

Demographic Factors in Opiate Addiction Among Mexican-Americans

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VARIOUS empirical studies have established the necessity for considering sex, race, culture, and the geographic region of residence when describing any population of addicts. Bates (1) and Chambers and associates (2) have provided descriptions of Negro addicts. Ball (3), Ball and Snarr (4), and Ball and Pabon (5) have described Puerto Rican addicts. Ball and Lau (6) provided a description of the Chinese addict. Southern white addicts have been the subject of extensive inquiry by O'Donnell (7-9) and O'Donnell and associates (10). Glaser (11) and Chambers and associates (12) have described female addicts, while Ball and associates (13) and Ellingwood and associates (14) have compared male addicts with female. Noticeably absent, however, is any definitive description of the Mexican-American opiate addict.

Research Design

Our study was designed to provide empirical data on contemporary Mexican-American addicts and on recent changes—if any have occurred—within the population of Mexican-American addicts. To accomplish these aims, data were analyzed on admissions of addicts to the Lexington and Fort Worth clinical research centers during the first 6 months of 1961 and 1967.

During the first 6 months of 1961, a total of 1,745 addicts were admitted either to Lexington

or Fort Worth. Of these, 102, or 5.8 percent, were Mexican-Americans (table 1). During the same 6 months of 1967, a total of 1,438 addicts were admitted to the two hospitals, of whom 169, or 11.8 percent, were Mexican-Americans. All statistical comparisons and descriptions were accomplished with these two populations.

For description and comparison, we grouped the attributes available for analysis into three categories—(a) social characteristics, (b) characteristics associated with addiction and related deviancies, and (c) characteristics associated with hospital admission. Wherever possible and whenever appropriate, sex was treated as an independent variable.

Of the 102 Mexican-American addicts admitted during the 1961 sampling period, 14, or 13.7 percent, were females (table 2). During the 1967 period, only 10, or 5.9 percent of the 169 Mexican-Americans admitted for treatment,

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were females. Therefore, while the incidence of Mexican-American addicts among all of the persons admitted had doubled, this increase was among male addicts only.

Social Characteristics of Addicts

Residence. The majority of Mexican-American addicts admitted during the first 6 months of 1961 had resided in one of three States—California, Texas, or New Mexico (table 3). These three southwestern areas contributed 69.6 percent of all of the Mexican-American addicts. There were, however, significant sex differences in the number of patients from these three States. California contributed 31.8 percent of all the male addicts (28 patients) and 21.4 percent of all the female addicts (three patients). Texas contributed 27.3 percent of the male addicts (24 patients) and 21.4 percent of the female addicts (three patients). Finally, New Mexico contributed 13.6 percent of the male addicts (12 patients), but only 7.1 percent of the female addicts (one patient). The remaining 24 male addicts came from the following States: nine from Arizona, four from Illinois, three from Colorado, and eight from all other States. The remaining seven female addicts came from the following States: one from Arizona, two from Illinois, two from Colorado, and two from all other States.

During the first 6 months of 1967, the number of Mexican-American addicts admitted from

Table 1. Distribution of opiate addicts admitted to Lexington and Fort Worth hospitals, by ethnic cultural group, 1961 and 1967

Ethnic-cultural group	1st 6 months of 1961		1st 6 months of 1967	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Whites.....	836	47.9	637	44.3
Negroes.....	624	35.8	442	30.7
Puerto Ricans.....	183	10.5	190	13.2
Mexican-Americans....	102	5.8	169	11.8
Total ¹	1,745	100.0	1,438	100.0

¹ Because data on 14 addicts admitted in 1961 and 8 admitted in 1967 were so inconclusive that it was difficult to associate these 22 persons consistently with an ethnic group, they are excluded from the annual totals.

