

Prescription Drug Abuse

Introduction

I chose to research prescription drug abuse because the town that I grew up in had a lot of people that abused prescription drugs. Some of these people were my friends and they got help but other kids didn't realize how bad prescription drugs can actually be for someone. I believe that prescription drugs should be monitored better by doctors that prescribe them to their patients. Prescription drugs are nothing to mess around with and should not be taken as an everyday medication.

Section 1: Background and Problem Statement

- **Web site #1 Name:** Medline Plus
- **Web address:** <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/prescriptiondrugabuse.html>
- **Background Information:** Prescription drug use is a serious and growing problem in the United States. One can get addicted to the narcotic painkillers, sedatives, tranquilizers, and stimulants. One reason why prescription drug use is a growing problem is because with our new technology, there is now an easier way to get prescription drugs without a prescription by using online pharmacies.

- **Web site #2 Name:** Teens Health
- **Web address:** http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/drugs/prescription_drug_abuse.html
- **Background Information:** Some reasons why people abuse prescription drugs are, they think they will help them have more fun, lose weight, fit in, and even study more effectively. The easiest ways that kids can get their hands on prescription drugs are through their own households, when parents leave prescriptions lying around, and at school because prescription drugs are sometimes sold like other illegal drugs.

- **Web site #3 Name:** Office of National Drug Control Policy
- **Web address:** http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/prescrptn_drugs/index.html
- **Background Information:** Prescription drugs are the second most commonly abused category of drugs behind marijuana and ahead of cocaine, heroin, and other drugs. There are major health effects that can come for abusing prescription drugs. Possible health effects are slow or stop breathing, seizure, respiratory depression and decreased heart rate to name a few

- **Web site #4 Name:** Healthypeople.gov
- **Web address:** <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=40>
- **Background Information:** Adolescent abuse has risen over the past 5 years in our country. In a study done in 2007, the two most abused prescription drugs are the

pain relievers Vicodin and OxyContin. The reason why some people may take these is because they believe it is safer to take Vicodin or OxyContin than street drugs. In 2005, an estimated 22 million Americans struggled with a drug or alcohol problem.

Section 2: Research

- **Web site #1 Name: Prescription drug abuse**
- **Web address: <http://www.prescription-drug-abuse.org/>**
- **Summary of the research: In the year of 2000, about 43 percent of hospital emergency admissions for drug overdoses because of the misuse of prescription drugs. A study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration showed that the number of teens and young adults (ages 12 to 25) who are new abusers of prescription painkillers grew from 400,000 in the mid 80's to 2 million in 2000.**

- **Web site #2 Name: Online Addiction and Recovery Resource**
- **Web address: http://www.myaddiction.com/education/articles/prescription_drug_statistics.html**
- **Summary of the research: In 2008, about 4.0 million people age 12 or older who received treatment for alcohol or illicit drug use in the past year, 2.2 million people received treatment at a self-help group, and 1.5 million received treatment at a rehabilitation facility as an outpatient. A study done in 2008 by a group of students at the University of Michigan showed that by 12th grade (seniors in high school), almost 10% of students had tried Vicodin and about 5% had use Oxycontin.**

- **Web site #3 Name: Mayo Clinic**
- **Web address: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/prescription-drug-abuse/DS01079>**
- **Summary of the research: Prescription drug abuse is the use of a prescription medication in a way not intended by the prescribing doctor. Prescription drug abuse includes everything from taking a friend's prescription painkiller for your backache to snorting grounded up pills to get high.**

Section 3: Statistics

- **Web site #1 Name: Office of National Drug Control Policy**
- **Web address: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/prescrptn_drugs/rx_ff.html**
- **Summary of the statistics: A 2008 poll asked what percentage of a U.S. household population 12 and older reported past month non-medical use of**

psychotherapeutics. They found that people between the ages 18-25 are they highest percentage of people that take prescription drugs without a prescription from a doctor. Additional data from another 2008 study done by NSDUH has shown that there were 2.5 million people aged 12 or older who used psychotherapeutics for nonmedical use for the first time within the past year.

- **Web site #2 Name: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration**
- **Web address:** http://www.justice.gov/dea/concern/prescription_drug_fact_sheet.html
- **Summary of the statistics: In 2009, on average, 6,027 persons per day abused prescription pain relievers for the first time. The total number of individuals that initiated drug use with prescription drugs exceeds the number of individuals that initiated drug use with marijuana. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prescription drugs, including opioids and antidepressants, are responsible for more overdose deaths than “street drugs” such as cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines.**

- **Web site #3: National Conference of State Legislation**
- **Web address:** <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14428>
- **Summary of the statistics: The National Survey on Drug Use and Health revealed in a study done in 2003 that about 19.5 million Americans (8.2 percent of the population) age 12 or older are current drug users. Of the 19.5 million users, 6.3 million abuse prescription drugs (2.7 percent of the population). This number is only behind one other drug, marijuana at 14.6 million (6.2 percent of the population). The most commonly abused prescription drugs fall into three general classes, opioids, central nervous system depressants and stimulants.**

Section 4: Consumer Information

- **Web site #1 Name: National Institute on Drug Abuse**
- **Web address:** <http://www.drugabuse.gov/DrugPages/PrescripDrugsChart.html>
- **Summary of the information: More than 6.3 million Americans reported current use of prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes. This is a very large number seeing that I never thought that in our world today people have been so addicted to prescription drugs.**

- **Web site #2 Name: National Drug Intelligence Center**
- **Web address:** <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs1/1765/index.htm#Prescription>
- **Summary of the information: In December 2001, a 17-year-old Georgia resident was indicted on manslaughter and reckless conduct charges for supplying OxyContin to a 15-year-old who died from an overdose of the drug. OxyContin is a brand name**

for OxyCodone. OxyCodone is also sold under the trade names Percocet, Percodan, and Tylox. Law enforcement reports that OxyContin, which has heroin-like effects that last up to 12 hours, is the fastest growing threat among OxyCodone products.

- **Web site #3 Name: Above the Influence**
- **Web address: <http://www.abovetheinfluence.com/facts/drugs-sources.aspx#>**
- **Summary of the information: Unintentional drug poisoning death rates increased substantially in the United States during 1999-2004. This increase can primarily be attributed to increasing numbers of deaths associated with prescription opioids (which are types of painkillers such as OxyContin and Vicodin). Unintentional poisoning deaths involving psychotherapeutic drugs, such as sedative-hypnotics and anti-depressants, grew 84 percent 1999 to 2004.**

Section 5: Solutions to the Problem (or Issue)

- **Web site #1 Name: Office of National Drug Control Policy**
- **Web address: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/prescr_drg_abuse.html**
- **Summary of the information: This is a government agency that wants to help prescription drug abusers. They offer many different programs for abusers so they can try to cut their habit of abusing prescription drugs. Central to drug prevention is the development and implementation of programs that prevent illicit drug use, keep drugs out of neighborhoods and schools, and provide a safe and secure environment for all people.**

- **Web site #2 Name: Prescription Drug Abuse**
- **Web address: <http://www.prescriptiondrugabuse.us/prevention.html>**
- **Summary of the information: This is a national organization. According to the Health and Human Services (HHS), these are common objectives that help to create an overall message of prescription drug abuse prevention are education, public health initiatives, early intervention, and law enforcement. In order to reduce prescription drug abuse, the government has issued a set of guidelines. These guidelines are designed to encourage Americans to help prevent prescription drug abuse by taking some of the following actions when disposing of expired, unneeded or unused medicine: Remove the drugs from their original containers, Seal drugs in non-descript containers, Mix the discarded prescription drugs with something undesirable. Throw the drugs out with kitty litter, coffee grounds or spoiled food, Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet unless the patient information says it is safe to do so.**

- **Web site #3 Name: Peer Assistance Services**
- **Web address: <http://www.peerassistanceservices.org/prescription/drugabuse.php>**

- **Summary of the information: This is a National Organization. Opiate withdrawal symptoms begin 8-12 hours after the last dose of medications. Symptoms resemble the flu and include watery eyes, sweating, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea in addition to marked decrease in appetite, insomnia, and extreme sensitivity to touch or movement. Benzodiazepine and barbiturate withdrawal symptoms can be life threatening. Symptoms may appear as early as 12 hours, or as long as seven days following last dose. Other symptoms include increased blood pressure, seizures, hallucinations, and psychosis. Stimulant withdrawal symptoms include anxiety, feeling depressed, lethargic, low motivation, and reduced ability to experience pleasure.**

Conclusions

Abuse of prescription drugs is a very serious problem in the United States of America. I never knew how many people actually abused prescription drugs and how many people were trying them for the very first time. My good friend was actually abused prescription drugs for a good two years of his life. He got hooked onto prescription drugs because he played sports in high school and kept getting injured and had to get surgery on both knees and shoulders. This took him about a year to get over abusing prescription drugs but he got through the rehab and is clean of prescription drugs. Watching him go through this whole process of not taking prescription drugs showed me how hard it is for people to get off abusing prescription drugs, but it is well worth it in the end. I am happy that I learned more about prescription drugs doing this fact sheet because now everyone that I know that sell their prescription pills, I can tell them about the side effects and some facts I listed above to make sure they don't help people with this awful addiction.

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