Benzos, Blues, and Beans: What We Know About Prescription Drug Misuse and Sexual Risk Taking Behavior Among Adolescents

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Disclaimer

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Objectives

- By the end of this session participants will be able to:
  - identify at least two subpopulations of youth at highest risk for prescription drug misuse and sexual risk behavior
  - explain the pathways that link adolescent prescription drug misuse and sexual risk-taking behavior
  - describe at least two strategies to address the relationship between adolescent misuse of prescription drugs and teen pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs.
About Us...
RTI is an independent, nonprofit institute that provides research, development, and technical services to government and commercial clients worldwide. Our mission is to improve the human condition by turning knowledge into practice.
Agenda

Data

Pathways

Strategies
Tell Us A Little About Yourself…

• Your name
• What state you are from
• What funding stream your project is a part of
• Your role on the project
• What made you come to this training
Why this topic?
Let’s Get on the Same Page

- **Prescription drug misuse**: use of a prescription drug when a doctor did not prescribe it for you
- **Non-medical use**: use of a prescription drug that was not prescribed for you or that you took only for the experience or feeling it caused
- **Prescription drug abuse**: based on criteria in the DSM-IV (problems at work, home, and school; problems with family or friends; physical danger; and trouble with the law due to prescription drug use)
Pharming 101

**DEPRESSANTS/TRANQUILIZERS**
Ativan, Valium, Xanax, Lunesta

**OPIOIDS**
Codeine, Morphine, Fentanyl, Oxycontin, Percocet

**STIMULANTS**
Adderall, Ritalin, Dexedrine

Photo credit (all 3 photos): thegooddrugsguide.com
Let’s do the math...
Snapshot of Prescription Drug Misuse Among Teens

1 in 4 teens reports having misused or abused a prescription drug at least once in their lifetime.

That is a 33 percent increase over a five-year period.

This translates to about 5 MILLION TEENS, almost twice the population of Chicago.

(MetLife Foundation, 2013)
Snapshot of Prescription Drug Misuse Among Youth

• Q: True or False – Because ecstasy, cocaine, heroin and meth have been of concern longer, the rates of use among youth are higher than of prescription drug misuse

   FALSE

• Prescription drug misuse among youth is second only to marijuana use
Where is youth prescription drug misuse occurring?

Rank the 4 different U.S. regions by rates of prescription drug misuse among youth

The highest rates of teen births and STIs are in the same regions as prescription drug use among youth

(carbontax.org)

(US DHHS, 2013)
Where is youth prescription drug misuse occurring? (cont.)

Q: True or False – Youth prescription drug misuse is more of a rural problem than an urban problem

TRUE

Rural adolescents are 26% more likely to have misused prescription drugs than youth living in non-rural areas

(Havens, Young, & Havens, 2011)
Who is misusing prescription drugs?

Q: True or False – Among youth, African Americans and Latinos have the highest rates of misuse

FALSE

- Highest among White students
- Followed by Hispanic and Black students

(Johnston, O’Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2013)
Youth at Risk

• Youth who do not live in a 2-parent household are more likely to misuse prescription drugs

(dreamstime.com)

(US DHHS, 2013)
Youth at Risk (cont.)

• Youth who have experienced trauma are more likely to misuse prescription drugs

• Exposure to trauma is also associated with increased sexual risk behavior

(Mccauley et al., 2010; Wilson, Woods, Emerson, & Donenberg, 2012)
Where are teens getting prescription drugs?

• Q: True or False – Most teens who misuse prescription drugs are buying them from dealers at school
  FALSE

• More than 4 in 10 teens (42%) who have misused a prescription drug obtained it from their parent’s medicine cabinet

• 49% say that they obtained it from a friend

(MetLife Foundation, 2013)
Youth attitudes

- Research indicates that the risk of PDM is widely underestimated
  - 1/3 of youth believe:
    - “nothing wrong” with occasional non-medical use of Rx drugs
    - painkiller medications are “not addictive”
  - 40% of adolescents believe that non-medical use of Rx drugs is safer than other illicit drugs, even without a prescription

(MetLife Foundation, 2013)
Almost **one-third** of parents believe ADHD medication can improve a teen’s academic or testing performance, even if the teen does not have ADHD.

