Methamphetamine Use and Sales Among Gang Members:

The Cross-Over Effect

by

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Abstract

Using a large national sample of gang members from NGCRC's Project GANGMILL, this paper explores the use and sales of methamphetamine drugs by American gang members. The research also examined use and sales of crack cocaine. The results are showing a cross-over effect for methamphetamine use and sales, but that some preference patterns continue as well when we control for race or ethnic background.

INTRODUCTION

Shortly before the September 11th terrorist attack on America, there was another attack that wreaked havoc in California. This incident occurred when members of the Hell's Angels in cooking up a batch of methamphetamine created a brush fire that got out of control resulting in the death of two pilots. Subsequently arrested and now in custody, one was a leader of the Hell's Angels outlaw motorcycle gang, another was a member of the same gang.

No one was surprised that motorcycle gangs were involved in methamphetamine, as bikers have always been associated with the use of this particular drug. There are many in the law enforcement and criminological research community, though, who feel that this kind of drug will always appeal only to

the predominantly white population that makes up the OMC gang member population. Some very articulate arguments have been put forth about how this drug --- meth --- would not be attractive to the Black population or to African-American gang members.

This paper will disclose recent research findings suggesting that indeed a "cross-over effect" in the illegal drug market has already occurred in the United States with regard to the use and sales of methamphetamine.

ECO-TERRORISM FROM GANG-OPERATED METH LABS: The Mendocino County, California Case

It is useful to provide a detailed example of how some gangs have also become involved in methamphetamine production, even though the primary thrust of the actual research reported in this paper is about meth sales and use. The example of meth production by the Hell's Angels in Mendocino County, California is useful in several respects. First, it illustrates how this kind of activity also entails eco-terrorism. Secondly, it illustrates how a criminal gang can through this activity wreak enormous havoc including the loss of life to firefighting pilots. And, thirdly, we need to remember that in this particular example it might prove useful to bring civil suits against the gang itself: a strategy that has been effective when there are identifiable assets that can be seized (e.g., gang "club houses", etc).

While not generally known to the public, when a "meth lab" is discovered in most cases it also represents a "haz-mat" crime scene. The residues and discharged chemicals from the "backyard chemistry labs" used are highly toxic substances that penetrate buildings and the soil. These meth "cookers" are also highly irresponsible in regard to environmental issues, such that there is no way currently to estimate the extent of financial calamity they have induced over the years through their eco-terrorism.

Called "clandestine labs" by law enforcement, today these are operated by a variety of gangs and produce a variety of illegal drug products, including "club drugs" that have risen in popularity within the drug subculture in recent years. In the year 1998 alone, there were over 1,600 different clandestine drug labs discovered by American law enforcement. The "clean-up" cost for a larger meth lab can easily cost $100,000 for each lab site to give some inkling of the economic impact of this eco-terrorism. There are an estimated 5 million Americans who have used meth, making it a highly profitable enterprise for gangs.

What happened in Mendocino County, California illustrates another deadly consequence of meth labs. Two Hell's Angels gang members had been operating a lab out in the prairie area, their "cooking" had gone awry, starting a fire. The fire quickly spread to cover 270 acres of brush in Mendocino County. Two firefighter pilots, Larry Groff and Lars Stratte, were killed when their planes collided in the heavy smoke from this meth lab fire. Witnesses provided information leading to the arrest of Richard Mortensen and Frank Brady, both in the Hell's Angels gang.

We are not aware of any civil litigation strategy that has ever been initiated by either the EPA or private parties against gangs as organizational entities for operating clandestine drug labs. But the example in Mendocino County might make a good case for a wrongful death lawsuit from families of the two pilots killed. The reason is that gangs like the Hell's Angels operate "club houses": they purchase the property, make many improvements to the property (i.e., typically security and fortifying it, making it "bomb proof" from rival gangs), they do maintain bank accounts as the members do pay "dues". This kind of civil litigation strategy has proven effective in the past against the Ku Klux Klan, and so it is reasonable to predict that eventually this remedy will be used against outlaw motorcycle gangs like the Hell's Angels as well.

THE CROSS-OVER EFFECT

In a market where any product appears first in a homogeneous ethnic group, the cross-over effect occurs when other ethnic groups or market segments begin to consume the product. Hip-hop music, for example, began exclusively in the African-American youth culture market; but it quickly "crossed-over" to other youth culture markets, especially white youths. The music industry provides numerous other related examples of the "cross-over effect".

