

SCOMM

#6:7

Alcohol and the Alaskan Offender

Judy Hill
Research Unit
Division of Corrections
August, 1975

This report has been prepared for use by the Standards and Goals Task Forces of the Division of Corrections and the Alaska Court System. It is an attempt to integrate material from several reports, and to isolate information concerning the impact of alcohol abuse on the correctional system.

Our data spans the five-year period from 1969 through 1974, permitting observations concerning the effects of the Uniform Alcoholism and Intoxication Act, which was passed in October, 1972. It also addresses the relationships between race, alcohol use and crime, and the relationship between alcohol use and violent crime.

The reports which have been reviewed are: Survey of Public Offenders: A Comparison of Ethnic Groups, published by the Office of Alcoholism in 1970; Misdemeanant Probation Project: Evaluation of First Year (1974); Sentencing Data, 1974; Recidivism, 1971-1974; and data from the population of the Eagle River Correctional Center (1975). Unfortunately, each of the reports employs a different data base, because they were prepared for specific administrative purposes. Taken together, however, they permit some inferences concerning the impact of alcohol abuse on the criminal justice system.

OVR/Office of Alcoholism Study (1969)

Data Base: In 1969, OVR conducted an interview survey of Alaskan offenders. Their sample included one-half of the total inmate population in 12 Alaskan state and city jails, and 3 federal prisons (Alaskan inmates only).

In 1970, the OVR data was re-analyzed by the Office of Alcoholism, with emphasis on questions regarding alcohol use. The Office of Alcoholism study included only sentenced Caucasian and Native adult males. In the sample of 173 who met these criteria, 99 (57%) were Native. Distribution of the various Native racial subgroups was similar to their distribution in the population of the state.

Results: Drunk in Public was the most frequent charge (36% of the total), accounting for 30% of Native and 16% of Caucasian charges. Natives accounted for 76% of Drunk in Public charges. Violent crimes accounted for 20% of Native and 36% of Caucasian sentences. The study did not investigate the relationship between drinking and violence. However, all respondents were asked whether they had been drinking at the time of their offense. Responses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Use of Alcohol at Time of Offense

	<u>Caucasian</u>	<u>Native</u>	<u>Total</u>
Drinking	64%	92%	80%
Not Drinking	36%	8%	20%

The difference between the two groups was statistically significant, with Natives highly more likely to have been drinking at time of offense ($\chi^2 = 19.34, p < .001$).

DOC Misdemeanant Probation Project (1975)

Data Base: As part of the evaluation of the LEAA funded Misdemeanant Probation Project, the DOC compared 152 Anchorage misdemeanants assigned by judges to probation, with 148 cases not assigned to the project. The comparison group consisted of the docket following each case assigned to the project; the comparison group was drawn to determine whether those assigned to probation were representative of the population of misdemeanants appearing in District Court.

Results: Table 2 shows type of offense for the Probation referrals and the Comparison group.

Table 2
Misdemeanant Offenses

	Probation Referrals		Comparison Group	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Harm to Person	7	5	12	8
Property Theft/Damage	79	52	22	15
OMVI	14	9	33	22
Other Alcohol	11	7	30	20
Drugs (Sales, Posses.)	14	9	15	10
Traffic	7	5	16	11
Firearms	18	12	7	5
Other	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>
	152	100	148	100

Table 2 shows that there are distinct differences in types of offense between those who are, and are not, referred to Probation. Most striking is the fact that 52% of Probation referrals are for offenses involving property theft or damage, while this category makes up only 15% of the Comparison group. Conversely, 42% of the Comparison group have charges of OMVI or other alcohol offenses, as compared to 16% of those assigned to Probation. This finding suggests efficient use of referral resources by District Court judges. The Borough Health Department DWI Program is designed to accept referrals from District Court. In fact, 34 clients (23%) of the Comparison group were referred to the Borough program.

