

Mugs and Drugs:
A Look at Today's Counter-Culture Trends and Their Impact on Oral Health

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Presenter Disclosures for Betsy Reynolds, RDH, MS

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MUGS: The Faces of Today's Counterculture

Split Tongue

Begins with piercing

Laser splitting or scalpel severing of fascia

Some prefer the gradual monofilament ("weed whacker thread") pulling

Sides move separately following healing

3-D Body Art

Includes implanted jewelry, "laser"-cautery branding and pseudosurgical reformations of the body

Common Subcutaneous Implants

- Beads
- Transdermal spikes
- Captive rings
- Jewel casings

Body Reformation

Primarily done on ears

Involves extended knowledge of cartilage and healing

Common examples are "Star Trek" and catlike ear reformations

Headliners: Elf Ears Are the Rage Among Quirky Young Adults; Andrea Canning and Susan Donaldson James; reporting for ABC News; 4/7/11

The look has been around since the 1960s television show, 'Star Trek' and has also been made famous by Liv Tyler's elfin look in 'Lord of the Rings'

The procedure is very painful and difficult to heal—but one blogger claiming to be a plastic surgeon said that 'improve the experience of listening to music'

Branding

Uses cautery to produce intentional keloid scarring

Repetitive scabbing and healing forces scar tissue to build up

Extreme care must be taken to avoid secondary infection

Cutting

A form of body modification, the skin is cut by scalpel and allowed to heal with scarring

CAUTION: The 'art' of cutting differs dramatically from the self-mutilating practice of cutting as a means to 'purge'

People who cut or 'self injure' are not a danger to others—the self-injury acts to diffuse overwhelming emotions and may in fact reduce the possibility of suicide attempts

For some young people, self-abuse is an extreme coping mechanism that seems to help relieve stress; for others it's a way to make deep emotional wounds more visible

'Cutting has become a coping behavior for young people, and it has gained momentum. It can become a go-to behavior for people when they sustain a self-esteem hit.'—Dr. Sharon Chirban; psychologist and expert on cutting and related disorders; Harvard University

Cutting can be habit forming and can become a compulsive behavior — meaning that the more a person does it, the more he or she feels the need to do it

The brain starts to connect the false sense of relief from bad feelings to the act of cutting, and it craves this relief the next time tension builds

When cutting becomes a compulsive behavior, it can seem impossible to stop. So cutting can seem almost like an addiction, where the urge to cut can seem too hard to resist

Called the 'new age anorexia', the practice of self-abuse or mutilating behavior is on the rise

Research suggests that 14%-21% of teens and young adults have self-harmed

According to a 2011 CIHI report, roughly 17,500 Canadians—an average of 48 a day—were admitted to hospital in the previous year for treatment of 'self-injury' (described as attempted suicide and self-mutilation)

Young women aged 15 to 19 were the most likely to self-injure—at a rate more than double that of their teen male counterparts--Source: report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information

Headliners: Experts Try to Learn Why Young People Hurt Themselves;As reported by Lindsey Tanner; AP writer; Idaho Statesman; 6/5/06

Nearly 1 in 5 students at two Ivy League schools—Princeton and Cornell—say they have purposely injured themselves by cutting, burning, or other methods

Among the Ivy League students who harmed themselves, about 50% said they'd experienced sexual, emotional, or physical abuse that researchers think can trigger self-abuse

The results of the survey are similar to other estimates on this frightening behavior—counselors say it's happening at colleges, high schools, and middle schools across the country

'Unless we start talking about it and making it more acceptable for people to come forward, it will remain hidden.'

-Dr. Daniel Silverman; study co-author and Princeton's director of health services

Headliners: Celebrity Cutters: 7 Beauties Who Hurt Themselves; David Freeman; reporting for CBSNews; 11/10/10; retrieved on 6/15/13 at: http://www.cbsnews.com/2300-204_162-10005485.html

Cutting and other self-injury practices are not just for every day folks—celebrities are also coming forward with their own stories of this disturbing trend

Being a royal is not protection against the emotional difficulties that can lead to cutting—in a 1995 interview with the BBC, Princess Diana revealed that she cut her arms and legs, saying: "You have so much pain inside yourself that you try and hurt yourself on the outside because you want help."

Christina Ricci has spoken openly of her self-injuring behavior—when an interviewer for Spin magazine noticed red marks on her arm, she said she had put out cigarettes on her skin; "It didn't hurt. You get this adrenaline rush. You can actually faint from pain. It takes a second, a little sting, and then it's like you don't feel anything. It's calming, actually."

