

Abstract there is  
oxycodone whose  
brand names include



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **Abstract**

Prescription drug abuse has increased in the recent years. More youth are being introduced to prescription drug abuse than anytime before. For the first time in the history of America, the number of new abusers of prescription drugs was at par with that of marijuana users. Depressants, stimulants and opioids have become among the most common causes of admissions in rehab centers. One important finding is that the rate of prescription drug abuse increased five fold while the rate of prescription of opioids increased. This means that most of these abused drugs are found in the house than bought over the counter.

It was also established that the youth are the greatest abusers of these drugs. People aged between 17 and 29 were found to be the most abusive in most of the studies. Finally, alcohol is the only drug that showed a substantial reduction in its rate of abuse.

## **Introduction**

Surprisingly, abuse of prescription drugs has taken an increasing trend for the last few years. The number of youth indulging in prescription drugs abuse has assumed an upward direction leading to concern among policy makers. In a study carried out recently, it was identified that abuse of painkillers was ranked the second most problematic issue in illegal drug abuse. It was beaten only by marijuana.

Many people deny abusing these drugs with the nonchalant supposition that they were recommended by the medical practitioners. National Institute of Drug Abuse defines drug abuse as the action of, “ taking a prescription  
<https://assignbuster.com/abstract-there-is-oxycodone-whose-brand-names-include/>

medication that is not prescribed for you, or taking it for reasons or in dosages other than as prescribed” (2005, par. 1).

While it might not seem harmful, prescription drugs abuse can have equally devastating effects like the illegal drugs. This paper intends to point out the extent of prescription drug abuse in American youth today.

## **Examples of Abused Drugs**

Several drugs are abused. Unlike illegal drugs, availability of prescription drugs makes it possible for the youth to access them. For instance, all they need is go to the cupboard, take out the drugs, and use them. National Institute of Drug Abuse further outlines the most abused prescription drugs. Among the most outlined drugs are opioids.

These are drugs prescribed as painkillers. They are also prescribed to patients that require depression of the central nervous system. They are prescribed mostly for anxiety and sleep disorder patients. This drug is also used by ADHD and narcolepsy patients as a stimulant. Under this group, there are several types including hydrocodone.

One of the brand names for hydrocodone is vicodin. There is Oxycodone whose brand names include OxyContin. Then there is propoxyphene whose brand names include Darvon. There is Hydromorphone whose brand names include Dilaudid.

There is meperidine including Demerol. Finally, there is Diphenoxylate, which includes Lomotil. Other prescription-abused drugs include Pentobarbita sodium whose brand names include Nembutal and Benzodiazepines, which

<https://assignbuster.com/abstract-there-is-oxycodone-whose-brand-names-include/>

include diazepam. They also include alprazolam like Xanax. These drugs are prescribed as central nervous system depressants. Commonly abused stimulants are Dextroamphetamine, which includes Dexedrine. They also include Methylphenidate like Ritalin and Concerta.

Finally, there are amphetamines like Adderall, Dexedrine, Dextrostat, Desoxyn, ProCentra, and Vyvanse and Benzedrine. Depressants are among the most abused prescription drugs. (McCabe, Knight, Teter and, Wechsler, 2004) defines depressants as “ chemical agents which destroy and depress any activity of the body parts especially it deactivates the central nervous system” (p.

32). They are used as prescriptions or taken illegally. There are two classes of depressants, barbiturates and benzodiazepines. While barbiturates are very effective when it comes to their designated roles, they can be extremely addictive and usually offer a high-level overdose potential. One of the main characteristics of having used a depressant are slurring in speech, feeling dizzy and most of all evidence of lack of coordination; effects closely related to those of alcohol.

This family of prescription drugs includes alcohol, narcotics, sedative-hypnotics, 1st generation antihistamines, and several anesthetics. The most widely used prescriptions of benzodiazepines in the USA include valium, Xanax and Librium. Medically, they are recommended to manage sleep disorders, reduce tension or anxiety and in some cases to reduce pain in patients with acute pain. They are safe if used properly. However, many individuals resort to abusing these drugs yet just like any other drugs;

<https://assignbuster.com/abstract-there-is-oxycodone-whose-brand-names-include/>

depressants can be very addictive if abused. Valium is the most abused of depressants. Stimulants are medications intended to facilitate brain functioning. These drugs have a thrilling effect and are mostly prescribed to relieve symptoms in conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, asthma, sleep disorders and other respiratory complications.