Table 2. Distribution of Mexican-American opiate addicts, by sex, 1961 and 1967

Addicted patients	1st 6 months of 1961		1st 6 months of 1967	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Males.....	88	86.3	159	94.1
Females.....	14	13.7	10	5.9
Total.....	102	100.0	169	100.0

the three States, California, Texas, and New Mexico, increased to 92.2 percent of all admissions. This increase is statistically significant ($\chi^2=24.100$; $P<0.001$). The distribution of admissions from the individual States also changed. California, the largest contributor to the two hospitals in 1961 (table 3), contributed proportionately only half as many addicts in 1967 as in 1961. Texas, on the other hand, doubled its contribution, and the contribution of New Mexico remained approximately the same in both 6-month periods.

During the first 6 months of 1967, Texas contributed 61.0 percent (97) of the Mexican-American males and 60.9 percent (six) of the Mexican-American females who were admitted to the two hospitals, replacing California as the largest contributor of addicts of both sexes (table 3). California contributed 19.5 percent (31) of the male addicts and none of the female addicts. New Mexico contributed 13.8 percent (22) of the male addicts and none of the female addicts. Of the remaining nine male addicts, three came from Arizona, two from Illinois, one from Colorado, and three came from other States. Of the remaining four female addicts, three came from Illinois and one from Colorado. Thus, while California, Texas, and New Mexico still contributed most of the Mexican-American addicts in 1967, Texas replaced California as the largest contributor of Mexican-American addicts of both sexes. The significant increases in the incidence of Mexican-American addicts admitted to the two hospitals between 1961 and 1967 is due primarily to increases among males residing in Texas.

Religious background. As expected, the majority of Mexican-American addicts had been reared in Catholic homes. In the first half of

1961, 93.0 percent (95) of the addicts reported that they were Catholics, as did 94.7 percent (16) in the first half of 1967 (table 4).

Level of formal education. Most Mexican-American addicts, regardless of sex, have been high school dropouts. In the first half of 1961, 88.2 percent (90) of the Mexican-American addicts admitted to the two hospitals were dropouts; as were 87.0 percent (147) of those admitted during the first half of 1967 (table 5). These data would suggest that Mexican-Americans who become addicts are the least educated of their ethnic-cultural group. Mexican-Americans are also the least educated of the addicted groups. Of the 637 white addicts admitted during the first 6 months of 1967, only 56.4 percent were high school dropouts; 61.8 percent of the Negroes and 78.4 percent of the Puerto Ricans admitted in this period were high school dropouts.

Marital status. In the first 6 months of 1961, Mexican-American addicts who had never been married outnumbered those who were currently

married and also outnumbered those who had broken marriages (table 6). In that period, 45.1 percent (46) of the addicts were single, 41.2 percent reported intact marriages, and the remaining 13.7 percent (14) had broken marriages. By 1967, several changes were found to have occurred in the marital status of these male and female addicts. The representation of single addicts decreased from the 45.1 percent (46) in the first half of 1961 to 29.6 percent (50) in the first half of 1967. Indicative of a high degree of disorganization were the significant increases ($\chi^2=6.691$; $P=<0.01$) in the number of addicts of both sexes who had attempted marriages which had failed. In the 6-month period of 1961, 13.7 percent (14) of all the addicts—35.7 percent (five) of the females and 10.2 percent (nine) of the males—reported a broken marriage. By 1967, 26.6 percent (45) of all the addicts—50.0 percent (five) of the females and 25.2 percent (40) of the males—reported broken marriages. This increase from 13.7 percent in 1961 to 26.6 percent

Table 3. Residence of male and female Mexican-American addicts, 1961 and 1967

State	Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1961						Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1967					
	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
California.....	28	31.8	3	21.4	31	30.4	31	19.5	0	0	31	18.3
Texas.....	24	27.3	3	21.4	27	26.5	97	61.0	6	60.0	103	60.9
New Mexico.....	12	13.6	1	7.1	13	12.7	22	13.8	0	0	22	13.0
Arizona.....	9	10.2	1	7.1	10	9.8	3	1.9	0	0	3	1.8
Illinois.....	4	4.5	2	14.3	6	5.9	2	1.3	3	30.0	5	3.0
Colorado.....	3	3.4	2	14.3	5	4.9	1	.6	1	10.0	2	1.2
All others.....	8	9.0	2	14.3	10	9.9	3	1.8	0	0	3	1.8
Total.....	88	100.0	14	100.0	102	100.0	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0

Table 4. Religious background of Mexican-American male and female addicts, 1961 and 1967

Religion	Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1961						Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1967					
	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Protestant.....	6	6.8	1	7.1	7	7.0	7	4.4	2	20.0	9	5.3
Catholic.....	82	93.2	13	92.9	95	93.0	152	95.6	8	80.0	160	94.7
Total.....	88	100.0	14	100.0	102	100.0	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0

in 1967 is statistically significant by Fisher's exact test—0.00307; $P = < 0.001$.

