

Reliability and Validity of Not-in-Treatment Drug Users' Follow-Up Self-Reports

Mark E. Johnson

IVDU Project, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska

Dennis G. Fisher

IVDU Project, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska. Center for Behavior Research and Services, California State University, Long Beach, California
dfisher@csulb.edu

Isaac Montoya

Affiliated Systems Corporation, Houston, Texas

Robert Booth

Addiction Research and Treatment Services, University of Colorado, Denver, Colorado

Fen Rhodes

California State University, Long Beach, California

Marcia Andersen

Personalized Nursing Corporation, Detroit, Michigan

Zhangqing Zhuo

NOVA Research Company, Bethesda, Maryland

Mark Williams

NOVA Research Company, Bethesda, Maryland

Abstract

Based on a sample of 259 drug users not in treatment from five different sites, we examined the reliability of self-reported demographic and behavioral information and the validity of self-reported drug use. Data were collected twice with a 48-hr interval, using the Risk Behavior Follow-Up Assessment (RBFA; National Institute for Drug Abuse, 1992), a structured interview. We examined internal consistency and test-retest reliability and found that, overall, drug users were generally reliable reporters of information regarding their demographics, drug use, sexual behavior, work and income, and criminal behavior. Exceptions to these findings of reliability were noted for items that were phrased too broadly. Comparison of self-report data and urinalysis results indicates that drug users accurately report cocaine and opiate use, although reports of cocaine use were somewhat more valid. These findings indicate that self-report data from drug users, when collected by trained interviewers, can be considered reliable and valid.