What is important to the present analysis is that in the African-American community there has been a veritable blindness to the idea that Blacks also use and sell methamphetamine drugs. One seasoned African-American detective in Chicago remarked once to this author: "Sure, there are a lot of meth users and sellers in Chicago, but not among Blacks. Black users prefer what they are used to: heroin and cocaine. You just will never see the Black drug-abusing subculture go into using LSD and speed, those are white drugs."

The argument that African-American and other non-white groups in America are "insulated" from the appeal of methamphetamine use and sales is basically that these ethnic groups would have an established preference function that would be hard to displace or erode.

The National Gang Crime Research Center considered this issue recently when it initiated Project GANGMILL: a study of gang problems in the new millennium. This study was designed to be able to speak to this issue in an authoritative way for the first time.

PROJECT GANGMILL: METHODOLOGY

Project GANGMILL involved collecting data on N = 3,489 juvenile and adult offenders in seven states from 22 different correctional facilities. This larger sample of N = 3,489 was pared down to N = 2,865 by means of intentional efforts to "validate" the data: that is, intentionally eliminating cases from the

sample where deception or inconsistency was detected.

In short, the researchers did not assume that all survey data from offenders was useful: rather the researchers assumed correctly that offenders often are difficult to study by means of the survey research method.

More information on the research methodology can be found in the Journal of Gang Research (Volume 7, Number 4; also see Special Report, this issue).

REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN METHAMPHETAMINE USE BY GANG MEMBERS

It would seem reasonable to begin our analysis by determining if any variation exists in methamphetamine usage by gang members in terms of their geographical location. Recall, our data environment includes N = 1,036 gang members surveyed from 22 different sites in seven (7) different states. Table 1 presents the results of this inquiry about meth or crank use among gang members.

As seen in Table 1, we are indeed seeing some variation in meth use by gang members in terms of their geographic location. The percentage of gang members using meth ranged from a low of zero percent in site #20 in a Michigan juvenile detention facility to a high of 50 percent in a Kansas juvenile detention facility. In a much larger site like site #4 in Downey, California, we are still seeing 38.5 percent of the juvenile gang members there reporting the use of meth. Yet in a large Wisconsin juvenile site, the rate is only 10.9 percent. A third of the female gang members survey from Georgia (Site #9) reported using meth.

In the multiple sites used from the State of Ohio, however, we see a range from a low of 2.5 percent to a high of 14.2 percent among confined juvenile gang members. In an adult jail in New Jersey, the percentage is 40 percent (Site #7), almost identical to the adult jail site from Wichita, Kansas (Site #2): 39 percent.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH SITE GEOGRAPHICAL IDENTIFIER

BY OVERALL SAMPLE SIZE OF OFFENDERS SURVEYED

AND NUMBER OF GANG MEMBERS IN RELATIONSHIP

TO ADMITTED USE OF "CRANK" OR METHAMPHETAMINE

(1) Wisconsin: State Juvenile Sample

Correctional Institution 230

Gang members: 137/15 (10.9%)

(meaning of "137/15": of the 137 gang members surveyed from this site after data validation, N = 15 of this group of gang members reported having used "crank" or methamphetamine; thus, 10.9 percent of the gang members from this survey site report the use of this illegal drug).

(2) Sedgwick County Jail

Wichita, Kansas 486

Gang members: 87/34 (39%)

(3) Juvenile Detention Center

Wichita, Kansas 18

Gang members: 6/3 (50%)

(4) Juvenile Detention Center

Downey, California 234

Gang members: 148/57 (38.5%)

(5) Ireland Youth Dev. Center

Milledgeville, Georgia 166

Gang membes: 56/11 (19.6%)

(6) Atlanta Youth Dev. Center

Atlanta, Georgia 97

Gang members: 27/7 (25.9%)

(7) Monmouth Co. Jail

New Jersey 37

Gang members: 5/2 (40%)

(8) Lorenzo Benn Youth Dev. Ctr.

Atlanta, Georgia 92

Gang members: 29/2 (6.8%)

(9) Female Youth Dev. Ctr.

Macon, Georgia 72

Gang members: 18/6 (33.3%)

(10) Indian River Youth Corr. Inst.

Ohio 243

Gang members: 67/8 (11.9%)

Table 1: Continued

(11) Maumee Youth Center

Ohio 95

Gang members: 39/1 (2.5%)

(12) Youth Opportunity Center

Ohio 25

Gang members: 7/1 (14.2%)

(13) Juvenile Corr. Inst.