The Comparison group is, in effect, a random sample of cases appearing in District Court; 42% of the offenses are alcohol-related. The dockets do not provide information concerning race of offenders, and there was no way to determine race. Those cases referred to Probation were, however, 74% Caucasian, 20% Native, and 6% Black. ⁽¹⁾ If they are representative of the Comparison group, it appears that, as an offender population approaches the racial distribution of the state population, drunken driving assumes an important picture in contribution to total offenses. Data from a sentencing study (see below) support this finding.

⁽¹⁾ A study of sentencing in Alaska published by the Alaska Judicial Council (Cutler, 1975) shows that among 567 felony defendants appearing in Anchorage courts, 66% were Caucasian, 15% Native, 6% Black, and 13% Other or Unknown. Comparable information is not available for District Court, which is served by the Misdemeanant Probation project.

Statewide, 1973 felony defendants were 60% Caucasian, 17% Native, 6% Black, and 16% Other or Unknown.

DOC Sentencing Study (1974)

Data Base: In Fairbanks, Juneau and Ketchikan, data was recorded for all offenders sentenced to time in jail during the final six months of 1974. Information included race, age, sex, type of charge, and time to be served.

In Anchorage, the same information was obtained from Commitment and Release cards, for calendar year 1974.

Number of cases were: Fairbanks, 270; Juneau, 41; Ketchikan, 38; Anchorage (six months), 497, (full year) 1038.

Results: Table 3 shows selected characteristics of offenders included in this survey. The statewide population includes Anchorage sentences; the same group is included in the Anchorage one-year survey. Thus, the two groups overlap and cannot be compared; both populations are shown simply to demonstrate the similarity between sentencing for Anchorage and for Alaska (a similarity caused by the fact that Anchorage accounts for 59% of the statewide sample).

Table 3
 Characteristics of Statewide and Anchorage
 Sentenced Offenders

	Statewide* 6 mo. Sample (N= 846)	Anchorage 12 Months (N=1031)
<u>Race</u>		
% Caucasian	44%	48%
% Native	50%	46%
% Black	5%	6%
<u>Offense</u>		
% Alcohol-Related Charges	41%	37%
% Part I Offenses	20%	23%
<u>Length of Sentence</u>		
% 1-10 days	65%	60%
% 1 day to 1 yr.	95%	93%
More than 1 yr.	5%	7%

(*Includes 497 in Anchorage 6-month sample.)

In the statewide six-month sample, Natives received 50% of all sentences; Caucasians received 44%, and Blacks, 5%.

Alcohol-related charges (D.W.I., Drunk on a Roadway and Disorderly Conduct) accounted for 41% of all sentences. Within the alcohol-related group, Natives received 58% of the sentences, and 57% of the sentences for Part I crimes (those which the FBI describes as most serious, including all violent crime).

The cut-off point of one year sentences provides a rough approximation of the distinction between misdemeanors and felonies (although some plea-bargained felonies are included as misdemeanors when this classification is employed).

In the statewide sample, 6% of the Caucasians, 2% of the Natives and 9% of the Blacks received sentences of more than one year. The total number was 39, or 5% of the population.

In Anchorage, during the calendar year 1974, DWI was the most frequent offense (17% of all charges), followed by Drunk on a Roadway (10%) and Disorderly Conduct (10%). Twenty-three percent of all sentences were for Part I offenses.

For the purposes of this report, we looked more closely at three offense categories within the Anchorage data--OMVI, Drunk on a Roadway, and Disorderly Conduct. Table 4 shows incidence of each type of offense by race.

Table 4
Racial Distribution of Alcohol-Related Offenses

	Caucasian		Native		Total*	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
OMVI, DWI	137	67	66	20	203	38
Drunk on Roadway, Disorderly Conduct	<u>67</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>265</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>332</u>	<u>62</u>
	204	100	331	100	535	100

*11 Blacks have been omitted.

Natives account for 62% of alcohol-related⁽¹⁾ offenses; however, 80% of the alcohol charges against Natives were nuisance offenses (Disorderly Conduct, Drunk on a Roadway). Coincidentally, Natives committed 80% of the nuisance offenses. Two-thirds of the alcohol charges against Caucasians were for OMVI, and Caucasians committed two-thirds of the OMVI offenses⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾The term "alcohol-related" refers to charges directly involving alcohol use, but does not include other offenses committed while drinking.