Since these drugs cause a sense of euphoria, they are constantly abused by young people in order to keep sleep at bay, heighten concentration or to pump up the energy levels. The most commonly misused stimulants are Amphetamine, Ritalin and Methylphenidate also referred to as ephedrine. These drugs are used as ' safe' substitutes for common illegal stimulants like cocaine and crystal meth. This is a very risky drift as the consequences are quite harmful and in some cases prove fatal.

Abuse of stimulants cause abnormal and precarious body temperatures, fatigue, sleep problems, paranoia, loss of appetite, aggression, delusions, sudden attacks and even death. However, these are dismal compared to the long-term effects of abusing these medications. Persistent abuse may result in acute problems such as malnutrition, coronary diseases, suicidal tendencies, panic attacks, mental disorders, addiction, and compromised immunity and even death (Smith, 2006).

## **Trends in America**

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (2007), for the first time in the History of the federal republic of America, the rate of new users of prescription drugs was as high as new users of marijuana.

According to the study, new users of prescription drugs who were between 12 and 17 years, almost equaling the rate of new users of marijuana. The study showed that new initiates of prescription drugs were estimates at 850, 000 by the year 2005. In the same year, new marijuana initiates were estimated at, 1, 139, 000. Study carried out earlier in 2003 pointed out that there were 913, 000 initiates to prescription drug abuse while marijuana initiates stood at 1, 219, 000.

The numbers in this statistical data highlights two important facts. First, the overall number of initiates in both prescription and marijuana drug abuse reduced. Second, the size of gap between new marijuana users and new prescription drug users reduced meaning that there were more initiates to prescription drugs as compared to marijuana users. During that year of research, 2005, the number of youth who reported to be using prescription drugs at that period stood at 840, 000 teenagers.

This made it the second most abused drug after marijuana. By the year 2010, the rate of prescription drug abuse was still rising. Brindle 2010 pointed out that the two out of every ten teenagers was abusing prescription drugs. What is very saddening is the number of new users every day.

According to her, 2, 500 teenagers were having a first attempt on prescription drugs for the main objective of getting high every day. In 2010, the use of prescription drugs continued to remain high. The use of OxyContin remained at 5. 1 percent in 2010.

This was a stable position for the last four years. However, there was a witnessed decrease in the use of Vicodin. There was a witnessed 8 percent decrease by 12th graders. This was a 1.

7 percent decrease as compared to the previous four years. One alarming discoveries by the report was that six, among the top ten most abused drugs were prescription drugs. They were drugs that would easily be bought over the counter. In addition, the report indicated that most of these drugs were given by friends who had also been given by their families, bought over the counter or stolen from other users in the family.

## **Alcohol consumption**

Brindle (2010) outlines the consumption of Alcohol in the United States. In his study, he points out that in overall the consumption of alcohol in the United States has declined. The number of people consuming alcohol in America has shown a steady decline as the years progressed.

In terms of regions, there were notable differences in the consumption of alcohol in the different regions of America. For instance, the South had spent 25% less than the national average of alcohol consumption and expenditure. Northeastern regions on the other hand were noted to have spent 22% more than the national average of consumption. There was a 9% and 12% increase from the Midwest and the West respectively (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

In terms of age, people above 65 were found to be lower consumers of alcohol as compared to the younger general. Just like the general population, the consumption of alcohol among teens and youth indicated a decline. The <https://assignbuster.com/abstract-there-is-oxycodone-whose-brand-names-include/>

report points out that the consumption of alcohol among people aged 12-17 reduced greatly 50% of consumption during 1979 to 17.6% as per 2002. For high school seniors, the number of students who had ever consumed alcohol continued to decrease. There was a notable difference a year after the other.

The following table shows the trend of alcohol consumption of high school seniors. Source: Brindle, 2010 On the other hand, there was a historical decline in consumption use for college freshmen. In 2003, the freshmen entering college recorded a record low drinking rate in the entire 38-year history of drinking survey taking for freshmen. Unlike any other year, the percentage of freshmen consuming beer frequently or occasionally dropped to as low as 44.

8%. This was a decline from a highest of 73.7% that was recorded in 1982. Similarly, other alcoholic drinks like wines and spirits dropped to the lowest ever recorded level during the entire existence of this study. The study pointed out that almost half; precisely 49% of college students in America did not take alcohol regularly. In a week, 31% of all the college students consumed five or less drinks. Just slightly above one out of every ten college students consumed ten drinks or an amount higher than this. In another survey carried by Harvard School of public Health and quoted by Brindle (2010), on average, the number of drinks taken by American students per week stood at 1.

5 bottles. In the continuation of this study, there were similar findings. The number of students abstaining from alcohol was reducing as years passed while the students increased the number of bottles consumed every week.