Means of support. We were aware that most legal occupations pursued by school dropouts would not provide sufficient money to support an addiction. We found, however, that 44.1 percent (45) of the 1961 addicts of both sexes had managed to maintain some legal occupational role (table 7). The number who maintained some legal employment in spite of their addictions increased to 66.3 percent (112) in 1967. This increase was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 12.811$; $P = 0.001$). No data were routinely available on what illegal activities provided supplementary funds.

A significant change occurred between 1961 and 1967 in the means by which the male Mexican-American addicts supported themselves. In general, the number of addicts who maintained some legal employment increased while the number who used illegal activities as their only means of support decreased. In 1961, 50.0 percent (44) of the male addicts were unemployed or supporting themselves through il-

legal activities. By 1967, this proportion had decreased to 30.2 percent (48 persons).

There were no significant changes in the employment status of the Mexican-American female addicts. In general, the female addicts continued to be unemployed dependents or to use illegal activities as their primary means of support. In 1961, more than 90 percent (13) of the female addicts were unemployed dependents or engaged in illegal activities. In 1967, a similar pattern was observed.

Characteristics of Drug Abuse

Behavior in respect to drugs. Data on the attributes of behavior in respect to drugs which are normally reported when describing opiate addiction, for example, the drug used and the source and method of administration, were not routinely collected at either hospital during 1961. These data, however, were collected in 1967 and are included as a partial description of the contemporary Mexican-American addict.

As table 8 shows, almost all Mexican-Ameri-

Table 5. Level of formal education of Mexican-American male and female addicts, 1961 and 1967

Level of education	Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1961						Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1967					
	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Above high school.	1	1.1	0	0	1	1.0	1	0.6	1	10.0	2	1.1
High school.....	10	11.4	1	7.1	11	10.8	19	11.9	1	10.0	20	11.8
Below high school.	77	87.4	13	92.9	90	88.2	139	87.5	8	80.0	147	87.0
Total.....	88	100.0	14	100.0	102	100.0	169	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0

Table 6. Marital status of Mexican-American male and female addicts, 1961 and 1967

Marital status	Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1961						Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1967					
	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Single.....	43	48.8	3	21.4	46	45.1	49	30.8	1	10.0	50	29.6
Married.....	36	41.0	6	42.9	42	41.2	70	44.0	4	40.0	74	43.8
Broken marriage..	9	10.2	5	35.7	14	13.7	40	25.2	5	50.0	45	26.6
Total.....	88	100.0	14	100.0	102	100.0	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0

can addicts (96.4 percent), regardless of sex, were addicted to heroin, which they injected intravenously (97.6 percent). Almost all (99.4 percent) purchased their drugs, even those legally manufactured, from pushers. In these respects, these Mexican-American addicts do not differ from the majority of other addicts in the United States (2, 15). A large majority (81.1 percent) of the Mexican-American addicts also had histories of smoking marihuana, a habit which had preceded their use of narcotics. The pattern of marihuana use was similar to that found among other opiate addicts who reside in large cities outside of the southern States (15, 16).

First use of opiates. The Mexican-American addicts admitted to the two hospitals in the first half of 1967 had begun use of opiates early in life. The mean age of starting for all these addicts was 19.3 years (table 9). Among the 169

Mexican-American addicts, males typically began to use opiates earlier than females.

Years of use of opiates. At the time of admission in 1967, the 169 addicts had been using opiates an average of 8.8 years. The male addicts had used them an average of 8.9 years while the female addicts had less lengthy histories of use—an average of 6.3 years.

History of arrests. The prevalence of arrest among Mexican-American addicts is the highest for any ethnic-cultural group. Every one of the 169 Mexican-Americans admitted in the first half of 1967 had a history of arrests (table 10). Among addicts of other ethnic groups admitted during the same period, 93.2 percent of the Negroes, 86.3 percent of the Puerto Ricans, and 83.4 percent of the whites reported that they had been arrested.

The average age of the Mexican-American addicts at first arrest was 16.8 years. Five of

Table 7. Means of support of Mexican-American male and female addicts, 1961 and 1967

Current employment status	Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1961						Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1967					
	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Some legal employment....	44	50.0	1	7.1	45	44.1	111	69.8	1	10.0	112	66.3
No legal employment....	44	50.0	13	92.9	57	55.9	48	30.2	9	90.0	57	33.7
Total.....	88	100.0	14	100.0	102	100.0	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0

Table 8. Attributes related to drug abuse among 169 Mexican-American male and female addicts admitted in first half of 1967

Characteristics of addiction	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Narcotics used:						
Heroin.....	154	96.9	9	90.0	163	96.4
Morphine.....	3	1.9	0	0	3	1.8
Codeine.....	1	.6	0	0	1	.6
Dilaudid.....	1	.6	1	10.0	2	1.2
Route:						
Intravenous.....	157	98.7	8	80.0	165	97.6
Other.....	2	1.3	2	20.0	4	2.4
Source:						
Pusher.....	158	99.4	10	100.0	168	99.4
Other.....	1	.6	0	0	1	.6
Marihuana:						
Users.....	128	80.5	9	90.0	137	81.1
Nonusers.....	31	19.5	1	10.0	32	18.9

the males had been arrested before age 10. Almost 80 percent of the Mexican-American addicts had been arrested as juveniles or adolescents. Although all the female addicts had been arrested, their arrests tended to occur at later ages than those among males. Half of the women were not arrested until after age 20.

Since all of the Mexican-American addicts had been arrested, the age at first arrest and at the start of use of opiates could be compared. The majority of the 169 addicts had been arrested before they began using opiates (table 11); 61.5 percent were arrested before any opiate use while 21.3 percent were using opiates before their first arrests. The remaining 17.2 percent were arrested and began to use opiates at the same age.

Characteristics of Admissions

Status at admission. During the periods of our study, the two hospitals accepted two classifications of opiate addicts, namely, persons who voluntarily sought treatment and Federal prisoners who were sent to the institutions for treatment. During the first 6 months of 1961, the major portion (57, or 55.9 percent) of the Mexican-American addicts admitted underwent enforced treatment as Federal prisoners (table 12). By 1967, however, this situation had changed. In the first 6 months of that year, an increasing proportion of both male and female Mexican-American addicts (71.0 percent, 120 persons) entered the hospitals voluntarily. This increase in volunteers, from 35.7 percent of the Mexican-Americans admitted in 1961 to 71.0

Table 9. Age at which 169 Mexican-American male and female patients admitted in first half of 1967 began to use opiates

Age at first use (years)	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
10-14.....	16	10.1	0	0	16	9.5
15-19.....	79	49.7	4	40.0	83	49.1
20-24.....	48	30.2	5	50.0	53	31.4
25-29.....	11	6.9	1	10.0	12	7.1
30-34.....	2	1.3	0	0	2	1.2
35-39.....	1	.6	0	0	1	.6
40-44.....	2	1.3	0	0	2	1.2
Total.....	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0
Median.....	15-19 years		20-24 years		15-19 years.	
Mean.....	19.3 years		19.9 years		19.3 years.	

Table 10. Age at first arrest of 169 Mexican-American male and female patients admitted in first half of 1967

Age at first arrest (years)	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
5-9.....	5	3.1	0	0	5	3.0
10-14.....	40	25.2	1	10.0	41	24.3
15-19.....	82	51.6	4	40.0	86	50.9
20-24.....	27	17.0	5	50.0	32	18.9
25-29.....	4	2.5	0	0	4	2.4
30-34.....	0	0	0	0	0	0
35-39.....	1	.6	0	0	1	.6
Total.....	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0
Median.....	15-19 years		19-20 years		15-19 years.	
Mean.....	16.7 years		18.2 years		16.8 years.	

percent of those admitted in 1967 is statistically significant ($\chi^2=19.310$; $P=<0.001$).