Riverview, Ohio 164

Gang members: 84/11 (13%)

(14) Sciotto Juv. Corr. Center

Ohio 120

Gang members: 44/6 (13.6%)

(15) Mohican Youth Center

Ohio 118

Gang members: 50/4 (8%)

(16) TICO Youth Facility, Ohio 112

Gang members: 28/2 (7.1%)

(17) Ohio River Valley Youth Facility 128

Gang members: 38/5 (13.1%)

(18) Youth Facility, Highland Hills 235

Ohio

Gang members: 88/8 (9%)

(19) Ottawa Co. Juv. Det. Center,

Michigan 48

Gang members: 26/2 (7.6%)

(20) Juvenile Det. Center

Kalamazoo, Michigan 6

Gang members: 6/0 (0%)

(21) Ottawa Co. Jail, Michigan 77

Gang members: 21/5 (23.8%)

(22) Kent Co. Juv. Det. Center

Michigan 59

Gang members: 25/2 (8%)

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN METH USE AMONG GANG MEMBERS

Table 2 examines the results of examining differences between male and female gang members in terms of having ever used "crank" or methamphetamine. As seen in Table 2, gender significantly differentiates meth use among gang members (p = .02). Some 17.5 percent of male gang members reported having used "crank" or meth. This rises to 27 percent among female gang members. Female gang members are therefore significantly more likely, it appears, to report having used this illegal drug when compared to the male counterparts in the Americn gang member population.

Table 2

SEX DIFFERENCES AMONG GANG MEMBERS

BY USE OF METH OR CRANK

Ever Used "Crank"

(Methamphetamine)

NO YES %Yes

Male 767 163 17.5%

Female 73 27 27.0%

Chi-square = 5.38, p = .02

RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN METH USE AMONG GANG MEMBERS

Table 3 examines the variation found among gang members by racial background in terms of the use of "crank" or methamphetamine. These results do in fact imply that African-American gang members have in some respect been insulated from the abuse of meth. Only 5.4 percent of the African-American gang members reported having ever used meth. Hispanic gang members had the highest rate for using meth: 31.2 percent. White gang members showed a rate of 24.7 percent, very much comparable to Asian/ Chinese gang members (26.3%), Native American Indian gang members (22.2%), and bi-racial gang members (25.4%). Obviously, the low rate among African-American gang members for the use of methamphetamine is producing this significant difference.

Table 3

RACIAL DIFFERENCES AMONG GANG MEMBERS

BY USE OF METH OR CRANK

Ever Used "Crank"

(Methamphetamine)

NO YES %Yes

African-American 385 22 5.4%

Hispanic/Latino 108 49 31.2%

White/Caucasian 201 66 24.7%

Asian/Chinese 14 5 26.3%

Native American Indian 21 6 22.2%

Bi-racial 82 28 25.4%

Chi-square = 76.3, $p < .001$

GENDER BY SALES OF CRANK OR METH

Usage of meth could be reasonably assumed to parallel actual sales of the same illegal product. However, sales of the drug is also a more serious indicator of the actual market dispersion and carries greater penalty from criminal code violations. Here we switch from examining usage patterns to sales patterns of the drug.

Table 4 provides the results of examing gender among gang members in relationship to having ever sold "crank" or methamphetamine. Clearly, as indicated in Table 4, we are picking up a parallel function by gender: the rate at which male and female gang members in the USA report having sold meth tends to parallel their usage patterns as well. This is, though, still a significant difference ($p = .03$), and the trend remains identical: female gang members have the higher rate of actually reporting having sold crank or meth (35%) when compared to male gang members (25%).

Table 4

SEX DIFFERENCES AMONG GANG MEMBERS

BY HAVING EVER SOLD OF METH OR CRANK

Ever Sold "Crank"

(Methamphetamine)

NO YES %Yes

Male 695 232 25.0%

Female 65 35 35.0%

Chi-square = 4.66, p = .03

RACIAL DIFFERENCES BY HAVING EVER SOLD "CRANK" OR METH

Table 5 examines racial differences among gang members in terms of having ever sold "crank" or meth. Remaining here is a stong ($p < .001$) statistical difference among gang members when comparing race by sales of meth. Some 38.2 percent of Hispanic gang members report having sold meth, compared to only 17.2 percent among African-American gang members. In fact, the rate for African-American gang members (17.2%) is comparable now to the rate for Native American Indians (18.5%).