1 in 6 parents believes that using prescription drugs to get high is **safer** than using street drugs.

1 in 5 parents indicated they have given their teen a prescription drug that was **not prescribed** to them.
Conversations about prescription drugs

Q: True or False – In light of increased attention to prescription drug misuse, more than 30% of parents talk to their kids about prescription drugs

FALSE

• Only 14% of teens report prescription drugs were discussed
• 81% discussed marijuana
• 80% discussed alcohol

(MetLife Foundation, 2013)
Activity: Spread the word

In a pair:

- Pick one statistic that stood out to you
- Choose an audience (youth, parents, providers, or community)
- Develop a tweet that you could use to share this information with that group (remember a tweet has 140 characters or less).
Pathways Between Adolescent Prescription Drug Misuse and Sexual Risk-Taking Behavior
“Complex risk profile”
• Early initiation
• Unprotected sex
• Sex when drunk or high
• Exchange sex for money, drugs, place to stay
• Greater number of sex partners than marijuana users
• Misuse of multiple types of prescription drugs most strongly associated with risky sexual behavior
Early sexual initiation leads to prescription drug misuse

Females who initiated sexual intercourse at younger than 15 years more likely to be past year prescription drug misusers at ages 16 – 24

(Berenson & Rhaman, 2011)
Sexual Victimization Puts Youth At Higher Risk for Prescription Drug Misuse

- Adolescent single rape victims more likely to report nonmedical use of prescription drugs compared to non-victims

- Revictimized adolescents (reporting 2 or more rapes) report more non-medical prescription drug use

- Adolescent PTSD associated with increased odds nonmedical use of prescription drugs relative to those without PTSD

(Walsh et al., 2014)
Viagra misuse among adolescent males

Focus groups conducted with 43 males aged 18 and 19 years who used Viagra found that

• 19% mentioned using Viagra for reasons of sexual enhancement.
• Most reported taking it out of either curiosity (42%) or peer pressure (30%).
• Most had first heard about the medication from television advertisements (42%), family members (32%), or friends (19%).
• They were able to obtain the drug from their friends and family members, or they stole it from their father or grandfather.
Synthesis Activity
Early sexual initiation

Prescription drug misuse

• Unprotected sex
• Sex when drunk or high
• Exchange sex for money, drugs, place to stay
• ↑ number of sex partners

Sexual victimization
• Other trauma

PTSD

Curiosity
Peer pressure

TV ads

• Friends
• Parents’ medicine cabinets

Sexual enhancement
Rerouting the Pathways
I. Cross-Training

- Work with organizations who provide substance use prevention and treatment services
- Educate partners about co-occurring risks so that they will in turn provide referrals
- Train each other on how to make and receive referrals
2. Strengthen Community Partnerships

- Provide concrete, reliable referrals
- Prevent initiation of prescription drug misuse
- Know of local interventions targeting adolescents who have already initiated other substance use
- Leverage your combined efforts to raise awareness about these issues within the community and with stakeholders and youth
- Focus on school retention
3. Engage Parents

• Provide information about adolescent prescription drug misuse
  (notinmyhouse.drugfree.org/steps.aspx)
• Teach parents how to talk with their teens
• Increase parental involvement and strong familial bonds

Photo credit: www.singleblackmale.org
4. Enhance Your Program

- Be sensitive to teens who have been victimized and connect them to help
- Know the signs and symptoms of prescription drug misuse and where/how to refer youth appropriately
- Encourage youth to be actively involved in the family setting, at school and in the community
Pregnant teens between ages 15-17 report greater rates of substance use than older pregnancy women.
5. Educate, Engage, and Empower Youth

• Media awareness training to help students analyze the presence and accuracy of media messages about prescription drugs in their environment.
• Seize opportunities to educate youth about how prescription drug misuse is related to sexual-risk taking behavior
• Engage peer educators (be sure to screen/educate peer leaders within your program)
Gallery Walk Activity
Pop positivity, not pills.

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PEERX SHARE A DOSE OF REALITY: PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE IS DRUG ABUSE

www.teens.drugabuse.gov/peerx
Resources


Resources (continued)


Resources (continued)


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