



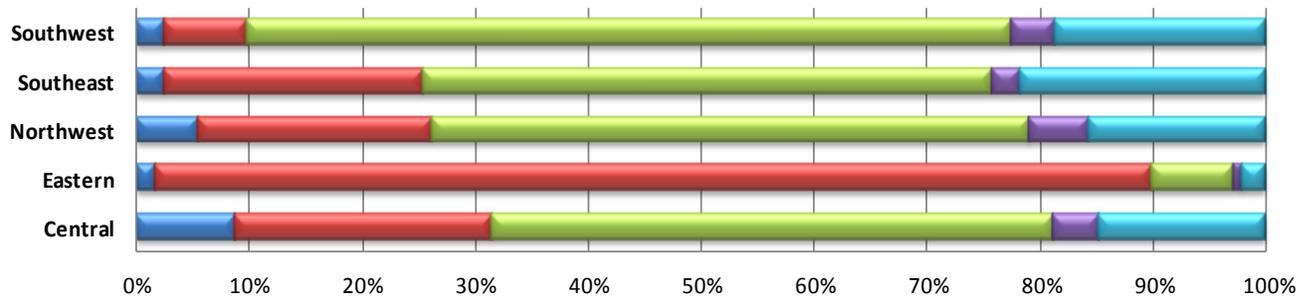
Injection Drug Use in Missouri

Injection drug use presents a public health concern. In addition to the harm associated with illicit drug use, injecting drugs directly into the bloodstream increases the risk of overdose and transmission of blood-borne diseases including HIV and Hepatitis B and C. It is difficult to estimate the number of injection drug users in Missouri as this population tends to be more transient. A study done by Brady et al. estimated the prevalence of injection drug use in large metropolitan areas in the United States.¹ Based on data from 2002, estimates of injection drug users in the Kansas City and St. Louis areas numbered 6,000 and 11,200, respectively. These estimates are about ten years old and are likely outdated.

Based on data from publicly-funded substance abuse treatment facilities in Missouri, injection drug use is prevalent throughout the state and is not limited to inner city areas.² In comparison to the total population, a higher than expected number of injection drug users are admitted to treatment in Southwest and Southeast Missouri which suggests significant injection drug use in these areas. With the exception of Eastern region, methamphetamine dominates the injection drug scene in the state—particularly, for Southwest Missouri. In Eastern region, injection drug users entering treatment are overwhelmingly heroin users. Similarly, Eastern region accounts for the majority of the state’s heroin-related deaths.³ In addition to methamphetamine and heroin, injection of other opiates including Oxycontin is notable—particularly in Southeast and Southwest Missouri. Treatment admissions for cocaine use have been declining in recent years both in Missouri and in the United States. In Missouri, waiting lists for treatment admission are common throughout the state. A one day survey of state-contracted treatment facilities in Missouri found 670 injection drug users waiting for addiction treatment.⁴

Injection drug use impacts multiple population groups. Significant growth in recent years has been among Whites—and in particular, White females—using heroin and other opiates. In 1999, the heroin injection drug user in treatment was disproportionately African-American. Ten years later, increased use among Whites has changed that distribution. Methamphetamine injection drug users are predominately White and twice as likely to be male. For those in treatment, the average age of first use of their injection drug is 21 years of age. Overall, between 5 and 10 years of drug use before first entering addiction treatment is common.

Drug of Choice for Missouri Injection Drug Users in Treatment



	Central	Eastern	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest
Cocaine	74	47	61	33	43
Heroin	190	2,443	232	294	122
Methamphetamine	416	198	589	649	1,129
Other Drugs	34	19	59	32	64
Other Opiates	123	59	175	280	312

Sources: ¹Brady, J.E. et al. (2008) “Estimating the Prevalence of Injection Drug Users in the U.S. and in Large Metropolitan Areas from 1992 to 2002. Journal of Urban Health. 85(3):323-351.

²Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Injection Drug Users Receiving Services in FY 2011 [unpublished].

³Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Section of Epidemiology for Public Health Practices, Bureau of Health Informatics.

⁴Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Wait List Survey Conducted in October 2011 [unpublished].