



Criminalistics Section – 2004

B105 National Forensic Laboratory Information System: 2003 Data Analysis

Michael R. Baylor, PhD, Research Triangle Institute, 3040 Cornwallis Road, PO Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194; Linqun Wong, MS and Frank L. Sapienza, MS, Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of Diversion Control, 600 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202; Kevin J. Strom, PhD and Valley Rachal, MS, Research Triangle Institute, 3040 Cornwallis Road, PO Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194*

After attending this presentation, attendees will have an understanding of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) that systematically collects results from drug analyses conducted by state and local forensic laboratories. The data and results presented will provide a detailed approximation drug evidence seized by law enforcement agencies and sent to forensic laboratories for analysis from January 1, 2003 to June 30, 2003.

This presentation will provide timely data on the variation in the distribution of controlled substances across geographic areas, identify emerging drugs of abuse identified in forensic laboratories, provide information on the diversion of licit drugs into illicit channels, and improve the ability to estimate drug availability based on laboratory analysis and identification.

This poster will describe the NFLIS program which first began implementation by the DEA and Research Triangle Institute (RTI) in September 1997. To date, approximately 36 state forensic laboratory systems and 56 local forensic laboratories that perform drug analyses, comprising a total of 192 individual forensic crime laboratories throughout the United States, have joined NFLIS. With the goal of including all of the forensic laboratories in the United States, the sustained recruitment of non-participating state and local forensic laboratories remains a priority.

NFLIS provides results of drugs analyzed and reported by participating labs through semi-annual reports, annual reports, and the Interactive Data Site (IDS). The IDS combines timely and detailed data analyses with a flexible, user-friendly system. It allows participating laboratories to run parameterized queries against the NFLIS database in a near real-time capacity. Labs can initiate queries for their own data at the individual case-level or they can calculate aggregate regional and national results. IDS users can specify the time period, region, type of laboratory, and drug type in order to customize these queries. Aggregate results of drugs identified and reported by participating NFLIS laboratories representing the period January 2003 through June 2003 will be presented. Highlighted findings will include the estimated prevalence of selected "drugs of interest" and analyzed drug items by category. The distribution of drug items by percent and number of total analyzed items in the state and local forensic laboratories will be depicted. The number and percentage of analyzed drug items for the twenty-five most frequently reported drugs, as well as the major drug categories such as narcotic analgesics, benzodiazepines, "club drugs," stimulants, and anabolic steroids will be presented in tables and graphs. Special study data on (1) drug combinations, (2) drug purity, and (3) drugs identified in strategic geographic locations as well as major metropolitan areas will be summarized.

The NFLIS data base is serving the drug enforcement community: supporting drug control/drug scheduling, highlighting variations in distribution of controlled substances across geographic areas and over time, improving estimates of drug availability, providing timely information about the diversion of licit drugs into illicit channels, identifying emerging drugs of abuse, increasing our understanding of the nation's drug problem, and linking the drug enforcement and forensic laboratory community across the nation.

Drug Analysis, National Forensic Laboratory Information System, Drug Database