

Impaired Driving Isn't Just Drunk Driving: Study Shows Many Drivers Also Test Positive for Illicit Drugs

A new study published in the journal *Injury Prevention* finds that one-third of all drivers pulled over for suspicion of impaired driving tested positive for illicit drugs even though they were under the legal limit for driving with alcohol in their systems.

Irish researchers examined 2,000 blood and urine samples collected from drivers who had been pulled over by police for suspected drunk driving. They found that one in three samples taken from drivers found to be under the legal alcohol limit had one or more illicit drugs in their system -- a far higher rate than among drivers who were found to be legally intoxicated from alcohol consumption. Marijuana was the most common drug detected other than alcohol.

The authors recommended that all drivers suspected of impairment be tested for illicit drugs as well as alcohol. "Too

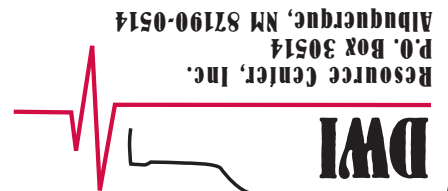
little attention has been paid to the adverse effects of drugs on driving, but drugged driving can be as dangerous as drunken driving," they wrote.

Reference:

Fitzpatrick, P., Daly, L., Leavy, C.P., Cusack, D.A. (2006) Drinking, drugs and driving in Ireland: More Evidence For Action. *Injury Prevention*, 12(6): 404-408

The DWI Resource Center is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt New Mexico organization formed to reduce the social and economic impact of DWI in New Mexico through public awareness, education, prevention programs and research. The Center also provides assistance to victims and serves as a central clearinghouse for information on DWI and victims' rights.

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DWI
Resource Center, Inc.
P.O. Box 30514
Albuquerque, NM 87190-0514

The Lethal Truth About Your Medicine Cabinet: Teens Are Using Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs to Get High

Across the U.S. teens are getting a new high. From family medicine cabinets or the drugstore, medicines designed to treat cold symptoms, provide pain relief or treat attention deficit disorder are being used to get high. This misuse involves prescription drugs such as opioids (Vicodin,[®] OxyContin[®]), antidepressants (Valium,[®] Xanax[®]) and stimulants (Ritalin,[®] Adderall[®]). Teens are also getting high from common over-the-counter drugs, particularly cold medicines with dextromethorphan (DXM) as a main ingredient. This is sometimes referred to as “pharming” and “robotripping.”

What are some of the consequences of misusing prescription or over-the-counter drugs?

The consequences for prescription drug abuse include respiratory distress, cardiac stress and seizures (all of which can lead to death), tolerance (meaning that you have to take more of the drug to achieve the desired effect), dependence and serious withdrawal symptoms. Among teens, pain medication is the most abused prescription medication. Misuse of dextromethorphan (DXM) can cause nausea, vomiting, seizures, hallucinations and even death.

Could my teen be misusing prescription or OTC drugs?

Nearly one-third of all drug abuse in the U.S. involves non-medical misuse of prescription drugs. More worrisome, 13.4 percent of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 have

Hiring A New Employee? Check out their DWI record online!

A DWI on an employee's record can be an indicator of alcohol & drug-related problems, lack of personal responsibility, and poor decision-making skills. Check your employees' records before you hire! The DWI Resource Center offers employers a free online DWI offender database, containing records from the last five years. Check your employees' records today by visiting our website:

<http://www.dwiresourcecenter.org>

misused prescription drugs at least once. To counter the growing problem of prescription drug misuse, parents are urged to learn the signs and symptoms of using these drugs, to talk to their kids about the dangers, and to intervene if they see a problem.

Why are teens misusing prescription and OTC drugs?

Teens often point to personal or family-related stress as a major reason why they misuse prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Sources of stressful feelings for teens may include anxiety about friendships, romantic relationships and family life; worry about academic success, high school tests or college entrance exams; or trouble balancing homework, after-school jobs and extracurricular activities.

What can I do to help my teen?

Research shows parents' attitudes about drug use directly affect their kids' decisions. Talk to your teens and set clear expectations. Let them know you don't want them to get high. Monitor their behavior for warning signs. Get to know their friends and their friends' families. Keep your prescription and other medications in a place where only you have access to them and ask your teen's grandparents to do the same.

This article is brought to you by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. For more information about prescription and over-the-counter drug misuse among teens and keeping your teen drug-free, visit www.TheAntiDrug.com, or www.MediaCampaign.org

Join leading EAP provider Outcomes, Inc. and the DWI Resource Center for a FREE breakfast seminar on:

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Registration is required. Please RSVP to (505) 881-1084 or register online at:

www.dwiresourcecenter.org/register.