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PREVENTION TALK

GENERATION RX: NEW CATEGORY OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE EMERGING IN AMERICA

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APPLICATION OF PREVENTION TECHNOLOGIES
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From LSD to ecstasy, patterns of substance abuse are evolving. The latest emerging trend is the illicit use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Teens get the drugs over the Internet, at school, and from parents' medicine cabinets. Part of the attraction of prescription drugs is that they can be easier to get for teens than illicit drugs.

Prescribed Ritalin, OxyContin and other psychoactive prescription drugs are the stock in trade at so-called "pharming parties," where teens trade medicines and often mix pills with alcohol to get high.

REMEMBER:

"Medications considered safe when used as intended can be fatal in large doses or mixed with other pills or alcohol."[4]

An estimated 2.3 million teens ages 12-17 abused legal medications last year, according to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.[2] The 2005 Monitoring the Future Survey found that 9.5 percent of 12th graders reported using Vicodin in the past year, and 5.5 percent of these students reported using OxyContin in the past year. Long term trends show a significant increase in the abuse of OxyContin from 2002 to 2005 among 12th graders. Also of concern is the significant increase in the use of sedatives/barbiturates among 12th graders since 2001.[3] This emerging trend in substance abuse is the hidden epidemic that parents need to learn about and become proactive in their own homes.

"When adults and medical professionals treat medications casually," says Dr. Francis Hayden, Director of the Adolescent Mental Health Center at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, "we need not be surprised that adolescents are treating them casually."[5]

THINK ABOUT:

- Half of all teens believe using prescription medication to get high is safer than street drugs.
- One third of teens surveyed say prescription painkillers are not addictive.
- One in five teens is being offered a prescription painkiller to get high.[4]

ACTION STEPS:

- Educate yourself and your teen about the risks of abusing medications.
- Monitor medications in your home.
- Support your local pharmacies and community coalition to control the sale of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

For more information call:

SOURCES:

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