<https://assignbuster.com/abstract-there-is-oxycodone-whose-brand-names-include/>



## Opioids Abuse

Opioids are drugs that are derived from opium. They also include some synthetic drugs whose chemical characteristics are associated with opium. The most common opioids are heroin, Morphine Codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone and fentanyl. When consumed, this class of drugs offers the user a strong sense of pleasure and some kind of drowsiness accompanied by a feeling of calm.

Typically, these drugs are designed to relieve pain given their chemical reaction with the brain. When consumed, they attach themselves on the opioid receptors, which are present in the human brain. When this process occurs, the brain produces certain chemicals whose role is reduction of pain. Such chemicals include endorphin. In addition, consistent use of these drugs could lead to dependence leading to a strong form of addiction.

Chemically, the use of opioids causes an increase in the release of “euphoric” chemicals within the brain of the person consuming them. As time goes by, a similar amount of these chemicals would require a greater amount of opioid drug in question as compared to the beginning of using the drugs. Eventually, the amount of drug consumed continues to increase further and further leading to abuse. The greatest risk factors increasing the likelihood of becoming dependent or abusing opioids is age. It was identified that youth, between 20 and 29 are the most likely to abuse these drugs. According to University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine (2011), the prescription of opioids has gone high.

On the other hand, prescription of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) assumed a downward trend. In the opioids type of drugs, hydrocodone and oxycodone accounted for the highest number of prescriptions taking up 84.9% of prescriptions of the opioids family.

In relation to the same increase in opioids prescriptions, there has been witnessed a fivefold increase in opioids abuse. Organizations dealing with abuse and rehabilitation of drugs have reported that the number of cases pertinent to opioids drug abuse have gone up five times as compared to previous years. Specifically, the number highest number of abusers of these drugs has been noted to be between 18 and 25. The study pointed out that one out of every four people within this age bracket would abuse these kinds of drugs.

The report further details that “opioid overdose is now the second leading cause of accidental death in the United States and the prevalence is second only to marijuana” (par. 4). In another study carried out by Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) as quoted by (McCabe, Knight, Teter and, Wechsler, 2004), defines drug abuse as “...the nonmedical use of a substance for psychic effect, dependence or suicide attempt or gesture” (par.

5). For the case of opioids, it is the state where “the compulsive use of opioids harms a person’s health or social functioning, or when a person is addicted to or dependent on opioids” (par. 1). It was also identified that 22.5% of drug users who were aged 12 and above abused a pain reliever at some point. Oxycodone is one of the most commonly abused opioid drugs.

<https://assignbuster.com/abstract-there-is-oxycodone-whose-brand-names-include/>

Examples of oxycodone brands include OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet and Tylox. In most cases, these drugs are prescribed to people exhibiting moderate or severe pain. However, the drugs can be abused with the aim of getting the feeling of euphoria. These drugs are taken either through pill swallowing or by use of an injection.

Other than the mentioned effects of euphoria, the drugs also show some physical symptoms like low blood pressure, difficulties in breathing, headaches, and some times heart failure. Another common drug in the family of opioids is morphine. Apart from acting as a pain reliever, morphines are also employed as surgical anesthetics.

Like the effects experienced by the users of oxycodone, morphine users also experience euphoric feelings accompanied with physical symptoms. Abuse of these drugs is associated with dizziness, foul mood, sweating and nausea. Once an abuser develops tolerance, stopping the use of this drug or reduction of quantity could lead to withdrawal symptoms. Hydrocodone is another opioid that is abused often. However, the rate and potential of abuse of this drug is relatively lower than the first two. Its potential of abuse is mostly reduced by the fact that this drugs cannot be bought on its own. It is always combined with other drugs like Acetaminophen.

In this case, it becomes rather difficult for youth and teenagers to buy the drug just for the purpose of abuse. Like other opioids, this drug is also characterized by physical symptoms incase of abuse. The abuser can be characterized by dizziness, vomiting, drowsiness et cetera. Equally,

dependence leads to withdrawal symptoms if the dosage is reduced or stopped.

## **Stimulants abuse**

Stimulants abuse is on the upward trend in America especially among the youth and young adults.

The ever increasing pressures to make it in life and stay at par with others make young people be tempted to find a quick way through hence end up resorting to drugs. This is a common scenario in high school and college students all over the United States. Research indicates that students are increasingly using prescribed stimulants like Ritalin, Concerta, Adderall and Dexerdrine to help them be more focused, not to fall asleep, repress hunger and experience a general sense of elation. Initially, drugs like Adderall were meant to be used in severe cases of ADHD to boost their attention. However, research shows that students in tertiary institutions are two times more probable to use the stimulants without medical approval compared to those not in high school (McCabe, Knight, Teter and, Wechsler, 2004). According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health of 2003, the rates at which the drugs are being prescribed have also escalated. Since these drugs are lawfully prescribed and used in medical conditions, they become easily susceptible to abuse.

