

Serious concern in Arkansas and the U.S.

Misuse of prescription painkillers

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE is a serious concern in the U.S. According to data from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), about 2.8% of the population (12 or older) reported non-medical use of prescription drugs in the past month, 6.6% reported use in the past year, and 20.3% reported use at least once in their lifetime.¹



This puts non-medical prescription drug use behind the use of marijuana but ahead of all other drug categories.

Misuse/Abuse

PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS—including hydrocodone, oxycodone and methadone—are the most abused and account for the highest proportion of Emergency Department visits involving the misuse/abuse of prescription drugs.²

Data collected by the NSDUH shows:

- Arkansas has higher than average non-medical use of painkillers.
- This use appears to be especially high for young adults and teenagers.
- The problem appears to be increasing (Figure 1 displays data on past-year use).

Figure 1:
Arkansas & U.S. NSDUH:
Non-medical Use of Pain Relievers
in the Past Year - % of Respondents

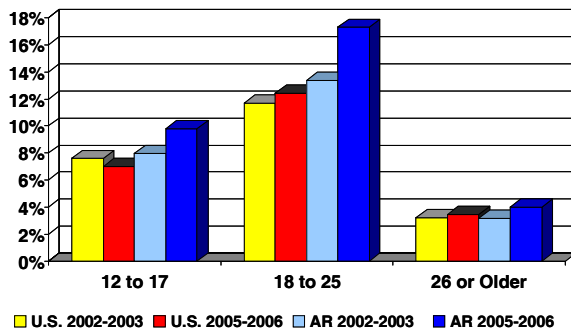
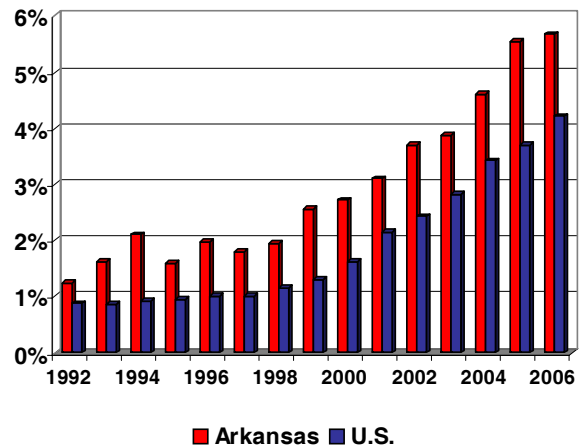


Figure 2 shows the impact of “Other Opiate” addiction on the Arkansas public treatment system compared to the U.S.³ (Here, “Other Opiates” include non-prescription use of methadone, codeine, morphine, oxycodone, hydromorphone, meperidine, opium and other drugs with morphine-like effects.) Even though this addiction comprises a relatively small proportion of the treatment population in Arkansas, the proportion has more than tripled since 1992.



Figure 2:
Arkansas & U.S. TEDS Admissions:
“Other Opiates” - % of Total



¹Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health can be obtained on the web at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/p0000016.htm#2k6>.

²From the April 6, 2007 NSDUH Report, *Patterns and Trends in Nonmedical Prescription Pain Reliever Use: 2002 to 2005* (<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k7/pain/pain.pdf>) and the New DAWN Report Issue 23 – *Emergency Department Visits Involving Nonmedical Use of Selected Pharmaceuticals* (<http://dawninfo.samhsa.gov/files/TNDR07EDvisitsNonmedicalUseForWeb.pdf>).

³Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) data can be found on the web at: <http://www.dasis.samhsa.gov/web/NewMapv1.htm>

Coming next issue: Use of Inhalants by Arkansas Youth

An Arkansas EPI-gram

THE STATE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL WORKGROUP BRINGS YOU THE FACTS ABOUT SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN ARKANSAS SPONSORED BY THE OFFICE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION