

Popping Pills for Thrills

Implications for preventing the misuse of pharmaceuticals

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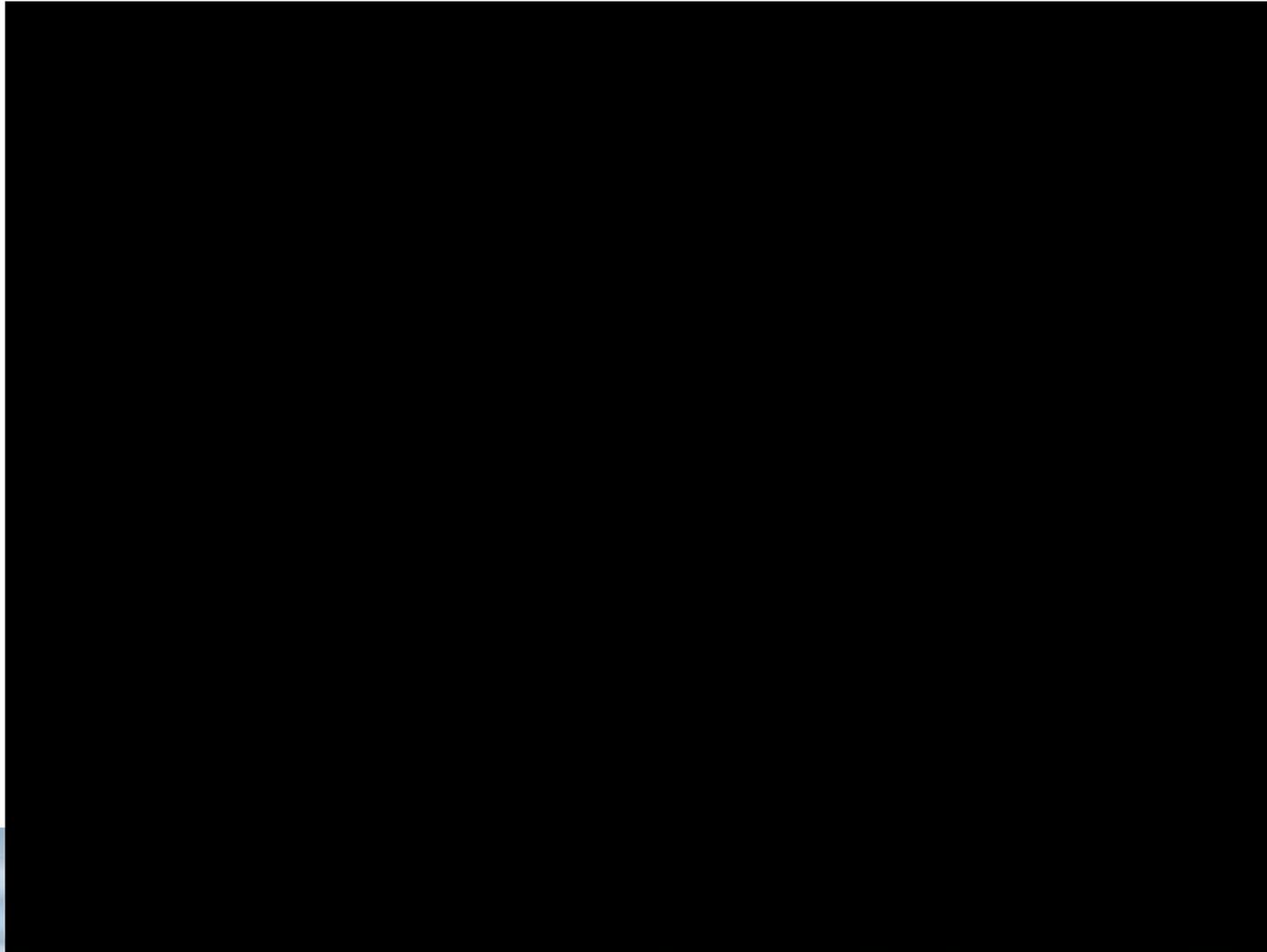
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Why abuse prescription drugs?