Some 28 percent of white gang members report having sold meth compared to 36 percent among Asian/ Chinese gang members.

Some interesting trends are therefore developing here. While usage among African-Americans was shown to be only 5.4 percent in Table 3, sales of the same drug are shown here to nearly triple for African-American gang members. In otherwords, African-American gang members are nearly three times more likely to sell the drug than actually use it; and it is still a low rate at that compared to other ethnic groups in the gang population.

Table 5

RACIAL DIFFERENCES AMONG GANG MEMBERS

BY HAVING EVER SOLD METH OR CRANK

Ever Sold "Crank"

(Methamphetamine)?

NO YES %Yes

African-American 335 70 17.2%

Hispanic/Latino 97 60 38.2%

White/Caucasian 192 75 28.0%

Asian/Chinese 12 7 36.0%

Native American Indian 22 5 18.5%

Bi-racial 75 35 31.8%

Chi-square = 32.9, $p < .001$

GANG ALLIANCE SYSTEM IDENTITY BY USE OF METH

There are three main gang alliance systems operating in the USA today with a fourth composed perhaps of white racist extremist gangs. The Crips/Bloods alliance system is that which has its origins in the Los Angeles area as a gang epicenter. The Folks/People gang alliance system is that which has its origins in the Chicago area as a gang epicenter. The Sureno/Norteno alliance system is that which has its origins in California generally as a gang epicenter. Crips fight bloods, folks fight peoples, surenos fight nortenos. While they often have the same personal, social, and developmental backgrounds, their gang alliance identity is what keeps them fighting each other.

More often than not, historically at least, these gang alliance systems become surrogate measures of gang member ethnicity as well. So it provides a secondary approach to examining issue of meth use and sales among gang members. We begin this analysis with examining gang alliance system identities in relationship to the use of meth in Table 6.

Table 6 reveals what appears to be the same pattern of low usage among African-American gangs when compared to high usage of meth among Hispanic gangs. It is this pattern that is making the comparison a significant one. Crips/Bloods tend to be comparable to People/Folks in having a low usage rate when compared to Surenos/Nortenos. In fact, the rates for Surenos (51.9%) are identically high to those of Nortenos (53.3%).

We are not saying that Crips/Bloods are all Black or that People/Folks are all Black; or even that Surenos/Nortenos are all Hispanic/Latino. What we are saying is that the gang alliance identity itself is producing results independent of actual racial category to establish a logically consistent pattern whereby Sureno/Norteno identities have the highest usage pattern for meth.

Table 6

GANG ALLIANCE SYSTEM IDENTITY

BY HAVING EVER USED "CRANK" OR METH

EVER USED "CRANK" OR METH?	NO	YES	%Yes
Crips	192	34	15.0%
Bloods	95	9	8.6%
People/Brothers	42	5	10.6%
Folks	267	44	14.1%
Surenos	37	40	51.9%
Nortenos	7	8	53.3%
Other	128	27	17.4%

Chi-square = 85.6, $p < .001$

GANG ALLIANCE IDENTITY BY THE SALES OF METH

A somewhat less pronounced difference emerges in examining gang alliance identity by the sales of

meth. This is shown in Table 7. As seen in Table 7, Crips/Bloods and People/Folks, generally, are more likely to sell meth than actually use it. The rate of sales tends to lag just barely behind the actual rate of usage among Sureno/Norteno gang members. The significant of the difference that emerges in Table 7, again though, is that the Sureno/Norteno pattern is about twice as likely to report having sold meth when compared to Crips/Bloods as well as People/Folks.

Table 7

GANG ALLIANCE SYSTEM IDENTITY

BY HAVING EVER SOLD "CRANK" OR METH

EVER SOLD "CRANK" OR METH?

NO YES %Yes

Crips 176 50 22.1%

Bloods 83 21 20.1%

People/Brothers 36 10 21.7%

Folks 231 79 25.4%

Surenos 40 37 48.0%

Nortenos 8 7 46.6%

Other 118 37 23.8%

Chi-square = 27.3, $p < .001$

DEMOLISHING THE MYTH THAT BLACK GANG MEMBERS ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO USE CRACK COCAINE

Within the argument that Blacks have a lower preference pattern for meth when compared to white gang

members is the stereotyped image and social construction that Black gang members would simply be more likely to prefer to use/abuse crack cocaine. It will in fact be demonstrated that it is a fundamental myth that African-American gang members are more likely to report having used crack cocaine than gang members of other racial backgrounds.