Actress Megan has acknowledged cutting herself, although she told People magazine, "I would never call myself a cutter. Girls go through different phases when they're growing up, when they're miserable and do different things, whether it's an eating disorder or they dabble in cutting."

Angelina Jolie admitted in an interview with USA Today that she was cutting during a rocky patch in her teens and early twenties: "It's that middle stage when you might not know what life means that is the dangerous time. But I don't have that anymore."

Headliners: Teens Share Internet Injury Videos; Liz Szabo; reporting for USA Today; 1/27/11

In an article appearing in Pediatrics, researchers reported on an 'alarming new trend'—teens and young adults are creating and sharing YouTube videos about cutting, burning and other self-harm practices

The top 100 videos analyzed for the study had been viewed more than 2 million times (viewers rated the videos highly with an average score of 4.6 out of 5)—many of the screened videos demonstrated 'how to' techniques

'The website won't cause this behavior but it can give [viewers] a community of support, so it normalizes it. It breaks my heart.'--Liz Perle; co-founder; Common Sense Media

Headliners: Cutting is NOT Something to Joke About; Jade Watkins; reporting for the Daily Mail; posted online 1/7/13; accessed 6/15/13 at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2258778/Cut-Bieber-Miley-Cyrus-weighs-sick-Twitter-trend.html>

Justin Bieber attempted to put controversy behind him when he asked his fans for forgiveness after photos emerged of him allegedly smoking marijuana but a 'Cutting for Bieber' trend on Twitter took the incident to a whole new and sick level

A morbid and dangerous mock campaign started by online pranksters urged Bieber fans to self-harm themselves in protest to the controversial images of the pop star

Twitter users and Bieber fans posted graphic images—including ones of themselves with slashed wrists, surrounded by blades and blood

Since becoming aware of the trend, fellow Twitter fan Miley Cyrus weighed in on the subject, begging individuals to put an end to it: '#cut4bieber? Cutting is NOT something to joke about. There are people who are actually suffering from self-harm, this is so disrespectful.'

Headliners: Self-Embedding: Image of a Horrid New Ritual; Susan Pigg; Living Reporter; Toronto Star; 12/5/08

Staples, needles, paper clips, pencil lead, shards of wood, glass and plastic—all part of the 'next step' new arsenal among troubled teens who have grown bored with simply piercing or cutting themselves

While cutting is popular for endorphins it releases, self-embedding produces a longer-lasting pain—distracting teens from mental pain brought on by physical or mental abuse

Ironically, it is radiologists—not child psychologists or physicians—who have brought attention to what they have called an 'alarming trend'

'Adolescence is painful for some of our kids—incredibly painful. They feel it's easier to heal a physical wound like this than their emotional pain.'--Dr. William Shiels; chief of radiology at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, OH

The dental team is in a unique position to detect self-injury and help those who cut

Self Injury Awareness Day is March 1

A tremendous resource:

Self Abuse Finally Ends ('S.A.F.E.') Alternatives

(800)-366-8288

www.selfinjury.com

It's time to do DRUGS...

Substance abuse is on the rise worldwide—and Canada is not immune

Here are some Canadian statistics on drug and alcohol abuse:

47,000 Canadian deaths are linked to substance abuse annually--Source: Health Officer's Council of British Columbia

From Ontario:

- 23% of Ontario students report that they were offered, sold, or given a drug at school in the last year—that's about 219,000 students
- 42% of Ontario students surveyed have used an illicit substance in the last year
- 83% of Ontario students in grade 12 drink alcohol—49% of grade 12 students admit to binge drinking

And from Saskatchewan:

- In a 2008 study, 23% of 14 year-olds and 70% of 17 year-olds in Saskatchewan reported drinking 5+ within a 2-hour period at least once in the past month--Government of Saskatchewan; Department of Health

Street youth are 11 times more likely to die of drug overdose and suicide--Source: Public Health Agency of Canada

Substance abuse has cost the Canadian health care system \$8 billion--Source: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

Female addicts are 54% more likely to die prematurely because of their drug use--Source: University of Toronto

B.C. marijuana crops generate an estimated \$5 to \$7 billion annually--Source: Edmonton Journal

For every \$5 spent on drug rehabilitation by the Canadian government, \$95 is spent on incarceration of drug users--Source: Health Officer's Council of BC

60% of illicit drug users in Canada are between the ages of 15 and 24--Source: Statistics Canada

Pedestrians under the influence of alcohol accounted for 12.3% of alcohol related road deaths in Canada--Source: Traffic Injury Research Foundation

Children of addicts are up to 9 times more likely to develop an addiction of their own--Source: Web4Health