Prescription drugs misuse: A concerning trend

- ❖ While most people take prescription medications responsibly for the reasons in which the medications were prescribed, there has been an increasing trend in non-medical use of pharmaceuticals.
- ❖ Video and images of prescription drugs misuse and abuse are increasing as the media reporting on the popularizing of pharmaceuticals intensifies.



Commonly used prescription drugs

- ❖ The most commonly abused prescription drugs can be classified in three classes:
 - Opioids
 - Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants
 - Stimulants



(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2005)

Commonly used prescription drugs

- **Opioids are mostly used to treat pain.**
 - Some examples of opioids are codeine, morphine, and opium.

- **Central nervous system (CNS) depressants are used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders.**
 - Some examples of CNS depressants are flunitrazepam, barbiturates, and benzodiazepines.

- **Stimulants are prescribed to treat the sleep disorder narcolepsy and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).**
 - Some examples of stimulants are cocaine, methamphetamine, and amphetamines.

(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2005)

“Determining legitimate medical purpose can be challenging. Despite their best efforts to balance their roles as health care providers and gatekeepers, pharmacists still struggle with the lack of a formal process for dealing with incidents of suspected or recognized abuse.”

Thomas E. Menighan, president of the American
Pharmaceutical Association

Prescription drug use in America

- ❖ The National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) asked non-medical users of prescription-type psychotherapeutic drugs regarding how they obtained the drugs they recently used non-medically.
- ❖ In 2005, the most prevalent source from which recently used drugs were obtained among non-medical users of prescription-type drugs was "from a friend or relative for free."
- ❖ Among persons aged 12 or older who used pain relievers non-medically in the past 12 months, 59.8% reported that the source of the drug the most recent time they used was from a friend or relative for free.

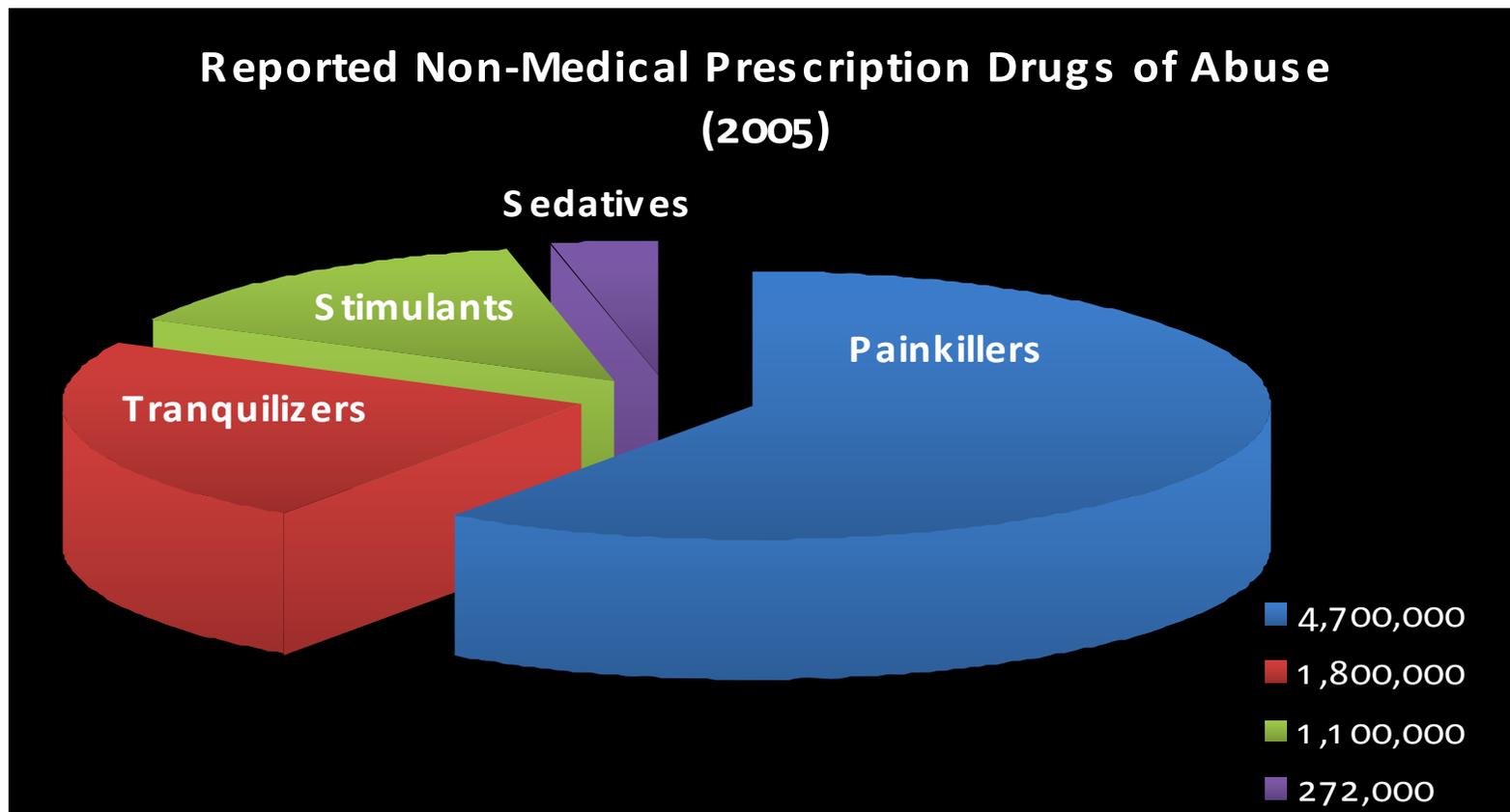
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2005)