⁽²⁾Perhaps it will help in understanding this statement if the reader notes that the number of Caucasians and the number of OMVIs is the same, and that the number of Natives and the number of nuisance charges is the same. Pure coincidence, but very confusing.

An Alaska Supreme Court ruling in early 1975 indicates that the charge of Drunk on a Roadway may no longer be used to subvert the intention of the Uniform Alcoholism Act. We may therefore expect that, in the future, either fewer Natives will be sentenced, or there will be an increase in Disorderly Conduct charges.

DOC Recidivism Study (1975)

Data Base: In 1975, the Division of Corrections published its first recidivism study meeting standards set by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals.⁽¹⁾

Recidivism statistics are up-dated annually, and consist of a follow-up on all offenders who are released after serving 10 days or longer in custody of the Division of Corrections.⁽²⁾ Data is reported as cases; thus each release from correctional custody is counted as a "case", and a single individual may account for a number of cases.

(1) "Recidivism is measured by (1) criminal acts that resulted in conviction by a court, when committed by individuals who are under correctional supervision or who have been released from correctional supervision within the previous three years, and by (2) technical violations of probation or parole in which a sentencing or paroling authority took action that resulted in an adverse change in the offender's legal status."

Our data differs from these standards in that we can provide only corrections-to-corrections data. Thus, recidivism is measured from time of release to time of sentencing to Corrections custody. Suspended sentences, fines and court probation are not included.

The data does not include recidivism taking place outside Alaska.

(2) Data from the 1974 Sentencing Study, cited previously, indicates that those serving more than 10 days compose from 35-40% of total sentenced intake.

The base year for the recidivism study is 1971. In the process of conducting the study, data has been collected on a total of 4,314 adults released (after serving ten days or more) during the period 1971-1974.

Results:

a. Recidivism: The three year follow-up of adults released in 1971 showed a recidivism rate of 36%. Despite the decriminalization of Drunk in Public (in October 1972), 50% of recidivism was accounted for by those with alcohol-related charges. Within this group, 78% committed another alcohol-related offense.

Fifty-two percent of offenders released in 1971 were Natives; however, when compared with other racial groups, Natives accounted for 72% of recidivism.

Eighty percent of cases released from Corrections custody during 1971 had served short jail sentences only, without probation/parole services after release. This 80% of the population accounted for 98% of recidivism among 1971 releases.

b. Description of population: A side-product of the recidivism study was the collection of information on cases released from custody during the years 1971 through 1974. These data clearly demonstrate the impact of the Uniform Alcoholism Act (October 1972) on characteristics of those receiving sentences of ten days or longer.

Table 5 shows percentage of all cases which were alcohol-related over the four year period.

Table 5
Proportion of Offenses
Which Were Alcohol-Related

<u>Year</u>	<u>Alcohol Related</u>
1971	34%
1972	25%
1973	13%
1974	7%

There was a 38% decrease in number of alcohol-related offenses between 1971 and '72, a 49% decrease between '72 and '73, and a 1% decrease from 1973 to '74. (This suggests that the impact of the Uniform Alcoholism Act may have stabilized, and that we may expect to see around 120 cases annually sentenced to ten days or more for alcohol-related crimes.)

At the time of passage of the Uniform Alcoholism Act, it was widely observed that the charge of Drunk in Public was, de facto, discriminatory against the Native population. With passage of the Act, in 1972, it was anticipated that both numbers and proportion of Natives in correctional custody would decrease.

Table 6 addresses alcohol-related offenses only, showing distribution by race.

Table 6
Alcohol-Related Offenses by Race

	1971		1972		1973		1974	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Native	310	81	190	79	100	81	84	69
Caucasian	73	19	49	21	22	18	37	30
Black	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
	<u>384</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>239</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>100</u>

In numbers, there has been a 68% decrease in alcohol-related offenses over the four year period. (A 73% decrease for Natives, and a 49% decrease for Caucasians.) The contribution of each racial group to total alcohol offenses remained steady until 1974, when there was a decrease in the proportion committed by Natives, and a corresponding increase for Caucasians.

