

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG ABUSE



COMMUNITY EPIDEMIOLOGY WORK GROUP

**EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRENDS
IN DRUG ABUSE**

Volume II
Proceedings of the Community Epidemiology Work Group

June 2004

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH**

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) acknowledges the contributions made by the members of the Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) who have voluntarily invested their time and resources in preparing the reports presented at the meetings. This publication was prepared by MasiMax Resources, Inc., under contract number N01-DA-1-5514 from NIDA.

This publication, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse, Volume II*, contains papers presented and data reported at the June 2004 CEWG meeting by CEWG representatives from 20 areas and guest researchers

from Ohio and Maine. A paper was also submitted by Mexico. In addition, Volume II contains papers by experts on a panel on prescription drug abuse.

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For more information about the Community Epidemiology Work Group and other research-based publications and information on drug abuse and addiction, visit NIDA's Web site at: <http://www.drugabuse.gov>

Both Volumes I and II (available in limited supply) can be obtained by contacting the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

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National Institute on Drug Abuse

NIH Publication No. 05-5365A

Printed March 2005

smoked it, and 1.4 percent inhaled the substance. Less than 1 percent reported that they injected clonazepam.

According to the informants, clonazepam is obtained from a variety of sources, including prescriptions

from physicians and doctor shopping, family and friends, and dealers. The cost of the drug depends on the strength (i.e., 0.5, 1.0, 2.0 milligrams). Clonazepam pills typically sell for \$2–\$5 on the street.

Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs: Preliminary Findings from the College Life Study

Amelia Arria, Ph.D.

This pilot study, conducted in early 2004 at a mid-Atlantic university (primarily with freshmen and sophomores), led to the following estimates:

- An estimated 15.5 percent of the students had used prescription pain relievers nonmedically at least once in their lifetime.
- An estimated 13.4 percent of the students had used prescription stimulants nonmedically at least once in their lifetime.
- A high proportion of nonmedical users of prescription drugs had a history of using other illicit or licit drugs, including alcohol.

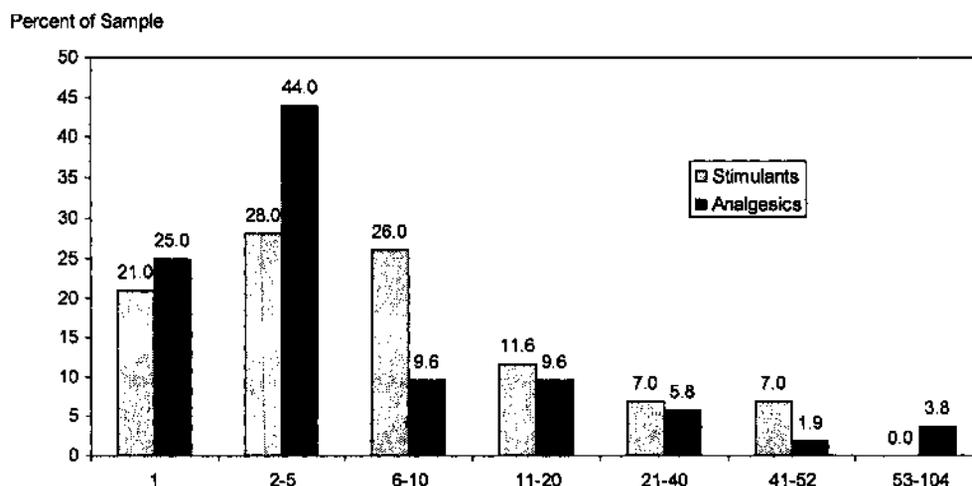
Dr. Arria, who serves as the Principal Investigator of this study at the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, presented

these and other findings from the pilot study supported through NIDA grant R01DA14845.

Sample and Methods. The pilot study included 468 students, age 18–25. Eighty percent were freshmen and sophomores. One-half were males, 69 percent were White, and 12 percent were African-American. All participants were administered a classroom-based questionnaire that included items on nonmedical use of prescription drugs, as well as use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs.

