



WHO GOES TO MASEP?

Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program, Social Science Research Center, Mississippi State University

The Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program (MASEP) is the statewide driver improvement program for first-time offenders convicted of driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or other drugs. Mississippi law requires the court to order all first-time DUI offenders to attend and successfully complete the program. MASEP is operated by the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University. From January, 1992, through December, 1994, the program operated 40 schools in 36 communities throughout the state. During this three-year period, 20,376 persons attended MASEP. A study examined the characteristics of these MASEP participants. The following is a summary of some of the major findings:

1. The mean age of the individuals who attended MASEP increased from 34.6 years in 1992 to 35.7 years in 1994. This was due to a decline in the number of participants under the age of 30 who attended the program, as well as an increase in the number of older persons who attended MASEP.
2. During the three year period, 67.5% of the MASEP participants were white, 31.0% were black, and 1.5% were of other races. There was a slight increase in the numbers of blacks and persons of other races who attended the program during

the three year period and a slight decrease in the number of whites who attended MASEP.

3. Blacks who attended MASEP between 1992 and 1994 tended to be significantly older than whites or persons of other races. The peak age for whites (i.e., the mode) was 22 while the peak age for blacks was 36. (See Figure 1, over.)

4. Females accounted for 13.8% of the MASEP participants during the three-year period. However, only 7.5% of the black participants were female while 16.5% of the whites were female.

5. Female MASEP participants were more likely than male participants to be divorced, separated, or widowed.

6. The average MASEP participant had completed 11.85 years of schooling. About 10% had completed less than nine years, and about 8% had completed sixteen or more years (i.e., four or more years beyond high school).

7. The educational levels of blacks and whites were very similar among the younger MASEP participants; but older black participants tended to have much lower levels of education than whites or younger blacks.

8. Nearly 64% of all MASEP participants reported that they smoked. Smoking was more prevalent among female (71.9%), separated (75.2%), divorced (73.0%), and white (65.9%) participants than among others who attended MASEP.

9. Smokers tended to have lower levels of education than non-smokers.

10. The mean blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at time of arrest of the participants who attended MASEP during the three-year period was 0.169% (169 mg/dl). Over 25% had BACs in excess of 0.200% (i.e., twice the legal limit).

masep

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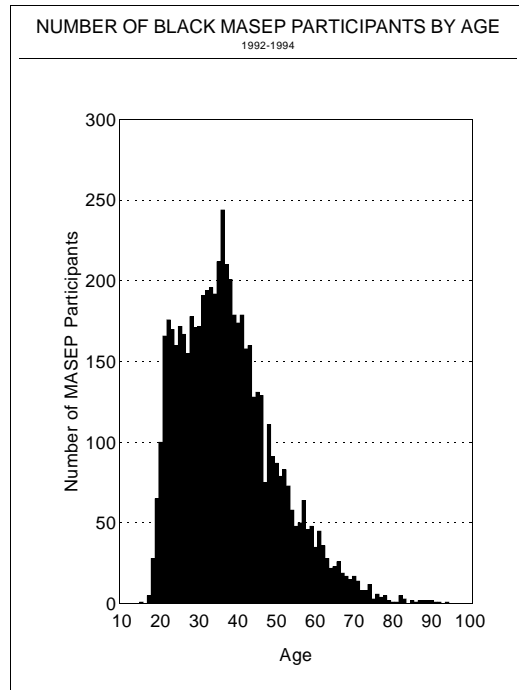
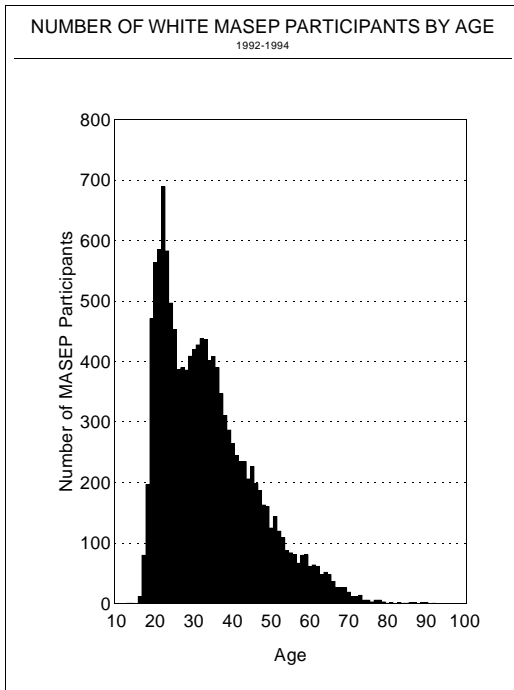


Figure 1: Number of MASEP Participants by Age and Race

11. There were no significant differences in the BAC levels of blacks and whites, or of males and females. However, mean BAC levels tended to increase as age increased, and the highest BAC levels were found among MASEP participants between the ages of 45 and 65.



12. BAC levels tended to be higher among smokers than non-smokers.



13. The Mortimer-Filkins Questionnaire was used to identify those MASEP participants who were especially likely to have serious drinking problems. Mortimer-Filkins

scores were found to be higher among persons with lower educational levels, and, as one might expect, among those with higher BAC levels.



14. The Anxiety/Neurosis Scale was used to identify MASEP participants with emotional problems. Emotional problems appear to be more prevalent among females, whites, those who have experienced marital disruption (i.e., divorced, separated, and widowed participants), those with lower educational levels, those who smoke, and those who are younger.



15. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of MASEP participants who are female over the past 15 years. The percentage of MASEP participants who are female increased from 6.6% during the 1977-1979 period to 10.3% during 1982-1984 to 13.8% during 1992-1994.



16. Over the past 15 years, there has been a dramatic decrease in the proportion of MASEP participants who are married (from 49.5% to 30.9%), and an increase in the proportion who are single (from 28.2% to 43.3%).

A complete copy of the study summarized here can be obtained by contacting MASEP at: (601) 325-3423. Ask for Social Research Report Series 96-3, "Characteristics of Convicted Drinking Drivers Who Attended the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program, 1992-1994: A Statistical Summary."