Oxycodone prescriptions (known by brand names Oxycontin and Percocet) have increased 850% in 10 years--

Source: Globe and Mail

Alcohol Abuse

More Leafy Statistics:

- Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in Canada
- 79% of people in Alberta over the age of 15 drink to some extent
- 24% of offenders entering federal custody (2 years' imprisonment or more) report having been under the influence of alcohol when they committed the crime
- More than 2,700 children are born each year with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Motor vehicle crashes, liver cirrhosis, suicides, esophageal cancer, and arrhythmias were the leading causes of alcohol-related deaths--MADD Canada

Almost all (97%) of problem adult drinkers began drinking before the age of 21

'The younger a teen is when he starts drinking alcohol, the more likely he is to hit the bottle to relieve stress once he's an adult...the likelihood significantly increases for those who start at age 14 or younger.'

- 83% of grade 12 Ontario students admit to using alcohol
- 49% of Ontario grade 12 students admit to binge drinking
- Among Ontario grade 11 drinkers, 13 years was the average age of first exposure, and 14 years was the average age for first intoxication experience.

Headliners: Use of Alcohol Before Age 21 Impairs Brain Development, Multiplies Chances of Addiction; As reported by the Idaho Office of Drug Policy; www.odp.idaho.gov

Medical authorities agree that much critical brain development occurs between the ages of 12 and 21—if alcohol is being abused during this critical time, 'brain wiring' is affected

Alcohol acts as a depressant which slows brain activity and hinders development—research has demonstrated that the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory can be 10% smaller in young drinkers

'The adolescent brain is much more sensitive to alcohol toxicity than adults', including being vulnerable to cell death. Adolescents showed much more frontal cortical damage than adults. We found that one high dose of alcohol caused significant loss of brain stem cells."--Dr. Fulton Crews; director; Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies; Univeristy of North Carolina School of Medicine

Early drinking multiplies chances of addiction:

- Children who start drinking by age 13 have a 45% chance of becoming alcohol dependent—SIX TIMES the rate for those starting at 21
- Starting at 17 increases the risk by FOUR TIMES and, at 19, dependency rates are TRIPLED

Underage drinking is a gateway to other drugs:

- Children who start drinking by 15 have a 67% chance of using illegal drugs—they are 20 times more likely to use marijuana and 50 times more likely to use cocaine
- 95% of surveyed meth users said they started drinking by 15

Alcohol fosters risky behavior:

Binge drinking kills more young people than all illegal drugs COMBINED

Young drinkers are much more likely to be injured or killed in accidents, engage in violence, suffer depression, and engage in risky sexual practices

Young people who do not drink cite disapproval by parents as the number one reason for abstinence—adolescents say parents have more influence on their lives than peers and surveys show that fewer children drink when parents keep track of where they are

Headliners: The Underage Drinking Epidemic; Reported by Emily Listfield; appearing in Parade; 6/12/11

While underage drinking has been going on for generations, a new (and far more troubling) issue is the rising trend of extreme underage drinking

According to the CDC, about 90% of all teen alcohol consumption occurs in the form of binge drinking

'We're seeing kids coming in with blood alcohol levels in the mid-0.3's, even 0.4, which is four to five times the legal limit for driving. That's the level at which 50% of people die. Ten years ago, we saw those levels only in chronic alcoholics.'--Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien; emergency medicine physician and assistant professor; Wake Forest University School of Medicine (North Carolina)

Approximately 200,000 adolescents visit emergency rooms each year because of drinking-related incidents and more than 1,700 college students die

“Underage drinking doesn’t discriminate. Whether you are an upper-middle-class, straight-A student or from the inner city, it impacts all demographics and communities. And it often peaks in May and June, when kids are celebrating proms and graduations. We call it ‘The Killing Season’.”--Arian Lopez; director of community outreach for the SoBeSober program for teens (Miami)

Adolescents tend to drink differently than adults—their goal is not to sit around enjoying a glass or two of wine over the course of an evening but to get as drunk as possible, as quickly and cheaply as possible

Unfortunately, there are more—and more dangerous—ways to accomplish this than ever before

The practice of **mixing alcohol with super-caffeinated energy drinks**; the marketing of flavored malt beverages in 23.5 ounce cans; a shift in preference from beer to hard liquor; and the influence of social media have all raised the stakes

The craze for combining energy drinks with alcohol is particularly troubling

A recent U.S. survey of over 4,000 students from more than 10 universities found that about 25% of the students who had a drink in the past 30 days were consuming alcohol with energy drinks—either premixed beverages or Red Bull and vodka