A majority of the Mexican-American addicts admitted during both years were being treated at these facilities for the first time. The proportion of first admissions, however, changed significantly from 1961 to 1967. While only 18.6 percent (19) of all the Mexican-Americans admitted in the first half of 1961 were recidivists, this proportion had increased to 34.3 percent

(58 persons) by the first half of 1967 ($\chi^2=7.701$; $P=<0.05$). Recidivism during the first 6 months of 1967 for other ethnic-cultural groups was as follows: whites—40.8 percent, Puerto Ricans—38.4 percent, and Negroes—34.6 percent.

Recidivism, at least as measured by the number of readmissions for treatment at one of the two Federal facilities, appears to have always been greater among male than among female

Table 11. Comparison of age at first arrest with age opiate use began among Mexican-American male and female patients admitted in first half of 1967

Distribution of event sequences	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Arrest before opiate use.....	101	63.5	3	30.0	104	61.5
Opiate use before arrest.....	34	21.4	2	20.0	36	21.3
Same age for both events.....	24	15.1	5	50.0	29	17.2
Total.....	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0

Table 12. Admission status of Mexican-American male and female addicts, 1961 and 1967

Status at admission	Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1961						Patients admitted in 1st 6 months of 1967					
	88 males		14 females		102 of both sexes		159 males		10 females		169 of both sexes	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Classification:												
Volunteer.....	40	45.5	5	35.7	45	44.1	111	69.8	9	90.0	120	71.0
Other.....	48	54.5	9	64.3	57	55.9	48	30.2	1	10.0	49	29.0
Number of admissions:												
1st.....	70	79.5	13	92.9	83	81.4	103	64.8	8	80.0	111	65.7
2d or more.....	18	20.5	1	7.1	19	18.6	56	35.2	2	20.0	58	34.3

Table 13. Total admissions of male and female Mexican-American addicts, 1961 and 1967

Total admissions	Admitted in 1st 6 months of 1961						Admitted in 1st 6 months of 1967					
	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1.....	70	80.5	13	92.9	83	82.2	103	64.8	8	80.0	111	65.7
2.....	7	8.0	0	0	7	6.9	34	21.4	1	10.0	35	20.7
3.....	8	9.2	1	7.1	9	8.9	15	9.4	1	10.0	16	9.5
4.....	1	1.1	0	0	1	1.0	3	1.9	0	0	3	1.8
5.....	1	1.1	0	0	1	1.0	4	2.5	0	0	4	2.4
Total.....	87	100.0	14	100.0	101	100.0	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0

¹ The number of admissions for 1 male is unknown.

Mexican-American addicts. The proportion of male Mexican-American recidivists admitted during the first 6 months of 1961 was 20.5 percent (18 persons); during the same period of 1967, one-third (56) of all the Mexican-American males treated were recidivists (table 13). In contrast, only one female Mexican-American (7.1 percent) was readmitted in the first 6 months of 1961, and only two female Mexican-Americans (20.0 percent) were readmitted in the same period in 1967. In neither year was the current admission more than the fifth for any Mexican-American.

Among addicts of all ethnic-cultural groups who were admitted to both hospitals during the first half of 1961, the number of admissions per person ranged from one to 27; 9.8 percent were being admitted for the sixth time or more. During the first 6 months of 1967, the range was 1 to 19; only 2.7 percent were being admitted for the sixth or more time.

Age at admission. The Mexican-American narcotic addicts of both sexes were all found to be young adults. During the first half of 1961, 75.5 percent (77) of these addicts admitted for treatment were under 30 years of age (table 14). By the first 6 months of 1967, the proportion of addicts under age 30 had significantly decreased ($\chi^2=4.729$; $P<0.05$), but the majority, 62.7 percent (106 persons), were still under 30 years of age.

