

PRESCRIPTION & ILLICIT DRUG MISUSE

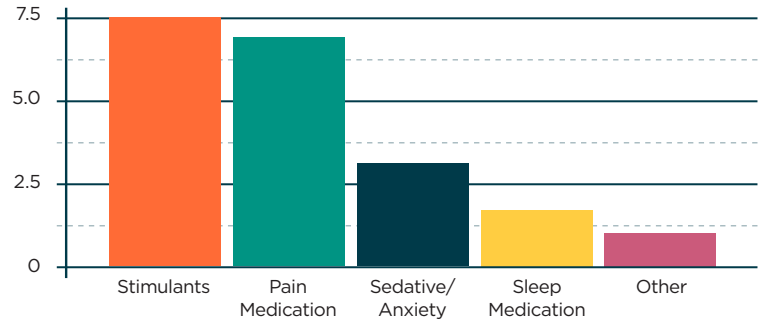
Partners in Prevention (PIP) has been Missouri's higher education substance abuse consortium since 2000. The coalition, made up of 21 universities in Missouri, works to promote healthy behaviors on college campuses. To gain an understanding of the current health behaviors of college students, PIP implements the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS) each year. The information gained from the MCHBS allows PIP to learn more about the high-risk behaviors that students are engaging in, such as illicit and prescription drug misuse.

DISCUSSION

Prescription drug misuse, defined as using prescription drugs without a doctor's consent, has been decreasing over the last 8 years from 21% in 2008 to 14% in 2015. Conversely, there has been a small increase in students who report using illicit drugs (other than marijuana) from 5.7% in 2009 to 6.5% in 2015.

The most commonly misused prescription drugs were stimulants (7.5%) and pain medication (6.9%), followed by sedative/anxiety medication (3.1%). Of the 6.5% of students previously mentioned who used illicit drugs, 3.8% reported using amphetamines, 3.0% reported using club drugs, 2.8% reported using cocaine, and inhalants, K2, and methamphetamines were each reported at 1.2%. Approximately 4.5% of students reporting misusing both prescription and illicit drugs (other than marijuana) in the last year. More than 75% of students who reported using marijuana

Prescription Drug Use in the Past Year



in the last year did not use any other drugs; however, over 80% of students who reported any other drug usage also used marijuana. The data suggests that while marijuana use cannot be used to predict other drug use, misuse of prescription or illicit drugs is a strong predictor of marijuana use.

SUMMARY

About 16% of Missouri college students are using some form of prescription or illicit drug. Most of these students are misusing prescription drugs, not illicit drugs. However, it is important to note that the majority of students who use illicit drugs are also misusing prescription drugs and using marijuana, meaning there is a small but high-risk subpopulation of polydrug users among Missouri college students. For campus programming and planning purposes, it may be important to note that stimulants and pain medications are misused significantly more often than other prescription drugs. Beginning in 2016, the MCHBS will collect data on students who misuse their own prescription drugs and the overlap of misusing prescription drugs while consuming alcohol.

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Illicit or Prescription Drug Use in the Past Year