Those students consuming caffeinated alcoholic beverages got intoxicated twice as often and drank more per session than those who had alcohol without caffeine

The caffeinated students were much more likely to be injured, much more likely to be taken advantage of sexually or to take advantage of someone else sexually, and much more likely to drive drunk

In the Land of the Leaf:

- Health Canada approved the sale of pre-mixed alcoholic energy drinks at liquor stores in 2010—despite having warned people not to mix alcohol with energy drinks
- The department issued a directive to liquor boards across the country to clarify that alcoholic beverages can have caffeine in them—just as long as the stimulant is derived from an ingredient that naturally contains caffeine
- Translation: This meant alcoholic energy drinks were fine because the caffeine came from a natural source—usually guarana
- But, as Postmedia News reported, sales of pre-mixed alcoholic energy drinks—the kind that mix sugar, booze and caffeine (up to the equivalent of five cups of coffee) into one noxious ‘party in a can’ — increased 296% between April 2005 and April 2010--As reported by Jordana Divon; for the Daily Brew; 27 May, 2012; accessed 9/29/14 at: <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/alcoholic-energy-drink-sales-increase-canada-despite-health-194745342.html>

Some of the reasons the drinks have health experts concerned:

- The body reacts when the liver is ‘at capacity’ by triggering fatigue—when caffeine is added, fatigue is avoided
- Another factor involves the heart—stimulants (such as caffeine) raise heart rate while depressants (like alcohol) lower heart rate which often results in ‘neural confusion’
- Caffeine is a diuretic and, when added to alcohol, increase the odds of severe dehydration

On 18 October 2011:

- Health Canada announced its decision to regulate most energy drinks as ‘food’
- Also contained in the decision by the Food & Drug Regulatory: ‘Prohibition of premixed alcoholic beverages with caffeinated energy drinks. The use of caffeinated drink beverages as an ingredient in premixed alcoholic beverages will be prohibited.’

But none of this is apparently stopping young Canadians from making these concoctions their party drink of choice

- A 2010 survey of 465 University of Victoria students revealed that 23% admitted they had consumed caffeinated alcoholic beverages in the past 30 days—and reported consuming at least two of these drinks each time
- It should be noted that, according to the report, the pre-mixed energy cocktails are not always the culprit—many young adults are purchasing regular energy drinks from corner stores and mixing them with alcohol after the fact
- These energy drinks typically contain more caffeine than the pre-mixed brands

Major medical associations have warned that too much caffeine can be dangerous for children who have less ability to process the stimulant than adults while the American Academy of Pediatrics adds that caffeine has been linked to harmful effects on developing neurologic and cardiovascular systems

In November 2012, the FDA said that it had received 92 reports over 4 years that cited illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths after consumption of 5-hour Energy drink—Monster Energy Drink was also cited in reports of several deaths

Anais Fournier, 14, suffered a heart attack brought on by ‘caffeine toxicity’ after drinking two cans of Monster Energy Drink— described by its makers as a ‘killer energy brew’

‘[Anais] was at the mall with her friends the night before, and had a 24-ounce energy drink. She drank another one less than 24 hours later, even though she knew I do not allow them because I know they are bad for you. She went into cardiac arrest three hours later at home.’--Fournier's mother, Wendy Crossland

The amount of caffeine Fournier drank in the two Monster energy drinks is about the same as that found in 14 cans of Coca Cola—and is almost five times the recommended caffeine limit from the American Academy of Pediatrics

One more new caffeinated product:

Colgate-Palmolive applied for a U.S. patent in October 2012 for an innovative new toothbrush that releases chemicals straight into the mouth when a person brushes—and caffeine is on the list of appealing ‘flavors’ to be delivered in this novel way

Teen’s growing preference for hard liquor over beer is also setting off alarms—hard liquor is increasingly replacing beer in drinking games and downing ‘shots’ is often a prelude to a night on the town

‘Everyone’s so much friendlier after a couple of drinks. It takes the pressure off. And if you want to get drunk quickly, shots are key. There’s a sense that you need to be wasted to go to a party, and if you’re not, you won’t have fun. Certain events, like Halloween and homecoming, its kind of guaranteed that kids are going to end up in hospitals.’--Helene F.; junior in Colorado college

Girls, long trusted as the ‘more responsible sex’, are now matching boys as regular binge drinkers

‘The difference in female physiology means that teen girls feel greater impairment from alcohol and encounter alcohol-related problems faster, including brain damage, cancer, cardiac complications, and other medical disorders. Any alcohol is a drug with real health and medical consequences.’--Edward Hill, MD; AMA president-elect

