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CHAID ANALYSIS OF DRUG-RELATED POLICE CORRUPTION ARRESTS

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AUC = .713

AUC = .805

AUC = .792

AUC = .865

AUC = .757

AUC = .750
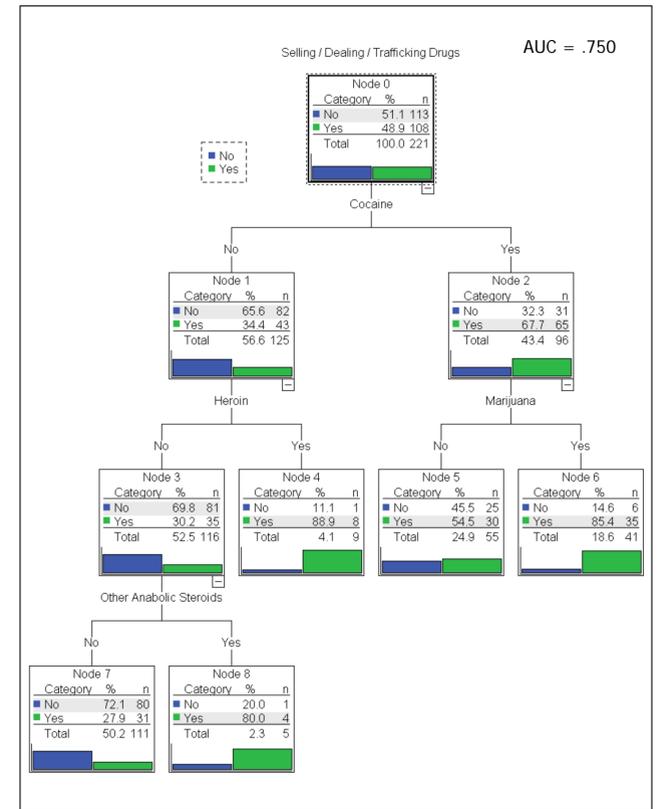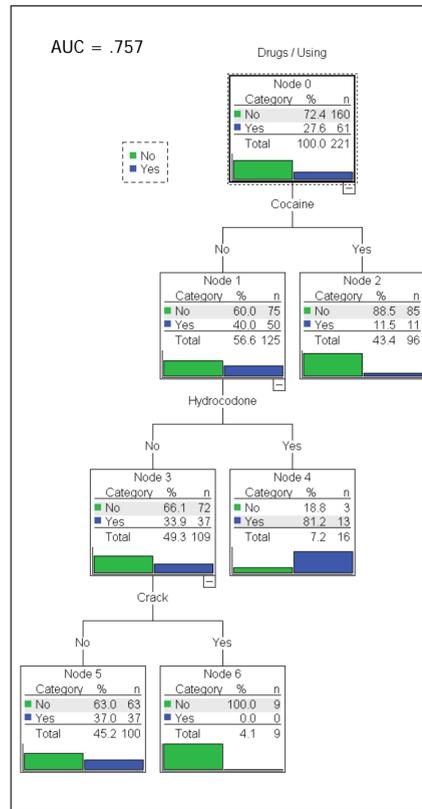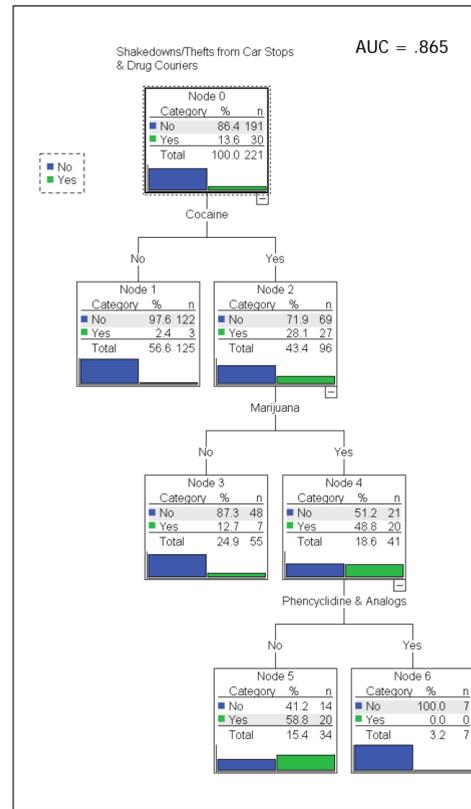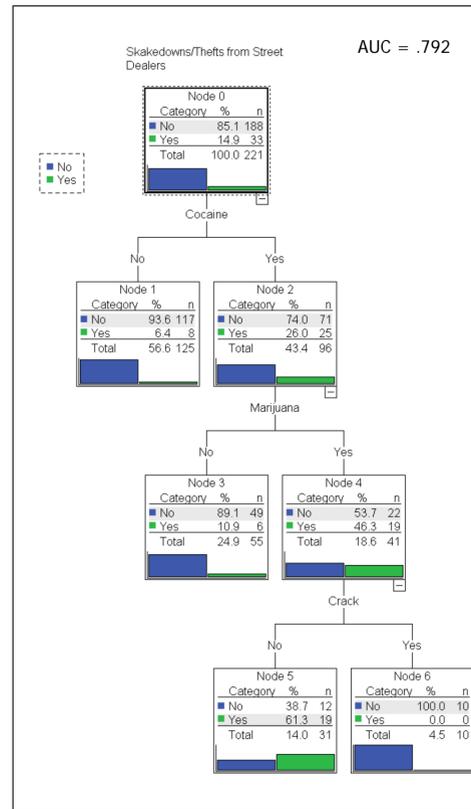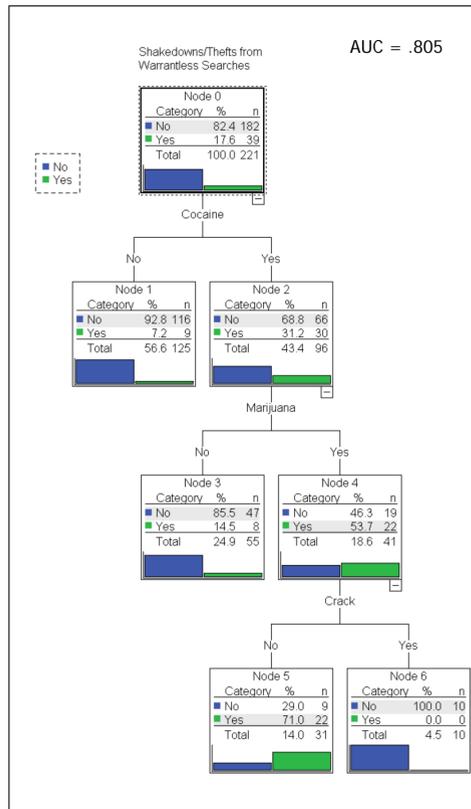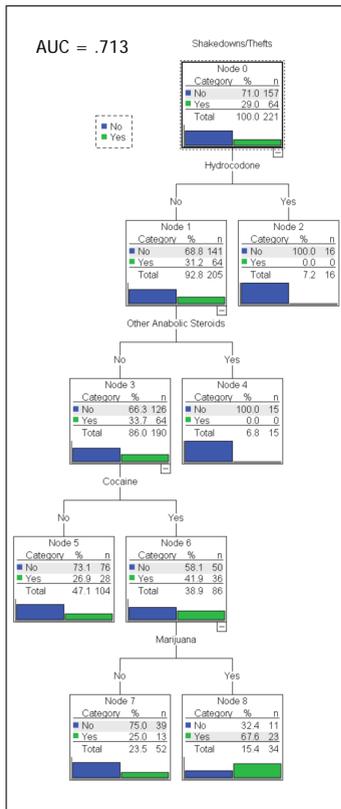
ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of the study is to provide empirical data on cases of drug-related police corruption. The study identifies and describes incidents in which police officers were arrested for criminal offenses associated with drug-related corruption.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is a quantitative content analysis of news articles identified through the Google News search engine using 48 automated Google Alerts queries. Statistical analyses include classification trees to examine causal pathways between drugs and corruption.