Findings. Of the pilot sample, 13.4 percent had used prescription stimulants nonmedically and 15.5 percent had used prescription pain relievers nonmedically at least once during their lifetime. More than one-half (51.6 percent) had used prescription stimulants nonmedically six or more times in the past year, compared with 31.0 percent of nonmedical prescription pain reliever users (see exhibit A).

Exhibit A. Number of Occasions Prescription Stimulants and Analgesics Were Used Nonmedically by Students in the Past Year, by Percent: 2004

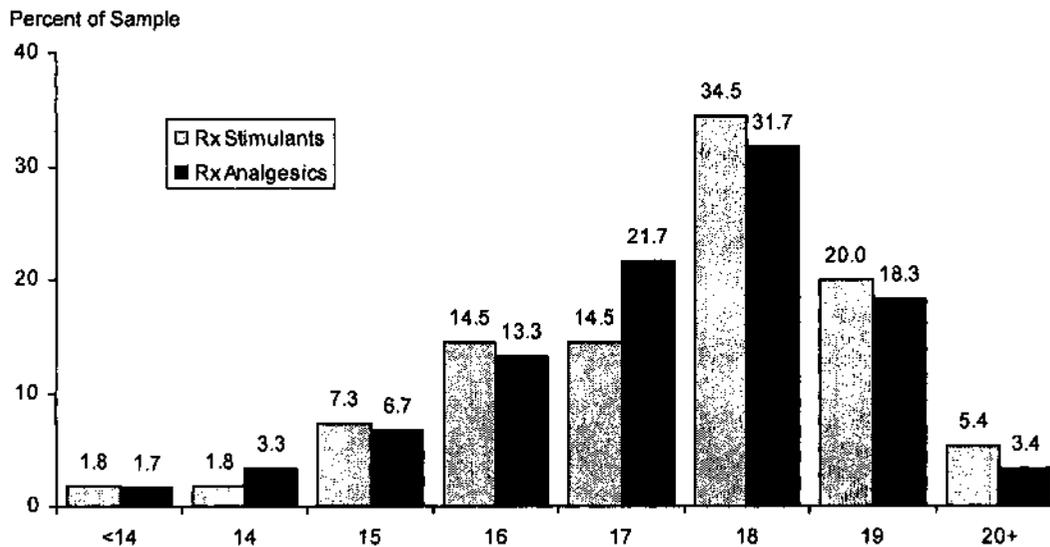


SOURCE: CESAR

Nearly one-half (47.2 percent) of the nonmedical prescription pain reliever users and 39.9 percent of

the nonmedical prescription stimulant users began using these drugs before the age of 18 (see exhibit B).

Exhibit B. Age of First Use of Prescription Analgesics and Stimulants Nonmedically, by Percent: 2004



SOURCE: CESAR

Males were more likely than females to use prescription drugs nonmedically.

Comparisons were made between three groups of students: prescription analgesic users, prescription stimulant users, and nonusers of these prescription drugs. The Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) scores and ages were comparable in all three groups. However, a higher proportion of prescription drug users than nonusers reported attention deficit or hyperactivity disorders.

Ninety-two percent of the nonmedical users of prescription stimulants had used marijuana, compared with 44 percent of the nonusers of either prescription drug. In addition, one-half of the nonmedical pre-

scription pain reliever users had used hallucinogens, compared with only 5 percent of the nonusers.

The longitudinal “College Life Study” is now in its implementation phase. It builds on what was learned from the pilot study and is designed to assess the impact of alcohol and drug (nonmedical and illicit) use on students’ behaviors, performance, and opportunities over time. A Federal Certificate of Confidentiality and Institutional Review Board approval have been obtained. Plans are to interview nearly 2,000 of the 4,500 incoming freshmen in the fall of 2004. In addition, an effort will be made to obtain funding for a qualitative study to obtain more insight into the process of initiation and consequences of nonmedical prescription drug use.

Prescription Drug Abuse Among Ecstasy Users in Miami

Steven Kurtz, Ph.D.

Major findings from this qualitative study of prescription drug/ecstasy users in Miami include the following:

- Polydrug use was the norm among the young people in the study. Use patterns crossed age, gender, and ethnic boundaries.