

100,000 Americans Die in Overdose Epidemic: Psychostimulants Third in Abuse List

CCHR advises parents to obtain facts behind dangers of prescribed stimulants that school- and college-age students abuse, erroneously thinking them safe.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The mental health industry watchdog, [Citizens Commission on Human Rights International \(CCHR\)](#) continues to monitor and report on concerns about the death rates in those taking or abusing psychotropic medications. It was responding to the recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announcement of 100,000 overdose deaths during the 12-month period ending in April 2021, with psychostimulants rating third, behind opioids of drugs implicated. Psychostimulants include those prescribed to treat "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder" (ADHD), which have a high abuse potential, along with methamphetamine.[1]



CCHR, mental health industry watchdog advises parents to obtain facts behind dangers of prescribed stimulants that school- and college-age students abuse, erroneously thinking them safe.

CCHR recommends parents take advantage of its [psychiatric drugs side effects database](#) to better educate themselves and teens on the risks of psychotropic meds, especially when abused.

CCHR obtained 2020 statistics from IQvia, a pharmaceutical data tracking company, which reports more than 9.5 million Americans are taking prescription psychostimulants, of which 3.1 million were in the 0-17 age group. An astounding 31.29 million Americans take prescription anti-anxiety drugs, which include benzodiazepines, including 1.15 million aged up to 17.[2]

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reported that in 2020, 4.4% of 12th graders have abused the ADHD psychostimulant, Adderall (amphetamine and dextroamphetamine) while 1.7% have abused methylphenidate (Ritalin).[3] Psychostimulants are often used for non-medical

reasons by an estimated 30% of U.S. college and university students, believing these will improve their study performance. Many students erroneously think that using Adderall, for example, is the same as drinking coffee, and that it is generally safe for anyone to use because it is prescribed by doctors.[4]

However, a Western Australian study, the world's first long-term data review of those using psychostimulants found they were 10.5 times more likely to fail to reach an age-appropriate educational standard than children diagnosed with ADHD but never medicated.[5] Dr. Martin Whitely, Ph.D., one of the researchers in the study and a former educator and Member of Parliament, has now launched his own website to also better educate parents.

Whitely points to the expected 2021 global sales of ADHD "medications" reaching \$22.5 billion—an incentive to keep marketing the drugs and notes: "But like the fabled Emperor's New Clothes, the growth of, and enthusiasm for, ADHD child drugging ignores the obvious. There is no scientific basis for diagnosing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and so-called 'ADHD medications' are amphetamines and similarly dangerous drugs, that temporarily alter behavior but risk damaging developing minds and bodies." [6]

"The pills [psychostimulants] would be bought and sold among students who had no idea what they were messing with," wrote Alan Schwartz, a New York Times reporter and author of ADHD Nation: Children, Doctors, Big Pharma, and the Making of an American Epidemic.[7] The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration says methylphenidate can lead to addiction and that "psychotic episodes, violent behavior and bizarre mannerisms have been reported" with its use.[8] The manufacturer of methylphenidate admits it is a drug of dependency.[9]

Prescription stimulants are abused by taking them orally, snorted, or injected; MDMA, also known as ecstasy, is usually taken orally.[10]

Provisional drug overdose death counts are based on death records received and processed by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). "The 12-month period ending in April 2021 is the first time we've seen over 100,000 estimated deaths due to drug overdose," said lead researcher Farida Bhuiya Ahmad, the mortality surveillance lead at NCHS.[11]

From 2019 to 2020, there was also an increase in benzodiazepine overdose emergency department visits and in benzodiazepine deaths, according to research published by the CDC. These visits increased 23.7% per 100,000 emergency department visits from 2019 to 2020, with increases for those with and without opioid involvement (34.4 and 21%, respectively). Overall benzodiazepine deaths increased 42.9 percent from April-June 2019 to April-June 2020; prescription and illicit benzodiazepine deaths increased 21.9 and 519.6% respectively.[12]

Nearly 841,000 people have died since 1999 from a drug overdose in the U.S., with deaths involving psychostimulants ever increasing. The largest increase in death rates involving psychostimulants occurred in the Northeast (43.8%).[13] Death rates for overdoses involving

psychostimulants were generally higher among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) persons than among other racial and ethnic groups.[14]

CCHR, which was established in 1969, has been a [resource for parents](#) to provide them with information they may not easily obtain from psychiatric or medical sources that rely upon biomedical treatments. The group alerts to new research and studies that may assist parents and others. It has helped achieve more than 190 laws worldwide that increase mental health protections.

[1] Dan Keating and Lenny Bernstein, "100,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in 12 months during the pandemic," The Washington Post, 17 Nov. 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/11/17/overdose-deaths-pandemic-fentanyl/>; "Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts," Vital Statistics Rapid Release, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

[2] <https://www.cchrnt.org/psychiatric-drugs/people-taking-psychiatric-drugs/>

[3] "Monitoring the Future Study: Trends in Prevalence of Various Drugs," National Institute on Drug Abuse, 26 May 2021, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/trends-statistics/monitoring-future/monitoring-future-study-trends-in-prevalence-various-drugs>

[4] Martha Jackson, "Are You Surprised By the 4 Most Abused Study Drugs?" Detox.com, 28 Feb. 2018, <https://www.detox.com/drugs-alcohol/are-you-surprised-by-the-4-most-abused-study-drugs-02-28-2018/>

[5] Martin Whitely, "World's First Long Term Data on ADHD Drugs From Raine Study Review," Speed Up and Sit Still, 17 Feb. 2010, http://www.speedupsitstill.com/raine_study_press_release/

[6] "Welcome to ADHDisBS.com We expose the lies and half-truths promoted by the ADHD Industry!" 6 Oct. 2021, <https://www.adhdisbs.com/post/welcome-to-adhd-is-bs>

[7] "New Federal Statistics Show Teen Overdose Deaths From ADHD & Anti-Anxiety Drugs On The Rise," CCHR International, 22 Aug. 2017, <https://www.cchrnt.org/2017/08/23/teen-overdose-deaths-from-adhd-anti-anxiety-drugs-on-the-rise/>, citing: Gareth Cook, "Big Pharma's Manufactured Epidemic: The Misdiagnosis of ADHD," Scientific American, 11 Oct. 2016, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/big-pharma-s-manufactured-epidemic-the-misdiagnosis-of-adhd>

[8] "Methylphenidate [A Background Paper]," U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Oct. 1995, p. 16

[9] https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2013/010187s077lbl.pdf

[10] <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/featured-topics/psychostimulant-cocaine-race-ethnic-minorities.html>

[11] Steven Reinberg, "More than 100,000 people died of drug overdoses in one year in U.S., report says," UPI, 17 Nov. 2021, https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2021/11/17/100thousand-drug-overdoses-one-year/6731637177250/

[12] "2019 to 2020 Saw Increase in Benzodiazepine Overdose ED Visits," Health Day, 31 Aug 2021, <https://consumer.healthday.com/2019-to-2020-saw-increase-in-benzodiazepine-overdose-er-visits-2654799793.html#toggle-gdpr>

[13] <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/deaths/index.html>

[14] <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/featured-topics/psychostimulant-cocaine-race-ethnic-minorities.html>

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