

High School Students' Prescription Drug Abuse and Their Perception of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs

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Background

- The prevalence of prescription drug abuse among adolescents is an increasing health problem (Hamilton, 2009).
- The early exposure of prescription drug abuse and other controlled substances among high school students can be a risk factor for subsequent problem behavior and psychiatric disorders (McGue & Iacono, 2005).

The Problem

- There is very little known about the impact of prescription drug monitoring programs on prescription drug abuse and diversion among **high school students**.

Study Purpose

- This study assessed college freshmen's recollection of their knowledge and perception of their state's PDMP efficacy when they were in **high school**.

Method

- Paper Survey
- University of North Dakota Students
(Freshman out of high school about 4 months)

Overall Sample: 458

Completed by all Students: 407

Completed by Freshmen: 266

Demographic Information

Student Demographics	<i>n</i>	%
Sex		
Male	129	48.5
Female	137	51.5
Racial/Ethnic Group		
White	242	91.0
African American	5	1.9
Latino/Latina	5	1.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	2.6
Alaska Native/American Indian	7	2.6

Demographic Information

Student Demographics	<i>n</i>	%
My home state is		
North Dakota	88	33.2
South Dakota	4	1.5
Minnesota	139	52.5
Other	34	12.8
Age to the nearest year		
17	2	0.8
18	153	58.4
19	97	37.0
20	4	1.5
21	3	1.1
22	1	0.4
>23	2	0.8

Use of Prescription Drugs

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	%
How old were you when you first tried prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription?		
5	1	0.4
12	1	0.4
13	1	0.4
14	1	0.4
15	12	4.5
16	13	4.9
17	13	4.9
18	11	4.1
19	2	0.7
Never	211	79.3

Use of Prescription Drugs

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	%
What types of prescription drugs have you used in high school without a doctor's prescription? (Mark all that you have used.)		
Painkiller drugs	57	21.6
Stimulant drugs	38	14.4
Sedative drugs	9	3.4
Dexedrine drugs	3	1.1
Other	2	0.8
None	191	72.4

Use of Prescription Drugs

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	%
How many times have you used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription in your senior year of high school?		
0 times	218	82.9
1 or 2 times	23	8.7
3 to 10 times	12	4.6
11 to 20 times	1	0.4
21 to 40 times	5	1.9
41 or more times	4	1.5

Use of Prescription Drugs

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	%
What were the reasons for taking prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription? (Could have more than one reason.)		
Never used	205	78.0
Increase focus and concentration	31	11.8
To get high	23	8.8
Peer pressures	6	2.3
Other	11	4.1

Use of Prescription Drugs

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	%
Where were students' primary sources of prescription drugs not legitimately prescribed by a doctor in your high school? (Mark all that apply.)		
Peer and friends	151	57.0
Family	36	13.6
Doctor shopping	4	1.5
Other	4	1.5
Don't know	119	44.9

Taking Prescription Drugs

Survey Questions	% Some Form of Agreement
I have taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription in my senior year of high school.	18.9
I knew at least one student in my high school that was addicted to prescription drugs.	46.0
I knew at least one student in my high school who was trying to stop abusing prescription drugs.	26.2

Help and Inhibition

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	%
Who talked to you about illicit prescription drug use during your high school years? (Mark all that talked to you.)		
Teachers	150	56.4
Parents	117	44.0
High school health services	104	39.1
High school administrators	86	32.3
Peer/friends	62	23.3
Pharmacists/physicians	40	15.0
Law enforcement	74	27.8

Help and Inhibition

Survey Questions	<i>n</i>	%
Which factors inhibited your prescription drug abuse in high school? (Mark all that apply.)		
Parents' expectations	139	52.9
Friends and peers	100	38.0
School drug policies and regulations	82	31.1
Prescription drug monitoring program	19	7.2
More information about the dangers of prescription drug abuse should be given out in high schools.		
Yes	204	79.1
No	54	20.9

Intervention

Survey Questions	% Some Form of Agreement
In high school, if I was struggling with prescription drug abuse, I would feel comfortable to seek professional help.	52.8
In high school, if my friends were abusing prescription drugs, I would feel comfortable to tell their parents.	31.8
In high school, if my friends were abusing prescription drugs, I would feel comfortable to notify the authority.	21.2

Seeking Prescription Drugs

Survey Questions	% Some Form of Agreement
Overall, if I was interested in obtaining prescription drugs from my family when I was in high school, I would have been less likely to do so if I knew that the prescription drug monitoring program could detect my family's increasing prescription drug use.	73.8
Overall, if I was interested in obtaining prescription drugs from my peer/friends in high school, I would have been discouraged to ask them because of the prescription drug monitoring program .	54.2

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

Survey Questions

% Some
Form of
Agreement

In my senior high school year, I was aware of the **Prescription Drug Monitoring Program** in my state. 32.4

I think the **Prescription Drug Monitoring Program**, in this state, would reduce prescription drug abuse. 65.2

I think that the **Prescription Drug Monitoring Program** in this state is a good thing. 86.7

Conclusion

Consistent Abuse Rates

- 16.5% - 2009 North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- 18.9% - In this High School Study (Senior Year)

Conclusion

High school students' **primary sources** of illicit prescription drugs;

Peer and friends	57.0%
Family	13.6%
Doctor shopping	1.5%

Conclusion

- A PDMP would have a low **direct** impact on high school students' abuse of prescription drugs.

Conclusion

- A PDMP could have a substantial **indirect** impact on high school students' abuse of prescription drugs.
- Students would be concerned about a PDMP's detection of a family member seeking to replace prescription drugs that they had diverted.

References

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