Findings – Data are analyzed on 221 drug-related arrest cases of officers employed by police agencies throughout the United States. Findings show that drug-related corruption involves a wide range of criminal offenses, and that cocaine is the most prevalent drug. Older officers and those employed by large agencies are less likely than others to lose their jobs after a drug-related arrest.

Research limitations/implications – The data are limited to cases that involve an official arrest. Additionally, the data are the result of a filtering process that includes the exercise of media discretion as to the types of news stories reported and the content devoted to particular news stories.

Practical implications – The study provides data on drug-related corruption and the drug trade in 141 police agencies, and suggests the need for police executives to develop effective strategies to address it.

Originality/value – The study augments the few existing studies on the topic, and is the only study known to describe drug-related corruption as it occurs within police agencies nationwide.

RESULTS

- CHAID procedures were employed to determine causal relationships between the statistically significant variables.

- Classification estimates were created for the most frequent forms of misconduct including: drug trafficking, the three most prevalent types of thefts/shakedowns, and drug use.

- Specific drugs that displayed the strongest predictive value were selected as "splitting criterions" for the data.

- Cocaine was the strongest predictor where specific drugs were independent variables.

- The CHAID models for specific drugs had varying levels of predictive power. The models that examined the types of thefts/shakedowns had the highest levels of predictive power.

- The tree predicting thefts/shakedowns of drug couriers and thefts/shakedowns that occurred during car stops had the highest predictive power. The tree identified cocaine as the most influential predictor in these cases.

- Marijuana also displayed statistically significant predictive power, particularly for cases in which cocaine was present. The CHAID tree also determined phencyclidine & analogs as a predictor for cases that involved marijuana and cocaine.

DISCUSSION & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The CHAID analysis determined causal pathways between specific drugs and types of drug corruption. The findings suggest that drug-related corruption is a multidimensional phenomenon that involves multiple forms of misconduct and multiple types of drugs.

Specific drugs are present across various patterns of drug-related corruption. The presence of cocaine maintained the highest levels of predictive power within the CHAID analyses of thefts/shakedowns, drug use, and drug trafficking.

The empirical validity of these findings is supported by the descriptive elements of the Mollen Commission (1994) report that emphasized the emergence of crack and cocaine within the NYPD almost two decades ago. While it is unclear at which point such drugs began infiltrating the domain of law enforcement, it is apparent that crack and cocaine continue to compromise the integrity of police agencies across the nation.

The study indicates that specific drugs are best at predicting acts of drug-related corruption that involve thefts/shakedowns, and factors other than drugs are more important in predicting cases of drug-related corruption that involve drug use and/or facilitation of the drug trade.

The development of effective policies to mitigate drug-related corruption will likely depend on research designed to further disentangle the relationship between specific drugs and various forms of misconduct.