Headliners: Diet Soda + Booze = A Bigger Buzz; Cecile Marczinski, PhD; study author; assistant professor; Department of Psychology; Northern Kentucky University; results appearing in Health; 6/13

Mixed drinks containing hard liquor and diet soda has been shown to increase drunkenness by 18% when compared to imbibers who ingested cocktails mixed with regular soda

‘A diet mixer has no calories for the stomach to digest, so the alcohol hits the bloodstream faster.’--Marczinski

Headliners: Alcohol Use, Binge Drinking Linked to 23,000 U.S. Female Deaths; United Press International (UPI); posted 1/8/13 at: http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2013/01/08/Alcohol-use-binge-drinking-linked-to-23000-US-female-deaths/UPI-34211357688222/; accessed on 6/15/13

According to a Vital Signs report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 14 million U.S. women binge drink about three times a month at an average of six drinks per binge

In addition, the report found about 1-in-8 women and 1-in-5 high school girls report binge drinking—half of all high school girls who drink alcohol reported binge drinking

The report found that binge drinking causes about 23,000 deaths among women and girls in the United States each year

Canadian Women and Booze:

- The latest numbers from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey suggest nearly 30% more women engage in risky drinking than a decade ago (‘risky drinking’ is measured as five or more drinks at a sitting, once or more a month)

Many medical experts are blaming the aggressive marketing of ‘alcopops’—like hard lemonade—for luring the underage girls into trying their first drink

Teenage girls who have tried alcopops or have heard of them say they were under the impression that the drinks have less alcohol than beer—when in fact they contain 4.5-6% alcohol (about the same as beer)

A new front is developing in the war on drugs—risk-taking teens are part of the problem; parents are the other. The feeling among people, especially adults, is that youth drinking is a 'rite of passage'—parents often feel there is nothing they can do about it but hold their breath and hope kids can make it through--Source: David Jernigan; Research Director; Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth; Georgetown University

Because many adults drank as teenagers themselves, they are more 'permissive' with their children wanting to drink alcohol before reaching adulthood

Headliners: During September 2004, two students died during opening weeks of class at the University of Colorado (Boulder) and Colorado State University

Samantha Spady, 20, was found dead on September 5 with a 0.436 blood-alcohol level—the high school homecoming queen and Colorado State University freshman had binged on an estimated 30-40 drinks

At Colorado State University, an alcohol task force was formed in response to Samantha Spady's death—a few blocks away from where her task force was meeting, a bar was having its weekly promotion: four drinks for the price of one

Less than 2 weeks after Samantha's death, Lynn Gordon Bailey, 18, died after an apparent hazing incident involving alcohol—his blood-alcohol level was 0.328

'How come they [Chi Psi fraternity members] put six bottles of liquor and six bottles of wine in front of them to drink in half-an-hour before they go down to a fraternity party with kegs of beer? It just doesn't square with us.'--Michael Lanahan, Bailey's stepfather

For more info: www.gordie.org

Several students at CU and CSU said the deaths—while tragic—have not changed their drinking habits

'Yeah, I mean, we thought about it but I think we went and got drunk that night.'--Cody Eberl, 22, CU senior

Tidbits for Dental Practice:

- Monitor alcohol content in homecare recommendations
- Watch for signs and symptoms of possible abuse/dependence
- Heavy drinking can increase the risk for certain cancers—especially those of the upper digestive tract (mouth, throat, pharynx, larynx and esophagus) liver, and breast
- It is not just heavy drinking that increases cancer risk—even drinking small amounts of alcohol increases the risk of these cancers, and the more you drink, the greater the risk

Headliners: A Chat About Drinking; Cochrane Library; as reported by Melissa Healy; staff writer; Los Angeles Times; 4/23/07

In a review of 21 separate clinical trials, researchers at Newcastle University of England and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine found that brief interventions by a physician reduced alcohol consumption by an average of FOUR DRINKS A WEEK!!!!

