

Wisconsin Crime Prevention Practitioners Association

Emerging Drug Threats

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Prescription Medications

The abuse and misuse of prescription medication has become an epidemic in the United States in the past decade and can be directly tied to the abuse of opiates such as heroin. The number of people seeking treatment for pain pill addiction has grown more than 400% since 2008!

What are prescription medications

There are three types of medication that are being abused:

- Opioids**—used to treat pain
- Stimulants**—most often used to treat ADHD
- Sedatives**— most often used to treat anxiety disorders

How is it used

These medications are most commonly taken orally as they are in pill form. With opioids, an abuser may alter the pill to inject.

Signs of use

There are so many different types of medication and each will present their own signs and symptoms of abuse.

A person abusing **opioids** may be drowsy or confused; have slower breathing; nod off; and may complain of nausea and/or constipation.

With the abuse of **stimulants**, a person may have anxiety; delusions; flushed skin; chest pains and periods of wakefulness.

The abuse of **sedatives** may show unnatural relaxation or drowsiness; poor memory; slurred speech; and coordination off.

What are the dangers

The reasons that these medications are prescribed is that they may have reactions with certain people and a prescriber takes a person's medical history, other conditions, other medications and such in consideration with determining what medication and the dose to give.

The other danger that we see is a person's assumption that these are perfectly alright to misuse. They look at the fact that many people use medications, doctor's prescribe them, they are created in a laboratory and the FDA approves the medications. After considering all of that, the wrongfully assume that these are perfectly alright to use.



