

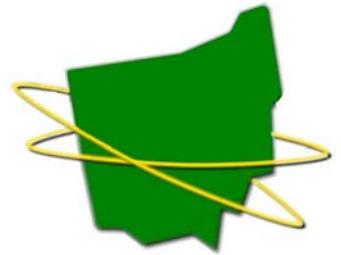


OSAM-O-GRAM

DATE: May 2003

DATELINE: Ohio

Wright State University
The University of Akron



Increases in Adderall Abuse Among High School and College-Aged Youth

In January 2003, OSAM Network Regional Epidemiologists in Akron-Canton, Columbus, Dayton and Youngstown areas reported increasing abuse of Adderall (a Schedule II amphetamine-based medication used as a treatment for ADHD) among high school and college-aged youth. This is the first significant mention of Adderall abuse since 1999 when the Network began monitoring drug trends in the state.

Adderall is a stimulant drug commonly prescribed for children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It may also be used for pain patients who are taking large amounts of opioid drugs in order to help them feel more awake and alert. This emerging trend of Adderall abuse is consistent with the continuing abuse of Ritalin (methylphenidate) among high school youth. According to the 2002 *Dayton Area Drug Survey*, about 7.8 percent of seniors (n = 2,406) reported non-medical use of stimulants like Ritalin at least once in their lifetimes. The survey predominantly includes suburban area high schools. Although the survey did not include Adderall abuse as a separate category, interviews with active users and front-line professionals in various areas of the state indicate dramatic increases in Adderall abuse among youth. As a treatment provider in the Dayton area said, "Adderall, big time! ... I mean that's coming up, I mean it's, ya know, increasing." According to these same active users and front-line professionals, Adderall is becoming even more popular than Ritalin.

Interviewer: *What about Ritalin? Is that abused?*

Law enforcement professional: *It doesn't seem like a lot of kids are on Ritalin anymore, it's like what, um... Adderall.*

There seems to be two distinct user groups who misuse the drug for different reasons. In some cases, Adderall is taken by students who want to remain awake so they can study late into the night. In other cases it is abused recreationally, usually in combination with other substances. The majority of abusers are white. The tablets are often sold or traded in schools by individuals who have prescriptions for them. A law enforcement professional from Dayton explained it in the following way:

I've had also in the past... um... kids selling their, their own drugs at school, Ritalin, Adderall all that... I had maybe four or five kids within one school that were all busted for doing that...

Given the growing number of juveniles who receive pharmaceutical treatment for ADHD, amphetamines and other stimulant abuse should be monitored carefully. This increase in use is particularly troubling given the reported increase in treatment admissions for methamphetamine abuse.

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Informants located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the January 2003 OSAM Network meeting.

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