Methamphetamine and Other Drug Use on the Texas-Mexico Border and in Colonias

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Information on methamphetamine and other drug use was drawn from an in-person survey of 1200 adult residents of three Texas-Mexico border sites (El Paso city, the urban Lower Rio Grande Valley, and colonias in the Valley) conducted in 2002-2003. Across the three sites, more than one-quarter (25.5 percent) of the respondents reported using drugs other than methamphetamine or other uppers during their lifetime, and 3.9 percent reported lifetime use of methamphetamine. Respondents in El Paso (5.9 percent) were more likely than their counterparts in the colonias (2.5 percent) and the Valley (2.4 percent) to report lifetime use of methamphetamine. Few respondents (0.5 percent) reported past-year use of methamphetamine. Lifetime methamphetamine users were more likely than users of other drugs to be female (42 vs. 29 percent) and between the ages of 25 and 34 (39 vs. 30 percent), but were less likely to be Hispanic (74 vs. 85 percent). Methamphetamine users were more likely than users of other drugs to be drug dependent (21 vs. 7 percent) and to be involved in drug possession or sales (29 vs. 6 percent). According to respondents, marijuana and other drugs were more likely to be available and visible in the colonias than in El Paso and the Valley. Acculturation data show that Anglo-assimilated respondents (18 percent) were more likely than respondents who were bicultural (10 percent) or traditional Mexican (4 percent) to have used drugs in their lifetime.