Adolescents Prescription Drug Abuse: Behaviors and Consequences

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Aims of presentation:

• Review data from national and regional studies
  • Focus on adolescent and college populations in the United States.

• Present definitions and case examples in order to highlight the complexity of this form of substance abuse.

• Present data from my team’s research over the past five years
Nonmedical Use

• National Survey on Drug Use and Health (SAMHSA, 2011)
  • Nonmedical use of prescription medications
    • U.S. population (lifetime = 20.4% and past year = 6.3%)
    • 12-17 years old (lifetime = 10.6% and past year = 7.4%)
    • 18-25 years old (lifetime = 28.7% and past year = 14.3%)
    • 26+ years old (lifetime = 20.1% and past year = 4.8%)
  • Past year nonmedical use of Adderall®
    • Adderall® 18-22 years (College = 6.4% and Non-college = 3.0%)

• Monitoring the Future study (Johnston et al., 2011)
  • Past year nonmedical use of prescription medications has doubled in the past 20 years among U.S. college students (7% to 15%).
  • Past year nonmedical use of Vicodin®
    • Vicodin® 18-22 years (College = 4.9% and Non-college = 9.9%)
Past Month Use of Selected Illicit Drugs among Youths Aged 12 to 17 (NSDUH)
Past Month Use of Selected Illicit Drugs among Young Adults Aged 18 to 25 (NSDUH)
Presenter will provide research that demonstrates:

- Medical use/misuse of prescription medications
  - More than 1 in 5 adolescents prescribed controlled medications
    • report misuse in past 12 months
  - Medical use (without history of nonmedical use or medical misuse)
    • not associated with higher risk of drug abuse
- Nonmedical use of prescription medications
  • Nonmedical use (w/ or w/out medical use history) associated with higher risk of drug abuse
Presenter will provide research that demonstrates:

- **Diversion: Peers**
  - Most adolescents obtain prescription medications from peers (e.g., 90% for stimulants)

- **Diversion: Internet**
  - No evidence adolescents obtain prescription medications directly via the internet

- **Diversion: Cost**
  - Majority obtain prescription medications for free
Presenter will provide research that demonstrates:

- **Diversion: Medical users**
  - 12-24% of secondary students are approached to divert their controlled medication
  - 10-16% of secondary students actually divert their controlled medication
  - Medical misusers much more likely to divert their controlled medication
Presenter will provide suggestions for prescribers:

• Inform your patients of the ABCD’s (Advise dose, Beware don’t share, Control your medicine and Dispose correctly)

• Screen for SUD’s

• Consider medications w/ less abuse potential

• Limit & monitor refills (reconsider “prn”)

For More Information…