Prescription drug use in America

- ❖ There were 6.4 million (2.6 percent) persons aged 12 or older who used prescription-type psychotherapeutic drugs non-medically found using a past-month measure.

- ❖ Of the 6.4 million prescription drug misusers,
 - **4.7 million used pain relievers**
 - **1.8 million used tranquilizers**
 - **1.1 million used stimulants (including 512,000 using methamphetamine)**
 - **272,000 used sedatives**

(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2005)



(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2005)

Prescription drug use in Indiana

- ❖ Indiana's estimated rate of abuse exceeds that for the nation for prescription pain relievers and benzodiazepines.
- ❖ The abuse of prescription drugs appears to be most severe among adolescents age 12 to 17 years of age and especially young adults between the ages of 18 and 25.
- ❖ In addition to being concentrated among younger age groups, prescription drug abuse is significantly more common among women and Caucasian Americans.

(Indiana State Epidemiology and Outcomes Workgroup, 2006)

Demographics of prescription drug misusers

❖ Prescription drug abuse affects many Americans, but concerning trends of increased prescription drug abuse can be observed among:

- **adolescents**
- **older adults**
- **women**



(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2005)

Demographics of prescription drug misusers

- ❖ Although older adults represent 13 % of the American population, they account for nearly one-third of all medications prescribed in the United States.
- ❖ Older patients are likely to take multiple medications prescribed long-term, which could lead to unintentional use.
- ❖ Older patients may be prescribed inappropriately high doses of medications such as benzodiazepines and may be prescribed these medications for longer periods than are younger adults.

(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2005)

Demographics of prescription drug misusers

- ❖ Men and women have similar rates of non-medical use of prescription drugs. Gender differences in prescription drug abuse can be observed among girls aged 12-17 years old.
- ❖ Women are at increased risk of abusing benzodiazepines like analgesics and tranquilizers.