The study should motivate more physicians to tackle the delicate discussion of problematic alcohol consumptions and have greater confidence that their input can make a difference

Prescription Drug Abuse

According to Partnership for a Drug-Free Canada: (www.canadadrugfree.org)

A 2012 alcohol and drug use survey showed opioids are among the most commonly used prescription drugs—almost one in six Canadians aged 15 and older reported having used the narcotic pain relievers in the previous 12 months

Opioid addiction has become a major public-health crisis in the last 15 years—Canadians currently consume more of the morphine-like drugs per capita than the citizens of any country except the United States

A recent Ontario study concluded that opioid-related deaths rose 242% between 1991 and 2010—from 12.2 deaths per million in the first year of the study to 41.6 deaths per million in its last--Source: Tara Gomes, a scientist with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Toronto

Headliners; Rx Problem Now an Epidemic; Lisa Girion, Scott Glover, and Doug Scott; reporting for the Los Angeles Times; appearing in the Idaho Statesman; 9/18/11

Propelled by an increase in prescription narcotic overdoses, drug deaths now outnumber traffic fatalities

Drugs exceeded motor vehicle accidents as a cause of death in 2009—killing at least 37,485 people nationwide CDC

While most major causes of preventable death are declining, drugs are an exception—the death toll has DOUBLED in the last decade and claims a life every 14 minutes

In terms of sheer numbers, the death toll is highest among people in their 40's

Overdose deaths involving prescription painkillers (including OxyContin and Vicodin) and anti-anxiety drugs (such as Valium and Xanax) more than TRIPLED between 2000 and 2008

It was estimated that the United States spent over a TRILLION dollars on prescription medication in 2013

Headliners: U.S. Priority on Illegal Drugs Debated as Pill Abuse Rises; Damien Cave and Michael Schmidt; New York Times News Service; appearing in the Idaho Statesman; 7/17/12

Recent studies are increasingly demonstrating that abuse of prescription medications are the nation's biggest drug problem—representing a shift from illicit substance like cocaine and heroin

'The United States was worried about cocaine and heroin for years but whether or not...policies worked or not doesn't matter because [policy makers] are now worried about Americans using prescription drugs.' --Morris Panner; former counternarcotics prosecutor in New York and at the U.S. Embassy in Columbia; current advisor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government

Of the 36,450 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2008, 20,044 were from prescription pain killers—more than ALL illicit drugs combined

Headliners: Side Effects of States' Crackdown on Painkillers; www.Cincinnati.com; posted 9/8/13; accessed on 8/29/14 at: <http://archive.cincinnati.com/article/20130908/NEWS01/309080044/Side-effects-states-crackdown-painkillers>

Since 2010, Ohio and Kentucky have taken aim at closing pill mills that dispensed addictive drugs such as oxycodone and hydrocodone—the unregulated clinics drew people hundreds of miles from other states to feed their habit

The crackdown is making a difference, officials say—prescriptions for oxycodone and hydrocodone are on the decline in both states by up to 10% and doctors are more cautious about prescribing addictive painkillers

It is a small reversal that follows a 300% explosion in prescriptions for opioid painkillers nationwide between 1999 and 2010

However, the increase in pain pill prescription abuse fueled a rise in heroin use and overdose deaths—the heroin supply increased, its price dropped and dealers focused on mostly white suburban and rural users who had tried prescription painkillers

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports a 55% increase in heroin-related overdose deaths nationwide in the ten years between 2000 to 2010—and four national studies show heroin users first abused prescription narcotics

Headliners: Heroin's Resurgence as 'Problem Drug' in Canada; CBC News; 6 Feb 2014; accessed on 29 Sept 2014 at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/heroin-s-resurgence-as-problem-drug-in-canada-1.2525103>

Heroin abuse is seeing a resurgence in popularity that is worrying Canadian addiction experts

According to Dr. Evan Wood from the University of British Columbia, addicts who are finding prescription drug addiction (such as addiction to OxyContin) too expensive or the pills too hard to obtain, turn to more readily available heroin—contributing to heroin's return 'as a problem drug in our society'

Heroin is cheap and potent—a \$25 bundle gives the same high as an \$80 OxyContin pill

Heroin is also dangerous because there is no way to know exactly what is in the product

National experts say street heroin may be cut with other drugs or substances such as sugar, starch, quinine or even poisons such as strychnine—some states have recently reported heroin laced with the narcotic painkiller fentanyl

Headliners: B.C. and U.S. Support Expansion of UBC's Addiction Research and Training; 6 Aug 2014; accessed on 29 Sept 2014 at: <http://med.ubc.ca/b-c-and-u-s-support-expansion-of-ubcs-addiction-research-and-training/>

The Province of British Columbia is providing \$3 million to UBC and the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS to expand an addiction medicine education and research training program for clinicians—making it the largest in North America

The program will seek new ways to treat substance dependence and related health concerns, through several components

Additionally, the funding sets the stage for the establishment of a Network for Excellence in Substance Dependence and Related Harms—the first-of-its-kind Canadian model designed to focus on integrating medical education, scientific research and clinical care to reduce the health and social harms of untreated addiction