Table 7 shows racial characteristics of all cases released from 1971 through 1974, in percentages.

	Table 7			
	Race			
	1971	1972	1973	1974
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Native	52	53	48	37
Caucasian	43	43	45	56
Black	4	3	6	5
Other, Unknown	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100

Since passage of the Uniform Alcoholism Act, the proportion of Natives has decreased, with a corresponding increase in proportion of Caucasians. It would be in error, however, to attribute this change entirely to the Uniform Act. As Table 8 makes clear, there has been an even more dramatic impact from the population influx which the state is experiencing.

Table 8
Race by Year for Sentenced Releases

	1971		1972		1973		1974	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Native	584	52	506	53	468	48	462	37
Caucasian	483	43	408	43	444	45	704	56
Black	41	4	33	3	55	6	64	5
Other, Unknown	15	1	8	1	14	1	25	2
	1123	100	955	100	981	100	1255	100

Clearly, the change in racial proportions which took place in 1974 is due largely to an increase in number of Caucasians in corrections custody.

Figure 1 portrays the percentage change in numbers of Caucasians and Natives released, using 1971 as a baseline year (zero on the scale).

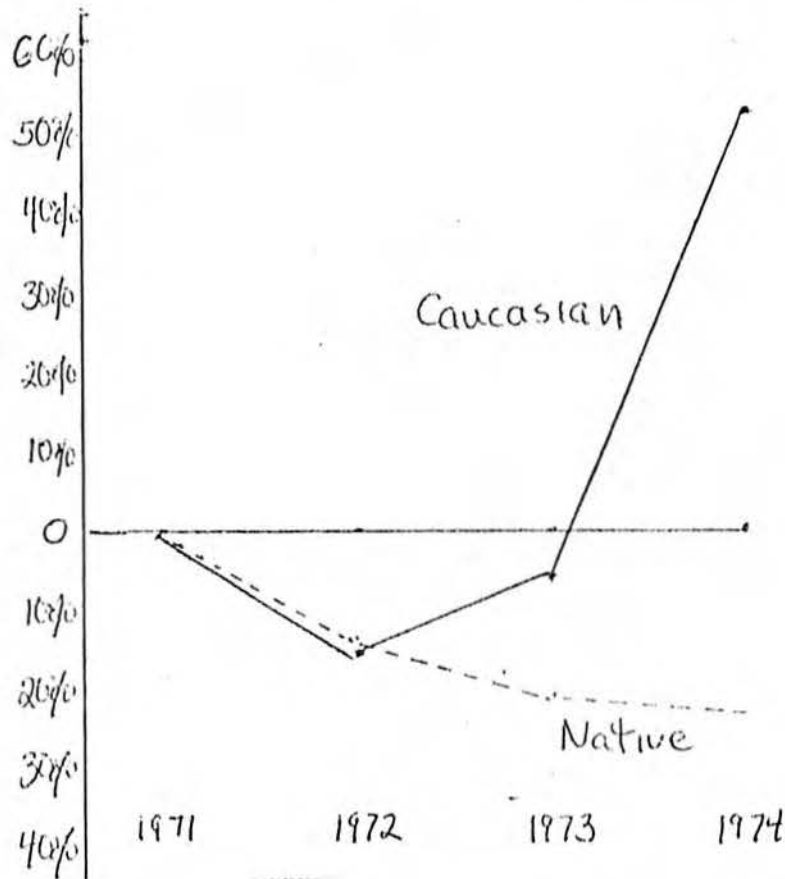


Figure 1: Annual percentage change in number of releases.

Table 9 shows the percentage change figures on which Figure 1 is based.

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Native</u>	<u>Caucasian</u>	<u>Total</u>
1971 to 1972	13% decrease	16% decrease	15% decrease
1972 to 1973	8% decrease	9% increase	3% increase
1973 to 1974	1% decrease	59% increase	28% increase

Figure 1 and Table 9 show that changes in racial composition of releases are the product of an interaction between the Uniform Alcoholism Act, and the pipeline-generated population increase.

DOC Base Expectancy Data (1975)

Data Base: Anchorage area offenders are presently housed in the Annex prior to sentencing. Those receiving sentences of six months or less are sent to either the Third Avenue facility or to the Palmer Correctional Center. Those with longer sentences are held in the Special Treatment unit (maximum security) at Eagle River, pending classification to another institution or into the Eagle River Correctional Center program.

The Self Administered Base Expectancy is a modified version of an instrument found to predict parole outcome in California. It consists of a number of questions concerning the offender's criminal and social history, as well as questions involving drug and alcohol use. The questionnaires are anonymous; we have no way of verifying

information provided by inmates. The results, however, seem reasonable in the light of other data regarding alcohol use.

During the first year of operation of the Eagle River Correctional Center, 103⁽¹⁾ inmates in Special Treatment have completed the Base Expectancy. These offenders were grouped in terms of whether or not their crimes had involved violence.

Results: Of the 103 who completed the Base Expectancy, 56% were Caucasian, 27% Native and 17% Black.

Fifty-two percent had committed violent crimes; 84% reported that they had been drinking at the time of their most recent offense.

Tables 10 and 11 show the relationship of alcohol use and violent crime, according to racial distribution of offenders.

Table 10
Numbers Committing Violent and
Nonviolent Crimes, and Number Drinking

	Caucasian		Native		Black		Total	
	V.- N	Nonv. N	V.- N	Nonv. N	V.- N	Nonv. N	V.- N	Nonv. N
Drinking	25	22	13	12	8	7	46	41
Not Drinking	3	5	0	1	0	2	3	8
Unknown	2	0	2	0	1	0	5	0
	<u>30</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>49</u>

(1) Most of this group were Anchorage-area offenders. Eighteen, or 14% had been classified for the Eagle River program by institutions in other parts of the state, and were in Special Treatment awaiting acceptance by the Eagle River Classification Committee.

Table 11
Relationship of Alcohol Use
and Violence (Percent)

	<u>Caucasian</u>	<u>Native</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Total</u>
Violence, Alcohol	44%	46%	44%	44%
Violence, No Alcohol	5%	0%	0%	3%
Alcohol, No Violence	39%	43%	39%	40%
No Alcohol, No Violence	9%	4%	11%	8%
Unknown	3%	7%	6%	5%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Tables 10 and 11 show that approximately half the crimes committed by Caucasians were violent; of the violent crimes, 89% were accompanied by alcohol use. Among Natives and Blacks, violence accounts for 46% and 44%, respectively, of crimes committed by each group. In these groups, 100% of violent crime took place when the offender had been drinking.

Table 12 summarizes the above data by showing the proportion of total offenses involving either violence or alcohol.

Table 12
Percentage of Offenses Involving
Violence or Alcohol Use

	<u>Caucasian</u>	<u>Native</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Total</u>
Violence	53%	54%	50%	52%
Alcohol Use	82%	89%	83%	84%

Tables 10, 11 and 12 show a clear relationship between alcohol use and crime -- both violent and nonviolent. They also show that the relationship is virtually independent of race.

The 103 Eagle River inmates were asked whether or not they had ever had a "serious" drinking problem. Responses are shown in Table 13.

Table 13
"Have you ever had a serious drinking problem?"

	Caucasian		Native		Black		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	27	47	21	75	3	17	51	50
No	<u>30</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>50</u>
	57	100	28	100	18	100	103	100

In the total population, there is a 50-50 split between those reporting a "serious" drinking problem and no problem. There are marked racial differences, however: 75% of Natives, 47% of Caucasians and 17% of Blacks report having had an alcohol problem.

When the Base Expectancy had been in use for some time, we added a question concerning drug use; responses are available from 64 offenders. Table 14 shows violent and nonviolent crimes, distributed according to both alcohol and drug use.

Table 14
Alcohol and Drug Use on Day of Offense
by Type of Crime

	Violent		Nonviolent		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Alcohol only	19	58	8	26	27	42
Drugs only	1	3	13	42	14	22
Alcohol and Drugs	5	15	4	13	9	14
Neither	<u>8</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>22</u>
	33	100	31	100	64	100

Drug use figured in 36% of the offenses, and alcohol in 56%. (It has been suggested that there may be a tendency to under-report drug use, or to substitute alcohol use for drug use in reporting. There is no way to verify this suspicion.)

