

Use of ADHD Drugs Grew By 46 Percent in Children From 2002 to 2010



Use of drugs for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children jumped 46 percent from 2002 to 2010, according to a new report in the journal Pediatrics.

Ritalin was the top drug prescribed for teenagers, with more than four million prescriptions filled in 2010.

"What the article is suggesting is that the number of children that we are treating for attention deficit disorder has gone up," said Dr. Scott Benson, a spokesperson for the American Psychiatric Association, told Reuters. "For the most part I think the overall increase reflects a reduction in the stigma. It used to be, 'You're a bad parent if you can't get your child to behave, and you're a doubly bad parent if you put them on medicine.'"

Overall, the number of drugs prescribed to children in the United States dropped slightly from 2002 to 2010. Antibiotic use and prescription painkiller use both decreased 14 percent. Prescriptions for allergy medications, cough and cold medicines and antidepressants also dropped. The report found 263 million prescriptions for minors were filled in 2010, down 7 percent from 2002.

When population changes are taken into account, that corresponds to a 9 percent drop, the article notes. Adult prescriptions rose 11 percent during the same time period. A recent article in The New York Times noted a growing number of high school students are using ADHD drugs, such as Adderall and Ritalin, to help them get better grades.

Teens get them from friends, buy them from student dealers, or pretend to have ADHD in order to get prescriptions.

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