Prescription Drug Abuse Among Teens

Girls are 50% more likely than boys to borrow, share or use prescription drugs

Prescription drug abuse among teens is a growing concern in Canada—non-medical use of prescription drugs is the third most common form of drug use among Canadian youth (after alcohol and cannabis)

350,000 Canadian kids have taken prescription medications NOT prescribed to them—in other words, 12% of Canadian teenagers have admitted to taking opioid prescription drugs to get high (70% of them say they stole the pills from home)

Opioid overdoses were responsible for one out of eight deaths among young adults in Ontario between the ages of 25 and 34

'This seems to be an issue that's particularly concerning in younger populations. For me, that's particularly troublesome because these are people who have a really long life expectancy and their lives are being cut short because of overdosing on these prescribed medications.'--Tara Gomes

Headliners: Push On to Get Dentists to Stop Routinely Prescribing Potentially Deadly Opioids; Elizabeth Payne; reporting for the Ottawa Citizen; published on 10 Jul 2014; accessed on 29 Sept 2014 at: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/push-on-to-get-dentists-to-stop-routinely-prescribing-potentially-deadly-opioids>

In light of a recent Ontario study that found opioids are a leading cause of death among young adults, several Ottawa parents have told the Citizen they became concerned when their teenagers were prescribed OxyContin for pain after their wisdom teeth were taken out

Dentists have, in fact, been identified as a high source of all the opioids prescribed in Ontario every year—between 30% and 40% of opioid prescriptions are written after dental surgical procedures

Source: Dr. Norman Buckley; director of the Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre and chair of the department of anesthesia at McMaster University

In most cases, opioids should not be prescribed for routine dental surgery—only in a minority of situations is an opioid required for any dental procedure--Source: Dr. David Mock; dean emeritus of the University of Toronto faculty of dentistry dental school and a member of the national advisory council on prescription drug misuse
Researchers looking into opioid use have been interested in 'the dentistry question' for a while

Dentists are third in the medical field for number of opioid prescriptions written each year--George Kenna; assistant professor; the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

'We know that people are receiving opioids after dental surgery and (we) are very interested in the overuse of these products. A big concern for me is once people get a prescription for these drugs, it is often an entry into using opioids.'--Source: Tara Gomes, a scientist with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Toronto
Painkillers are the prescription drugs most commonly abused by teens and are also the most abused type of prescription drugs by 16- to 17-year-olds

Almost two out of five teens report having friends that abuse prescription painkillers and nearly three out of 10 report having friends that abuse prescription stimulants

Many parents are not aware of teen prescription drug abuse—teens say their parents are not discussing the dangers with them

Only one-third of parents discuss the risks of abusing prescription medicines with their teens—yet children who learn about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50% less likely to use drugs--Source:

www.drugfree.org/notinmyhouse

Every day, 2,500 kids age 12 to 17 abuse a prescription painkiller for the first time, and more people are getting addicted to prescription drugs

The National Institute on Drug Abuse released a study stating that 'the most dramatic increase in new users of prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes' had occurred among teens

Those findings are echoed by the recently published National Survey on Drug Use and Health which observed that pharmaceuticals have grown in popularity while use of substances like marijuana, ecstasy, and LSD have declined

Headliners: Young people battle prescription drug addiction; Sonne Lenz, S; reporter; posted 7/8/10 on www.STLtoday.com; accessed 10/18/10

In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the first time included a question about prescription drug abuse on its youth survey.

The results showed one in five (20%) of high school students had taken at least one prescription medication such as Oxycontin, Percocet, Vicodin, Adderall, Ritalin or Xanax not prescribed to them—nearly one in ten reported taking 10 or more

Among those who abuse prescription drugs, high rates of other risky behaviors (use of street drugs, alcohol, and unsafe sexual practices) have also been reported

Headliners: Prescription Drug Abuse Up Among Teens: Survey; Alan Mozes; reporting for HealthDay for WebMD News; 4/23/13; accessed on 6/15/13 at: <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/news/20130423/prescription-drug-abuse-up-among-us-teens-survey>

A recent survey found that 24% of high school students—more than 5 million teens—have abused prescription medications

These findings represent a 33% increase from 2008

The findings stem from a nationally representative poll launched in 2012 by The Partnership at Drugfree.org, in conjunction with the MetLife Foundation—the survey involved nearly 3,900 teens currently enrolled in grades 9 through 12 at public, private and parochial schools and more than 800 parents who participated in at-home interviews

13% of the surveyed teens acknowledged having experimented at least once with either Ritalin or Adderall that was not prescribed for them

20% of the teens who admitted prescription drug abuse said their first experience doing so was before the age of 14—with 27% mistakenly believing that prescription drug abuse is safer than ‘street drugs’ such as cocaine or ecstasy