If our responses are accurate, there is a striking difference between alcohol and drug use in relation to violent crime. Alcohol use had occurred on the day of 73% of all violent crime, and 39% of nonviolent crime. Drug use had taken place in only 18% of violent crime, and in 55% of nonviolent crime. The use of both alcohol and drugs was equally associated with violent and nonviolent crime.

Twenty (31%) reported that they have, at some time, had a serious problem with drugs. Table 15 shows responses to this question, by race.

Table 15
"Have you ever had a serious problem with drugs?"

	Caucasian		Native		Black		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	13	35	2	13	5	42	20	31
No	<u>24</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>69</u>
	37	100	15	100	12	100	64	100

The tendency for each group to report drug problems reverses the findings for alcohol problems: 42% of Blacks, 35% of Caucasians and 13% of the Natives had experienced serious problems with drugs.

Finally, Table 16 shows number and percent of individuals reporting problems with both drugs and alcohol.

Table 16
 Serious Drug and/or Alcohol Problem
 (Self Report)

	Caucasian		Native		Black		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Alcohol only	7	19	10	67	3	25	20	31
Drugs only	9	24	0	0	4	33	13	20
Alcohol <u>and</u> Drugs	4	11	2	13	1	8	7	11
Neither	<u>17</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>38</u>
	37	100	15	100	12	99	64	100

When reported alcohol and drug problems were combined, 11% of the group reported having had a problem with both alcohol and drugs; 31% with alcohol only, 20% with drugs only, and 38% reported that they had never had a problem with either. Two-thirds of the Natives, but a quarter or less of Caucasians and Blacks reported an alcohol problem: one-third of the Blacks, a quarter of the Caucasians and none of the Natives reported a drug problem. The three groups did not differ in terms of having had a problem with both alcohol and drugs. Almost half the Caucasians, one-third of the Blacks and one-fifth of the Natives reported no problems with either.

Summary and Conclusions:

In this paper, we have attempted to tie together a series of reports, all based on different population groups, but all dealing to some extent with the relationship between alcohol use and crime in Alaska.

I. Relationship between alcohol use and crime:

1. In a 1969 study of one-half the Alaskan residents in 15 state, city and federal jails, 80% reported that they had been drinking at the time of their offense; 36% had been charged with Drunk in Public.

2. In a 1974 random sample of District Court cases (misdemeanors), 42% of the charges were alcohol related (OMVI, Drunk on a Roadway, Disorderly Conduct).

3. In a 1974 study of all sentences received during a six-month period in major population centers, 41% of the sentences were for alcohol-related offenses. Thirty-seven percent of all sentences in Anchorage during 1974 were alcohol-related.

4. In a study completed in 1975, which traced recidivism in 1,123 individuals released from corrections custody in 1971, an overall recidivism rate of 36% was reported for the three-year period; 50% of recidivism was accounted for by those with alcohol-related offenses.

5. In a 1974-75 sample of 103 offenders with sentences of six months or more, 84% reported that they had been drinking on the day of the offense for which they were incarcerated. In a sub-sample of this group (the 64 who were tested after questions on drug use

had been added to the questionnaire), 42% reported that they had used alcohol on the day of the offense; 22% had used drugs, and 14% reported that they had used both alcohol and drugs.

II. Distribution of racial groups:

Table 17 shows racial distribution of five selected populations. The 1973 Alaska Workforce shows numbers of adults (age 16 and over) in the state population; 1973 statewide Felony Defendants represent the only data on race available from the Court System. The three remaining groups are from DOC data: the Sentencing, Recidivism and Base Expectancy Studies.

Table 17
Racial Distribution
of Selected Populations

	1. 1973 Alaska* Workforce (N=123,400)	2. Statewide** 1973 Felony Defendants (N=749)	3. July - Dec. 1974 Statewide Sentences (N=846)	4. 1974 Releases 10 days plus (N=1255)	5. 1974-1975 6 mo. plus (N=103)
Caucasian	84%	60%	44%	56%	55%
Native	11%	17%	50%	37%	27%
Black	2%	6%	5%	5%	17%
Other, Unknown	<u>3%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0</u>
	100%	99%	100%	100%	99%

*1973 Alaska Workforce: Department of Labor, June, 1973.

**Alaska Judicial Council, Sentencing in Alaska (1975).

Although it includes both 1973 and 1974 data and several data bases, Table 17 permits some speculation regarding proportion of Natives within the system. Column 1 is an approximation of the adult population of the state, classified by race. Column 2 shows the percentage of each racial group represented among felony defendants, statewide, in 1973. (The relatively high rate of "unknowns" in this sample is unfortunate; however, the data indicates that Natives are over-represented in the felony defendant population. It is also unfortunate that similar data is not available from District Court, where most alcohol-related cases are processed.) Column 3 includes statewide sentences for 1974 (including all sentences, no matter how short), and the Native percentage increases markedly. Column 4, from the Recidivism study, includes only those with sentences of ten days or longer, and shows a reduction in proportion of Natives to total population. Column 5 is based on a group of offenders (mostly from the Anchorage area), with sentences of six months or more. Natives make up a still smaller proportion of this group, although the percentage of Natives is still more than twice the percentage in the adult population of the state.

This is very rough data; the groups are not strictly comparable, and our own data (see Table 8, this paper), indicates that 1973 Workforce figures may drastically underestimate the Caucasian population present in the state by 1974.

The data does suggest, however, that as sentence length increases (theoretically suggesting more serious offenses), the

proportion of Natives in the correctional population more closely approaches the proportion in the statewide population.

III. Impact of the Uniform Alcoholism Act (passed in October 1972):

The time span covered by this series of reports permits us to look at very similar populations before and after passage of the Uniform Act. In 1969, the decriminalization of Drunk-in-Public was only starting to be contemplated, but no changes had been made in the system. The OVR study conducted in that year consisted of a sample of one-half the sentenced adult male Alaskan offenders, including those serving only a day or two. At that time, 36% of all offenses were alcohol-related, and 57% of the offenders were Native.

In 1974, a DOC statewide survey of all sentences (one day or over) during a six month period showed that 41% of charges were alcohol-related, and 50% of offenders were Native.

Thus, when all sentences are considered, there is very little change in proportion of alcohol-related arrests, or of Natives in custody. This confirms the observations of booking officers in the jails, who have consistently claimed that, "Nothing has changed except that the people who used to be charged with Drunk in Public now come in for Disorderly Conduct or Drunk on a Roadway."

The Uniform Act has had an impact, however, and its effect is evident in data from the DOC Recidivism study, which includes only those sentenced for ten days or longer, thus eliminating approximately 60% of those booked into the jails. Within the longer-term group included in the Recidivism study, the percentage of offenses

which were alcohol-related was reduced from 34% of total 1971 offenses, to 25% of 1972, 13% of 1973, and 7% of 1974 offenses.

Among those with sentences of 10 days or more, the number of alcohol-related offenses decreased by 38% between 1971 and '72, 49% between 1972 and '73, and there was a 1% decrease between 1973 and '74, indicating that the number of alcohol-related charges may be stabilizing.

This data suggests that the major impact of the Uniform Alcoholism Act has been in reducing the number of offenders who receive sentences of more than ten days; there has been virtually no change in terms of alcohol-abusers serving very short sentences. Correctional centers are still serving as a primary resource for detoxification.

IV. Alcohol/Drug Use and Violent/Nonviolent Crime:

Data gathered as part of the program evaluation of the Eagle River Correctional Center provides further information concerning the relationship between alcohol use and crime. This is self-report data from a group of 103 inmates with sentences of six months or longer, awaiting classification in the maximum security unit of the Eagle River Correctional Center. These offenders completed a self-administered version of the California Base Expectancy, which includes items on alcohol and drug use. (Items concerning drug use were added after 39 individuals had already completed the Base Expectancy; drug use information is therefore available on 64 offenders.)

