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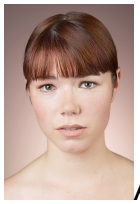
Sharp Rise In Emergency Department Visits Involving ADHD Medications



A new report shows that the number of emergency department visits involving attention deficit /hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) stimulant medications more than doubled from 13,379 visits in 2005 to 31,244 in 2010.

The study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) finds that the greatest rates of increase in emergency department visits involving ADHD stimulant medications occurred among those aged 18 and older, while the level among those under 18 remained largely unchanged during this period.

The number of emergency department visits involving ADHD medications among those aged 18 to 25 rose from 2,131 in 2005 to 8,148 in 2010. Similarly the number of such visits increased from 1,754 to 6,094 among those aged 26 to 34, and from 2,519 to 7,957 among those over age 35 in the same period.

The number of emergency department visits involving ADHD medications that were used non-medically also nearly tripled during this period – from 5,212 in 2005 to 15,585 in 2010. In 2010 non-medical use of ADHD medications accounted for half of all emergency department visits involving ADHD medications. In 2010 there were 2.3 million emergency department visits related to the misuse of all drugs.

Differences in the rates of emergency room visits related to the non-medical use of ADHD medications also narrowed considerably between males and females during this period. In 2005, 3,770 of these emergency department visits involved males compared to 1,439 involving females. By 2011, 8,650 of these visits involved men while 6,932 involved females.

One of the goals of SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Success program is to address prescription drug misuse and abuse among persons aged 12 to 25. States throughout the nation are using the resources and information provided by this program to raise awareness in their communities about on the potential risks of misusing prescription medicines and what can be done to help prevent it.

The report, entitled Emergency Department Visits Involving Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Stimulant Medications, is based on findings from the 2011 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) report. DAWN is a public health surveillance system that monitors drug-related morbidity and mortality through reports from a network of hospital across the nation.

The complete survey findings are available on the SAMHSA Web site.

Helping a friend or family member struggling with alcohol or drugs can be heartbreakingly painful but, with help, it can be remarkably rewarding. At times, it can seem so overwhelming that it would be easier to ignore it, pretend that nothing is wrong and hope it just goes away. In the long run, however, denying it or minimizing it, will be more damaging to you, other family members, and the person you are concerned about. **Don't Wait, Now Is The Time**. If you are still wondering if now is the time....click here for some helpful information.

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