Among the findings: one-third of teens think there is nothing particularly wrong with the notion of using prescription medications that were never prescribed for them to tackle a specific injury or illness

Almost one-quarter of the teenagers believe that their parents are more concerned about street drug use than the misuse of prescription drugs—16% of parents also said they think prescription drugs are less dangerous than street drugs

Perhaps this explains another survey finding: While about four in five teens said they had discussed both alcohol and marijuana use with their parents and almost one-third said they had talked with them about crack/cocaine, only between 14% and 16% said that the topic of painkiller/prescription drug abuse had ever come up

This was true despite the fact that a parent's medicine cabinet is the repository for 56% of the prescription meds teens say they are abusing with nearly half of parents acknowledging that there are no barriers to access at home 20% of parents actually admitted to willfully giving their teen a prescription med that they had on hand—for which their child had no prescription

Headliners: Drug Abuse Admissions Among Older People Rise; Washington Wire Service; appearing in the Idaho Statesman; 6/16/10

According to a recent government study, between 1992 and 2008 the proportion of people admitted to treatment for drug abuse who were aged 50+ nearly DOUBLED

Alcohol remains the leading cause of admissions in this age group but sharp increases were noted in heroin, cocaine and marijuana dependency--Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

‘The graying of drug users in America is an issue for any programs and communities providing health or social services for seniors.’--Pamela S. Hyde; agency administrator

Headliners: Marijuana Use by Seniors Goes Up As Boomers Age; Washington Wire Service; appearing in the Idaho Statesman; 6/16/10

The number of people aged 50+ reporting marijuana use in the prior year has gone up substantially in recent years—the rise in use has been most dramatic in the 55-59 age group whose reported use more than TRIPLED between 2002 and 2008

The drug is credited with relieving many problems of aging: aches and pains, glaucoma, macular degeneration and sleep problems

Many older marijuana users say they generally spoke in private settings and that the quality (and price) of the drug has increased substantially since their youth—making them less paranoid about using it

An area of concern: Due to the generation of xerostomia as well as dietary choices made by marijuana users, caries rates and periodontal health may be compromised

Headliners: The New Drug Addicts—Grandma and Grandpa; Diane C. Lada; reporting for the Sun Sentinel; appearing in the Idaho Statesman; 7/1/12

State and federal statistics show the number of people in their 50's and 60's reporting illicit drug use and seeking help with addictions skyrocketed in the past decade

Recent statistics from Nova Southeastern University (Davie, FL) show the number of Floridians aged 51-60 who entered public-funded primary treatment programs went up 37% between 2001 and 2011

The increases were especially dramatic in regard to sedatives with boomers going from comprising 6% to almost 19% of ALL admissions involving drugs like Valium and Xanax

Treatment for crack cocaine abuse also increased significantly for this age group during the same 10-year period—going from 325 to 412 admissions

The National Institutes of Health ('NIH') reported that surveys demonstrated that in 2010, 2.4 million people aged 50-59 admitted they had abused prescription or illegal drugs within the past month—almost THREE TIMES as many as was demonstrated in 2002

In a 2011 article from The Partnership at DrugFree.org, Angela Conway of the South Miami Hospital's Addiction Treatment Center stated: 'There are physical, psychological and social factors that make elderly people more vulnerable to addiction'

One reason they are more vulnerable comes from the abundance of medications the elderly are consistently put on—the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration states that nearly three in 10 people between the ages of 57 to 85 are on at least five prescriptions

Rates of hospital admissions for conditions related to prescription drug use in the elderly rose 96% between 1997 and 2008

The NIH became alarmed about the rapid rise in boomer addicts and released its first consumer alert in June 2012 on prescription and illicit drug abuse signs and dangers on its website: www.NIHSeniorHealth.gov

Previously, the agency's publications about drugs and seniors have focused on monitoring interactions between legally prescribed medications and how to properly take pills

According to the Prevention Tactics report: 'Prescription drug abuse is present in 12%-15% of elderly individuals who seek medical attention'

A document from the Johns Hopkins Medical School notes that the number of Americans over age 50 abusing prescription drugs is projected to rise to 2.7 million in 2020

Key Problem: Signs of prescription drug abuse in the elderly often mimics those of natural aging

Solutions?

- Talking about abuse of ANY drug (including alcohol)—especially to pre-teens and teenagers
- Watch for signs and symptoms of abuse
- Get involved
- Provide resources for counseling
- Mentor children when possible

Know what's out there and what is in your chair—you are in a position to make a difference!