Table 8 provides the results of examining the racial background of gang members in the present large national sample by whether the same gang member reports having ever used crack cocaine. Table 8 reveals, au contraire the public image, that African-American gang members actually have the lowest rate of crack usage; only 8.8 percent of African-American gang members report having used crack cocaine. The highest rate is found among Hispanic/Latino gang members, where 31 percent of this group report having used crack cocaine. White and Asian/Chinese gang members are comparable in respect to having used crack cocaine: about a fourth of them report doing so. Thus, what is producing the statistically significant difference in Table 8 is in fact the low rate of consumption of crack cocaine among African-American gang members when compared to gang members of other racial categories.

Table 8

RACIAL BACKGROUND OF GANG MEMBERS

BY HAVING EVER USED CRACK COCAINE

Ever Used "Crack Cocaine"?			
	NO	YES	%Yes
African-American	372	36	8.8%
Hispanic/Latino	109	49	31.0%
White/Caucasian	203	64	23.9%
Asian/Chinese	14	5	26.3%
Native American Indian	23	4	14.8%
Bi-racial	88	23	20.7%

Chi-square = 48.8, p < .001

RACIAL DIFFERENCES BY THE SALES OF CRACK COCAINE

Finally, Table 9 investigates the relationship between the race of the gang member and whether their gang has ever sold crack cocaine. The nuance of survey item language is important to note here: the sales is not by the individual gang member, but whether they report their gang itself has ever sold this drug. When it comes to the racial background of gang members and whether their gang has ever sold crack cocaine, generally what Table 9 suggests is that it is truly a wide open market. African-American gang members are reporting the highest rate (87.8%) for their gang selling crack cocaine. But whites, Asian/Chinese, and Native American Indians are not too far behind on this and do also themselves show high rates of crack cocaine distribution through their gang enterprises. So the cross-over effect here, if any, is that all racial categories of gang members are distributing crack cocaine through their gang enterprises. It is not a market dominated exclusively by African-American gang members; nor can it be said that African-American gang members have achieved any level of hegemony is the distribution of crack through their gang.

Table 9

RACIAL BACKGROUND OF GANG MEMBERS

BY WHETHER THEIR GANG HAS EVER SOLD CRACK COCAINE

Ever Sold "Crack Cocaine"?			
	NO	YES	%Yes
African-American	47	343	87.9%
Hispanic/Latino	28	125	81.6%
White/Caucasian	71	186	72.3%

Asian/Chinese 5 14 73.6%

Native American Indian 8 19 70.3%

Bi-racial 14 96 87.2%

Chi-square = 30.7, $p < .001$

RACIAL BACKGROUND OF GANG MEMBERS BY SALES OF METH BY THEIR GANG

We have previously examined the racial background of gang members by whether they themselves, as individuals, have ever sold "crank" or methamphetamine (Table 5). There is a difference between whether the individual gang member has ever sold this product and whether their gang has sold the same product in its overall illegal enterprise scheme. A separate question on the survey moved beyond the individual sales of meth to whether their gang itself has ever sold meth and it is this factor which we examine now. Table 10 provides the results of this inquiry.

Here again an interesting trend emerges in Table 10 when we examine the racial background of gang members by whether their gang as an organizational entity has engaged in the sales of meth.

While only 5.4 percent of African-American gang members have ever used meth, and only 17.2 percent have themselves sold meth, some 41.7 percent of African-American gang members report that their gang itself has in fact sold "crank" or methamphetamine. Table 10 does suggest the tendency that Bi-racial gang members followed by Hispanic/Latino gang members have the higher rates for sales of meth through their gang enterprise. Most important to note is that white gang members actually account for less than half of the overall market for sales of meth through their gang organization.

Table 10

RACIAL BACKGROUND OF GANG MEMBERS

BY WHETHER THEIR GANG HAS EVER SOLD "CRANK" OR METH

Has Your Gang Ever Sold "Crank" or Methamphetamine?	NO	YES	%Yes
African-American	216	155	41.7%
Hispanic/Latino	54	98	64.4%
White/Caucasian	109	141	56.4%
Asian/Chinese	11	8	42.1%
Native American Indian	10	17	62.9%
Bi-racial	36	71	66.3%

Chi-square = 37.5, $p < .001$

EVIDENCE OF MARKET SEPARATION: INSULATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN GANG MEMBERS FROM USAGE OF METH

The evidence does suggest that meth has little appeal, comparatively that is to say, for African-American

gang members as a drug of choice for personal consumption. However, some interesting trends emerged here which are noteworthy and have a lot of relevance to understanding this phenomenon.

