B64   The National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS): Monitoring Trends in Cannabis/THC, Methamphetamine, and Cocaine Drug Reports

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Learning Overview: After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the types of information provided by the DEA's National Forensic Laboratory System (NFLIS).

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing specific knowledge of national and regional trends for methamphetamine, cocaine, and cannabis/THC reported to the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS).

NFLIS is a program of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Diversion Control Division. NFLIS-Drug systematically collects drug identification results and associated information from drug cases submitted to and analyzed by Federal, State, and local forensic laboratories. These laboratories analyze controlled and noncontrolled substances secured in law enforcement operations across the country, making NFLIS-Drug an important resource in monitoring illicit drug abuse and trafficking, including the diversion of legally manufactured pharmaceuticals into illegal markets. These data are used to support drug scheduling decisions and to inform drug policy and drug enforcement initiatives both nationally and in local communities around the country. Each year, NFLIS-Drug publishes an annual report on data reported to NFLIS. Part of the annual report captures national and regional estimates for the top 25 most frequently identified drugs. Over the last few years, NFLIS has shown trends with methamphetamine, cocaine, and cannabis/THC as the three most frequently identified drugs that are notable to the community.

Results of drug cases *submitted* to State and local laboratories from January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2017, which were *analyzed* by March 31, 2018, are presented for methamphetamine, cocaine, and cannabis/THC. The data presented include *all* drugs mentioned in the laboratories' reported drug items. National annual estimates and regional trends for methamphetamine, cocaine, and cannabis/THC are presented.

In the 2014 annual report, methamphetamine surpassed cocaine as the second most frequently identified drug, while in 2017, it surpassed cannabis/THC as the number one most frequently identified drug. Cocaine reports gradually increased from 2001 to 2007, then significantly decreased through 2014, followed by slight increases in reports through 2017. From 2016 to 2017, reports of cannabis/THC (from 374,712 to 344,167 reports) decreased significantly, while reports of methamphetamine (from 314,872 to 347,807 reports) and cocaine (from 214,602 to 230,436 reports) increased significantly ($p<.05$). Between 2016 and 2017, cannabis/THC reports decreased significantly in the Midwest and West regions ($p<.05$). Methamphetamine reports increased significantly in all regions except the West, in which reports significantly decreased. Cocaine reports increased significantly in the South and Midwest regions.

NFLIS-Drug publicly shares data that can benefit management decisions of crime laboratories through various reports throughout the year including midyear and annual reports. NFLIS-Drug provides a resource for the community to identify and respond to drugs trends.

NFLIS, DEA, Drug Trends