(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2005)

Demographics of prescription drug misusers

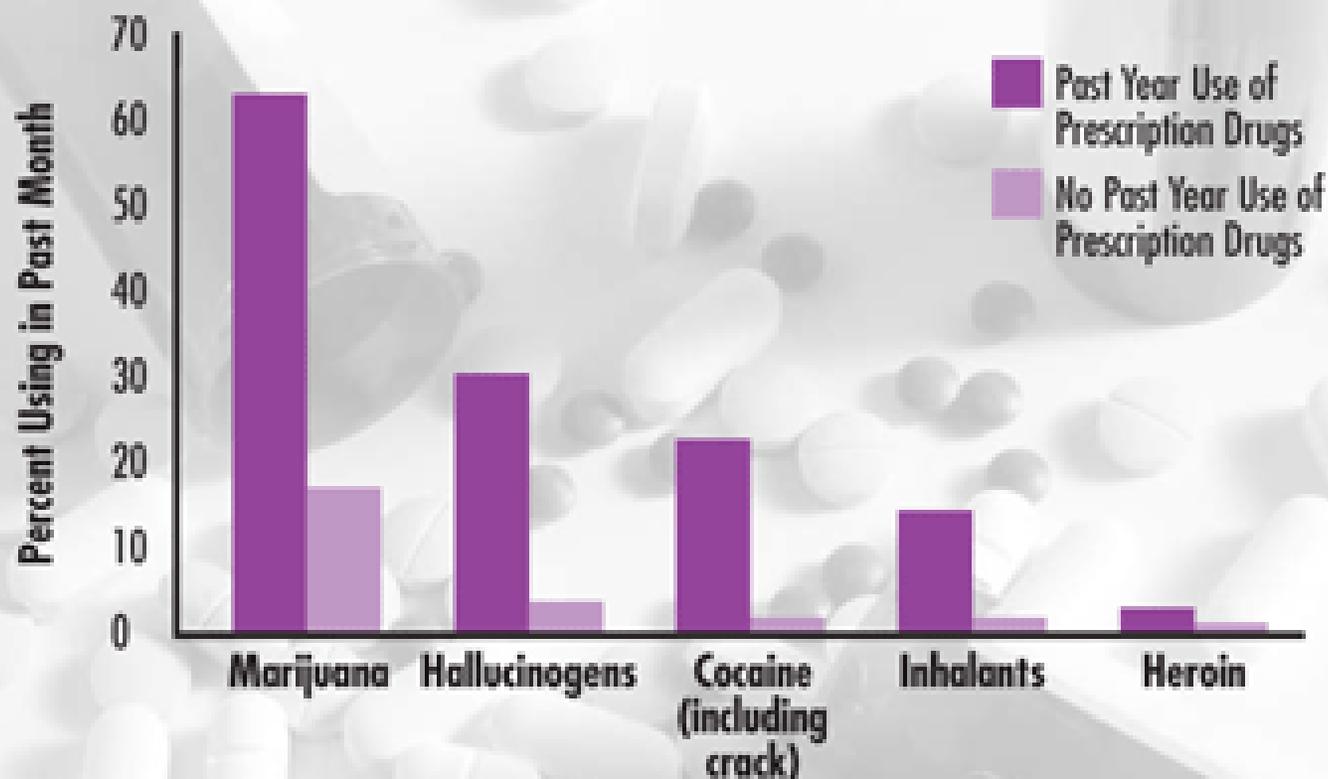
- ❖ In 2006, a study sponsored by a Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA) that 1 in 5 teens misuse prescription drugs. This finding is significant as youth believe that painkillers are a “safer” way to get high as opposed to illicit drugs.
- ❖ The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study found that 62% of youth reported access to “powerful painkillers” at home while 52% reported that prescription drugs were “available everywhere”.

(Join Together, 2006)

Demographics of prescription drug misusers

- ❖ Among adolescents and young adults, prescription drug abuse is highest nationally among young adults aged 18-25 years old.
- ❖ The National Institute on Drug Abuse's Monitoring the Future survey in 2005 found that 12 graders reported using OxyContin and Vicodin without a prescription. **Vicodin is one of the most commonly abused illicit drug among adolescents and young adults.**
- ❖ This is a concern since youth who use other drugs are likely to abuse prescription medications. [NIDA], 2005)

Past-Year Use of Other Drugs Reported by Prescription Drug Abusers: Persons Aged 12 to 25, 2001



Source: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
The NHSDA Report, January 16, 2003.

