal's power over the victim's emotions; upon hearing the perpetrator's distressed plea for help, the victim responded by helping to restore his emotional well-being. An expanded conceptualization of recantation would inform training of criminal justice professionals to recognize, beyond threats, the complex interpersonal processes—including sympathy appeals and minimization—that serve to keep violent relationships intact.

Our findings also point to the importance of providing supportive assistance to victims, including having a trusted victim advocate work with victims throughout the criminal justice process to prevent and defend against the perpetrator's sophisticated techniques. Our results suggest that recantation is a byproduct of the actions of sophisticated perpetrators. This points to the need for prosecutors to redouble their efforts in recantation cases to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

Bonomi AE, Gangamma R, Locke C, Katafiasz H, Martin D. "Meet me at the hill where we used to park:" Processes associated with victim recantation. *Social Science and Medicine* 2011; 73:1054-1061.