

## Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs among College Students

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### ABSTRACT

NMPD is a very serious problem around the globe. No matter how tightly our security system works against it, people find a way to get their hands on prescription drugs anyhow. The perseverance of the study was to address the college student's perception of beneficial effects of prescription drugs along with the harm these drugs cause on long term usage. It has been observed that college students are unaware of the health and legal consequences of NMPD. Therefore, along with spreading awareness among college campuses, parents of students, physicians, government officials must come up with strategies to impart knowledge on the ill effects of NMPD.

**Key Words :** Nonmedical use, Prescription stimulants, Abuse, College students

### INTRODUCTION

Prescribed analgesics are used by patients to compress the pain after surgeries or any type of body pain but because of their potential to develop addictive behaviors are used non-medically by people around the world. Students on the other hand have kept the false perception that the use of prescription medicines may improve their concentration and help them in studies, on the other hand some teenagers/adults abuse these medicines to get high and get away from the reality. This is taking negative toll on the health of the people who are using these medicines without the prescription of doctors for reasons other than these are prescribed for.

It is found in studies that college years are mainly considered as the initiation of illicit drug use because of developmental stage. In one study it was found that NPA has been linked to the no. of mental health issues (Boyd *et al.*, 2014; Conway *et al.*, 2006; Green *et al.*, 2011; Martins *et al.*, 2009). Garland *et al.*, 2015 found in a research that people reported of using opiates to come over the negative mood state.

McCabe *et al.* (2005) explored the correlates and prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription opioids and

found that it is a problem on college campuses. Also the studies provided the therapeutic strategies that might help in reducing the misuse of prescription opioid without creating hindrance for basic pain management medication.

Another article by (Quintero *et al.*, 2006) provided an analysis of several socio-cultural factors influencing pharmaceutical misuse by college students. Prescription drugs are abused to alter a variety of functions within the body setting, including self-medication, socio-recreation, and academic functioning. Such misuse is common in a very social context wherever people deliberately decide to experiment with medicine. Widespread data relating to effects, dosages, and compatibilities with alternative medicine, let alone the intensive availableness of prescription drugs in body social circles, makes this category of medication a lovely choice to other psychoactive substances.

Lord *et al.* (2009) explored that student pharmacists were found to be less in number in case of nonmedical use of prescription medicine. It was observed that their training as pharmacist actually worked in their favor as it kept them away from the misuse as they knew the underlying consequences of the violation of ethic code

as it might put their profession into danger. On the other hand, there were higher rates of low academic achievers that were found to be misusing prescription medication and the most common source was found to be “That Friend”.

Arria and DuPont (2010) explored the actions we need to in order to prevent nonmedical use of prescription stimulant in college students and this study also focused on why we need to do something about it. It is important for the academic community to focus on the findings of the study. By spreading awareness about the legal consequences and health issues regarding the nonmedical use of prescription medicine would help reduce the nonmedical use and also deglamorize it. This study presented eight effective ways to control this problem among college students that wouldn't just empower students but also physicians, parents, law, government and university officials. These strategies include busting the myths, spreading correct information, conducting new researches, etc.

Lord *et al.* (2011) conducted a study on college students and found that three motives were related to a higher likelihood of regular misuse: to get high, to manage chronic pain, and to cope with depression or anxiety. Those who misuse prescription medications to get high may represent a typology of student more entrenched in drug use in general. Consistent with other studies, there also appears to be a typology of individuals who misuse prescription medications to self-medicate potentially untreated physical or mental health conditions.

Zullig and Divin (2012) conducted a research that concluded that 13% respondents were using non prescription drugs. It was observed that students who reported depressive symptoms or suicidality were at high risk of abusing opioids. It was found that depressive symptoms and suicidality have greater odds of association with nonmedical prescription drug use. College female students used painkillers without prescription. So the studies revealed that student self medicate to overcome mental distress.

Gupta *et al.* (2013) conducted a study among College going males in Chandigarh to check the prevalence and pattern of substance use; it was found that 52.7% students belonging to age group 19 to 21 years were using some kind of substance. Relief from psychological stress followed by easy availability was the most common reason of substance abuse. It was also found that substances use is common among college

going male students irrespective of their social demographic characteristics like age, parental education, occupation and socio-economic status.

Ford and Ong (2014) examined whether college student's association with nonmedical use of prescription stimulants are related to Akers' social learning theory. The study revealed that for academic reasons, approximately 17% were found using prescription stimulants. Nonmedical use of prescription stimulants was found to be correlated with all four social learning measures in other model of the study.

McCabe *et al.* (2014) explored the trends in medical, non medical use and diversion among college students as lifetime and past year prevalence and it was found that continued monitoring of use of prescription medication in colleges is a must process in order to help students as to guide them about prevention and also tell them about beneficial effects of intervention.

Meisel and Goodie (2015) explored the college student's social networks for prediction of prescription drug misuse and found that one fourth sample abused prescription drugs and about 30% sample had one friend or more in common who abused prescription drug. 24.6% respondents misused prescription drugs in the total sample of study.

Arria *et al.* (2018) explored the association of college students with use of non- medical prescription stimulants and perceived academic benefit. The results of the study revealed college students were at higher risk for using nonmedical prescription stimulants as per their belief that was observed from the data collected from online survey but many studies concluded that NPS does not play any role in academic advantage.

### **Conclusion :**

Non medical use of prescription drugs among college students is pretty prevalent around the globe. Students are abusing these drugs to alter or alleviate their mood states and later they become addicted to the medicines. These medicines are highly potential of developing addictive behaviors and governments are very well aware of this but this awareness is not reaching college students. Students are using/abusing these medicines to score better as they perceive or believe that these medicines will help them concentrate on studies better which is a wrong perception. On the contrary these medicines cause severe health complications mainly mental health issues. Therefore it is pretty evident that the lack of education

and present myths about the prescription medicines and their non medical use affect the cognition of individual and eventually lead to physical health complications. College students who are in the developmental stage should be properly educated about these ill effects of these medicines when consumed non-medically and popular myths about the good effects of the use of these medicines must be dispelled.

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