Effects of prescription drug abuse

- ❖ While CNS depressants, opioids, and stimulants affect the body in various ways, their misuse and abuse can have long-lasting or deadly effects.
- ❖ For example, opioids can produce drowsiness and nausea, and at large dosages, can depress or stop respiration.
- ❖ As your body become use to the physiological affects of CNS depressants, individuals may need larger doses to produce the same effects—leading to physical dependence.

(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2005)

Preventing prescription drug abuse/misuse

School-based prevention

- ❖ Among school-age children and adolescents who may be at risk of non-medical use of pharmaceuticals, McCabe, Teter, & Boyd (2004) suggest that physicians, parents, pharmacists, school nurses, social workers, counselors, and principals be educated about the prescription drug misuse.
- ❖ Other school administrators such as school nurses, social workers, etc. can help monitor which students are prescribed medications and may be at risk for prescription drug diversion.

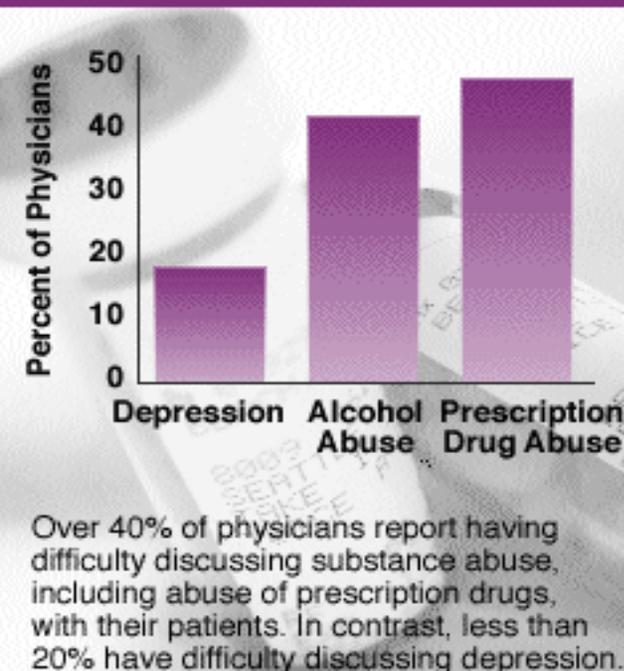
McCabe, S.E., Teter, C.J., & Boyd, C.J. (2004). The use, misuse, and diversion of prescription stimulants among middle and high school students. *Substance Abuse & Misuse*, 93, 7, 1095-1116.

Preventing prescription drug abuse/misuse

Increasing the role of the physician

- ❖ Prescription drug abuse prevention is an important part of patient care.
- ❖ Nearly 70 percent of Americans (191 million people) - visit a health care provider, such as a primary care physician, at least once every 2 years.
- ❖ Accurate screening and increases in medication should be carefully monitored by physicians as well as the patient receiving the medication.

Many Physicians Have Difficulty Discussing Substance Abuse With Patients



(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2001)

Preventing prescription drug abuse/misuse

Increasing the role of the patient

- ❖ Patients can be challenged to provide a complete medical history and a description of the reason for the visit so that their physician be accurate in the assessment and treatment of any illness.
- ❖ Patients should also try to thoroughly read and follow the directions for careful use of pharmaceuticals. Become familiar with any side effects of common to the use a particular prescription drug.
- ❖ Also, ask your pharmacist or physician of any adverse potential interactions among the medications you take and as always, do not change or disrupt dosages unless discussed with your health care provider in advance.

(National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2001)

Warning signs of potential prescription drug abuse

- You take more pain medication than your doctor has prescribed.
- You request prescriptions from multiple doctors.
- You use alcohol or other medications to increase the effects of the pain medication.
- You take pain medication to deal with other problems, such as anxiety or stress.
- Your doctor, friends or loved ones express concern about your use of pain medication.

(The Mayo Clinic, 2006)

Resources

Join Together. (2006). 1 in 5 teens misuse prescription drugs. Last accessed on July 29, 2007 at:

<http://www.jointogether.org/news/research/summaries/2006/1-in-5-teens-misuse.html>

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Thank You !

www.drugs.indiana.edu



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