Of the sample of 103, 52% had committed violent crimes, and 84% reported that they had been drinking at the time of their offense. Among the 54 individuals who had committed violent offenses, 85% report that they had been drinking; among the 49 who had committed nonviolent offenses, 84% had been drinking. The data indicates that alcohol use is equally associated with violent and nonviolent crime; there was virtually no difference between racial groups in terms of either violence or alcohol use. Although the numbers are very small, there is a slight relationship between race and alcohol use on the day violent crimes are committed: 89% of violent crimes committed by Caucasians were accompanied by alcohol use, while 100% of violent crime by Natives and Blacks took place on a day when the offender had been drinking.

In the subgroup of 64 inmates who had answered questions concerning both alcohol and drug use, alcohol had figured in 56% of all offenses, and drug use in 36%. Alcohol use had occurred on the day of 73% of all violent crime, and 39% of nonviolent offenses. Drug use had taken place in only 18% of violent offenses, and in 55% of nonviolent crime. The use of both alcohol and drugs on the day of the offense was equally associated with violent and nonviolent crime. In this group, alcohol tended to be associated with violent crime, and drug use with crimes involving property theft.

The total group of 103 offenders were asked whether or not they had ever had a "serious" drinking problem. Answers were evenly divided, with 50% of the group reporting an alcohol problem. There

were striking racial differences, with 75% of the Natives, 47% of the Caucasians, and 17% of the Blacks reporting that they had had a serious problem.

Of the 64 who answered questions about drug use, 31% reported having experienced a serious problem with drugs. By race, 37% of the Caucasians, 42% of the Blacks and 13% (two individuals) among the Natives reported drug problems.

It is easy to question the veracity of responses to these questions, since the inmates' replies are not validated by other data. The racial differences, however, seem to confirm that the answers are truthful. Alcohol is much more available than drugs within the Native population of the state, and drinking is more socially acceptable than drug use. Further, alcoholism programming, education and interest has tended to focus on the highly visible Native alcoholic, with less impact on Caucasians and Blacks. On the other hand, drug use is more socially acceptable in the Black culture; as a Black inmate says, "It's considered cool to be on drugs."

In summary, our data supports the following conclusions concerning Alaskan offenders:

1. As expected, there is a strong relationship between alcohol use and crime.
2. The proportion of Native offenders in the correctional system far exceeds their presence in the general population of the state. The proportion decreases, however, in groups composed of those with progressively longer sentences. Natives are, thus, more involved in minor offenses than in more serious crime.

3. The major impact of the Uniform Alcoholism Act has been in reducing numbers of those with alcohol-related offenses serving sentences of ten days or longer. Corrections still plays a major role in detoxification, and in housing nuisance offenders.

4. When releases (of those with sentences of ten days or longer) are compared for the years 1971 through 1974, there is a striking decrease in proportion of Natives to Caucasians. Although this is partly due to the effects of the Uniform Act, the major cause can be attributed to a sharp rise in number of Caucasians.

5. In a sample of offenders with sentences of six months or longer, alcohol use was associated with 84% of all offenses, 85% of violent crime, and 84% of nonviolent crime. The relationship between drinking and violence did not differ among racial groups.

6. There are striking differences among racial groups in response to the question, "Have you ever had a serious alcohol problem?" Seventy-five percent of the Natives, 47% of Caucasians, and 17% of the Blacks reported a problem. In contrast, 42% of the Blacks, 37% of Caucasians and 13% of Natives reported having had a drug problem.

References

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Alaska Department of Education, A Survey of Public Offenders in Alaska, May, 1970.

Office of Alcoholism, Alaska Department of Health and Welfare, A Survey of Public Offenders II: A Comparison of Ethnic Groups, July, 1970.

Division of Corrections, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services:

- a. Misdemeanant Probation Project: Evaluation of First Project Year, February, 1975.
- b. Sentencing Study (1974).
- c. Recidivism, 1971-1974.

National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Corrections, Washington, D.C., 1973.

Alaska Judicial Council, Sentencing in Alaska, March, 1975.