A comparison of the median ages for both

the male and female addicts during both sample periods indicated that distributions of Mexican-American addicts by age had not significantly changed. The median age group for males and females during 1961 and 1967 was the same—25–29 years. Comparisons of the mean age in the two periods, however, did produce one slight change. The mean age for all Mexican-American males admitted increased from 26.3 years in 1961 to 28.2 years in 1967.

Discussion

Our study was designed to provide empirical data on Mexican-American addicts. It has generated several questions which require answers. For example, why is the sex ratio so out of balance? Mexican-American females seem somehow buffered or insulated from the illicit drug subculture. Why does a minority group representing only 2 percent of the U.S. population contribute 10 percent of the population of opiate addicts? Why has the incidence of addiction shifted geographically? Unfortunately, there are no answers for these questions. We hope that our initial empirical efforts will generate sufficient interest in the drug problem among Mexican-Americans so that more research will be directed at this group. Specifically, data should be collected which would permit a full range of comparisons between Mexican-American addicts and Mexican addicts, between

Table 14. Ages of Mexican-American male and female addicts at time of admission, 1961 and 1967

Age at admission (years)	Admitted in 1st half of 1961						Admitted in 1st half of 1967					
	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
15-19-----	8	9.1	0	0	8	7.8	7	4.4	0	0	7	4.1
20-24-----	30	34.1	4	28.6	34	33.3	45	28.3	4	40.0	49	29.0
25-29-----	27	30.7	8	57.1	35	34.3	46	28.9	4	40.0	50	29.6
30-34-----	18	20.4	2	14.3	20	19.6	36	22.6	1	10.0	37	21.9
35-39-----	3	3.4	0	0	3	2.9	17	10.7	1	0	18	10.7
40-44-----	2	2.3	0	0	2	2.0	4	2.5	0	0	4	2.4
45 or over-----	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2.5	0	0	4	2.4
Total-----	88	100.0	14	100.0	102	100.0	159	100.0	10	100.0	169	100.0
Median-----	25-29 years		25-29 years		25-29 years		25-29 years		25-29 years		25-29 years.	
Mean-----	26.3 years		26.4 years		26.3 years		28.2 years		26.2 years		28.1 years.	

Mexican-American addicts and Mexican-Americans who do not use drugs, and between Mexican-American addicts and other addicts.

Summary

To isolate any changes which may have occurred in Mexican-American drug addicts in recent years, the histories of the 106 Mexican-American addicts admitted to the Federal hospitals at Lexington, Ky., and Fort Worth, Tex., during the first 6 months of 1961 were compared statistically, by sex, with the histories of the 169 Mexican-Americans admitted during the same period of 1967.

The study showed that the incidence of Mexican-American addicts among the total addicts admitted to the two hospitals doubled between 1961 and 1967 even though the total number of hospital admissions decreased by almost 20 percent. The increase, however, was only among the male addicts. Female representation in 1967 was less than half that of 1961. The majority of Mexican-American addicts in 1967 resided in Texas; in 1961, California had been the largest contributor of Mexican-American addicts.

An overwhelming majority of the Mexican-American addicts, regardless of sex, were school dropouts. Although the addicts averaged 28.1 years of age in 1967, almost one-third had never been married. Moreover, more than 40 percent of those who had attempted a marriage had been unable to sustain the relationship.

A large majority of the Mexican-American opiate addicts in 1967 had histories of smoking marihuana, histories which usually had preceded their use of opiates. Opiate use most often began during the adolescent years. The Mexican-American addicts were most frequently found to be young adults; their mean age decreased between 1961 and 1967. Almost all were addicted to heroin, which, of course, they purchased from illegal sources; almost all used it intravenously.

Even though the Mexican-American addicts supplemented their incomes from illegal sources, a majority maintained some legal occupational role while addicted. All had been arrested; the first arrest most frequently had

preceded the use of opiates. While, by 1967, recidivism was increasing, readmissions were more likely to be voluntary than enforced.

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