They are taken orally to enhance attention and alertness and inhaled or mixed with water and injected into the blood vessels to get the euphoric feeling (Klein-Schwartz, 2002 p. 219-223). Some teenagers suffering from ADHD do not take their prescribed medicines as indicated, preferring to pile

them up and distribute them amongst their peers during weekends as they party. Studies also indicate that these teenagers even go to the extent of putting their own prescribed drugs up for sale especially during the exams period. These drugs are commonly used with alcohol, other sanctioned prescriptions from drug stores and even unlawful substances such as cocaine and joints. On the streets, they are procured illegally and go by names such as speed, rippers, bennies, dexies and ritz.

The increase in the number of addiction treatment and rehabilitation centres is a sure indication that the problem is on rampage.

### **Depressants abuse**

Addiction to depressants results from extensive use of the drugs whether for medicinal purposes or illegally. Overdependence on the drugs can prove fatal particularly when used alongside other illegal drugs and substances. An evaluation of emergency rooms in 1993 by Drug Abuse Warning Network noted that almost 70% of cases related to drug abuse were attributed to benzodiazepines. At the same time, recent studies indicate that abuse of gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) is on the rise in the USA. Abusers use it to boost performance, induce sleep among other effects. In most cases, it is taken with alcohol and other substances to amplify its influence especially in places like gymnasiums by body builders, nightclubs, bars and in boisterous events.

These are regular places for teenagers and individuals aged 20 to 40 years. According to the US Drug Enforcement Administration, increases in date rapes have been linked to abuse of benzodiazepine. Rape cases resulting

from abuse of GHB are equally rampant though not reported or lack in evidence as the perpetrators have little recollection of what happened or the victim, if also was under the influence, may also not recall a thing. A survey on drug abuse and health indicated that an estimated 6 million individuals above 12 years of age use prescribed drugs for other purposes than medicinal. Among the abusers of opiate for instance, young adults showed the highest increase in levels in a period of 2002-2004. For the first time in the survey of abuse of prescribed medications, the figure among people aged 12 and above reached 2.4 million in 2004, a number that goes way beyond 2.

1 million; those who started abusing marijuana at that age. In 2005 alone, the use of stimulant drugs skyrocketed among 12th graders. 8.6% of the students misused amphetamine while 4.4% abused Ritalin.

## **Conclusion**

It is necessary that measures are taken to check the increase in abuse of prescription drugs. This is true considering the fact that most of these drugs are easily available in most households. In addition, the drugs are legal and can be bought legally over the counter. Policy makers have a daunting task of ensuring that they come up with prescription strategies that will not allow the youth to continue abusing these otherwise useful drugs.

## **Reference List**

Brindle, L. (2010). Addressing prescription drug abuse among youth and young adults.

Retrieved April 7, 2011, from <http://www.wphospitalnews.com/addressing-prescription-drug-abuse-among-youth-and-young-adults/> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Alcohol and public health.

Retrieved April 7, 2011, from <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>

Klein-Schwartz, W. (2002).

Abuse and Toxicity of Methylphenidate. *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*, 14, 2, 219-223. McCabe, S. E., Knight, J.

R., Teter, C. J.

and Wechsler, H. (2004). Non-medical Use of Prescription Stimulants among US College Students [electronic version]. *Addiction*, 99, 96-105 National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2005). Prescription medications. Retrieved April 7, 2011, from <http://drugabuse.gov/drugpages/prescription.html>

Office of National Drug Control Policy.

(2011). Prescription drug abuse prevention. Retrieved April 7, 2011, from [http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/prescr\\_drg\\_abuse.html](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/prescr_drg_abuse.html)

Smith, K. (2006, February, 2). Dangers of Stimulant Abuse. *The University Daily Kansan*. 888, 52-53. Retrieved from <http://www.kansan.com/stories/2006/feb/02/drugs/>

University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine (2011, April 6). Opioids now most prescribed class of medications in America. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved April 7, 2011, from [http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/04/110405161906.htm?utm\\_source=](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/04/110405161906.htm?utm_source=)

<https://assignbuster.com/abstract-there-is-oxycodone-whose-brand-names-include/>

feedburner&utm\_medium= feed&utm\_campaign= Feed%3A+sciencedaily+%28ScienceDaily%3A+Latest+Science+News%29