First, while it is true that African-American gang members are less likely to use meth than other racial categories in the U.S. gang member population, it is not true that African-American gang members are more likely to prefer crack cocaine instead. In fact when we examined crack cocaine usage among gang members (Table 8), African-Americn gang members in fact showed the lowest actual rate of abusing this drug! So we cannot explain lower meth usage rates among African-American gang members by what might be a different preference function in this case crack cocaine.

Secondly, we cannot conclude that the lower preference function for meth use among African-American gang members is explained by the hypothesis that Black gangs are more likely to be involved in the sales of a rival product: e.g., crack cocaine. Table 9 did show that African-American gang members were somewhat more likely (87.9%) to report that their gang has sold crack cocaine, but it is also clear that we cannot say that African-American gang members have a dominant share of the crack cocaine drug distribution market: they have very serious competition from all other racial groups. When 72.3 percent of white gang members are reporting that their gang has sold crack cocaine, and 81.6 percent of Hispanic gang members, and 73.6 percen of Asian/Chinese gang members are also reporting their gang has sold crack cocaine --- it is simply not possible to say that the underground market in crack cocaine sales is dominated by African-American gang members. African-American gang members have a slight edge is all our data suggests, but overall account for only about a half of the market in this regard.

Thirdly, the strongest evidence of a "cross-over" effect emerged in Table 10 where we examined the racial background of gang members by whether their gang as an organizational enterprise has ever sold meth. Here it was established that if the public image exists that this is primarily a white phenomenon (e. g., limited to gangs like the Hell's Angels), then this is also a serious misconception enjoying no empirical support from the present study. There seems to be ample competition across ethnic groups for the actual sales of meth through their gang organization.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research has had the benefit of a large national sample of real gang members. The methodology was such that it was in fact unique with respect to a high level of validity with regard to measuring gang membership. The fundamental focus of the research reported here was to examine the issue of whether a "cross-over" effect is emerging in the use and sale of meth by gang members and their gang or whether preference functions existed to curtail this development.

What the data tends to suggest with regard to the hypothesis that a cross-over effect is emerging is that usage of meth by African-American gang members remains lower than other ethnic groups and this is statistically significant. However, when we examine race by the sales of meth through the gang as an organizational enterprise, while a statistically signficant difference remains, the overall tendency suggest

enormous competition exists. In fact, it cannot be said that white gang members have achieved hegemony in the distribution of meth through their gang.

To the extent, therefore, that the sales of meth through the gang as an organizational enterprise continues over time, it may reasonably be expected that opportunity for the use of meth will disperse through racial groups.

Another important finding in this regard what that the preference function for a drug other than meth could not account for lower usage of meth among African-American gang members. Actually, when we examined the use of crack cocaine, African-American gang members were not the racial group that led in this personal drug abuse category.

Is there evidence of a convergence for African-American gangs to distribute meth via their gang organization? The answer is yes from the present research.

Is there evidence that African-American gangs dominate crack cocaine distribution in the American underground illegal drug market? No is the answer from this research: they have plenty of competition from all other ethnic groups in the U.S. gang member population is what this research actually showed.

Finally, are factors other than race important in accounting for preference functions and patterns in the use and sales of meth? Yes, it would seem reasonable to assume that gender is important in consumption patterns, as female gang members clearly showed statistically significant higher rates for meth usage in this regard. And it is reasonable to assume that production availability of meth has varied by geographical area as well, with the caveat that it can be reasonably be assumed to be available anywhere today. "Cooking" up a batch of meth is, after all, not a process that requires a highly trained chemical engineer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Curtis J. Robinson has worked with the National Gang Crime Research Center for a decade in various capacities. Currently, he is heading up an initiative to provide training to develop an international group of internet investigators to eliminate gang websites from the Internet (see p. 38 of this journal for further details). Curtis has worked in corrections, juvenile probation, and is currently a visiting lecturer in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of California, Stanislaus where he coordinates west coast operations for the NGCRC.