

KEY: Person Place Time Hypothesis

1. Inhalant Abuse on the Rise Among Children

By Shankar Vedantam
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, January 24, 2005; Page A06

Diane Stem of Old Hickory, Tenn., vividly remembers the day she was called home by her distraught husband and daughter: Her 16-year-old son, Ricky Joe Stem Jr., had been found dead in the house with a plastic bag over his head. He had been sniffing Freon from the house's air-conditioning system.

Marissa Manlove of Indianapolis got a call from a friend in June 2001 who told her that her 16-year-old son David Jefferis Manlove had dived into a swimming pool and not come up. The teenager died after breathing from a can of computer duster, using the nozzle as a straw to suck the chemical toluene inside.

Toy Johnson Slayton of St. Simon's Island, Ga., remembers the police coming to her home in December 2001 after her 17-year-old son Johnson Bryant was found dead in his truck after going into cardiac arrest and hitting a tree. A can of butane and a surgical glove were found with the body -- police told her they believed her son had been "huffing."

"I looked at the man and said, 'What does that mean?' "she said. "I am so angry because this was not on my radar screen. We had discussed the dangers of drugs and alcohol, but never, ever in my wildest dreams had I known to look at a can of butane with fear."

A hidden epidemic is gaining momentum in America, experts say. Children as young as fourth-graders are deliberately inhaling the fumes of dangerous chemicals from a variety of household and office products. Inhalants, as they are known, are widely available and hard to detect, and are fueling a dangerous trend: The most reliable annual survey of drug use among children has found that inhalants are the one group of drugs in which abuse is on the rise.

The chemicals travel rapidly to the brain to produce highs similar to alcohol intoxication. Unlike the effect of alcohol, these highs disappear within minutes, making it hard for parents to detect the abuse.

The products, which can range from gasoline to cigarette lighter fluid, cleaning supplies to adhesives, are often highly toxic and addictive.

New brain imaging research has shown that the chemicals can produce lasting changes in the brain, as well as heart, kidney and liver damage.

The new brain imaging research also shows that different inhalants affect different parts of the brain, which might be why children report preferences. "Some kids like to huff acetone, some

like to huff toluene and some like butane," said Stephen Dewey, a researcher at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York.

Some indications suggest the problem may be growing faster among girls. Overall, nearly one in five eighth-graders has tried an inhalant, usually by breathing from a rag or a bag doused with the chemical. The increase in abuse has tracked a sharp drop in youngsters' perceptions of the risks of inhalants, said Lloyd Johnston, a researcher at the University of Michigan who helps conduct the annual "Monitoring the Future" survey of eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders.

Parents seem to know little about the trend.

"It completely caught us off guard," said Diane Stem of Ricky's death. "He was a great kid, a great athlete; we have a loving supportive home; we had warned him about drugs and alcohol, but we didn't know to warn him about inhalants."

In retrospect, say these parents, they ought to have been more worried.

"Not every family has crack cocaine under their sinks, but every family has cleaning products under their sinks," Stem said.

Data show that inhalant abuse among children is growing. Use is highest among whites, followed closely by Hispanics, and is lower among blacks. The problem afflicts children from all socioeconomic backgrounds, and from families with both high and low levels of parental education.

But stereotypes about who abuses inhalants and the stigma associated with the practice have kept many parents from believing that the problem could affect them and blinded them to warning signs, said Slayton, Johnson Bryant's mother.

"Looking back, there was an episode where I went in a playroom and found a surgical glove and thought, 'What is the cleaning service leaving a glove for?'" she said. Her son Johnson was filling the gloves with butane and inhaling from them. "He had a heavy cough. He had bouts of belligerence. The stigma of inhalants is what kept me from being aware."

Harvey Weiss, executive director of the nonprofit National Inhalant Prevention Coalition in Austin, said that increasing the visibility of inhalant abuse could reduce abuse. Such campaigns in the early 1990s in Texas brought abuse rates down, but the prevention programs were eliminated in 1995. "Inhalant rates in Texas went back up again," he said.

"We've seen a significant increase in inhalant use by eighth-graders _____," agreed Nora D. Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, at a recent meeting in Washington organized by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

Abuse often starts early. By the fourth grade, about one in 25 children has tried an inhalant; by the sixth grade, the rate is one in 10; by eighth grade, it is nearly one in five, Johnston and other

researchers report. Inhalant use among eighth-graders is second only to cigarettes and alcohol in drug use.

Although rates seem to be increasing for both boys and girls, experts are especially worried about the sharp increase among girls. But surveys show that boys are more likely to become heavy users.

No single test can detect all of the inhalants, and experts believe that many deaths linked to abuse go unreported or are listed as accidents. Abuse can lead to cardiac arrest, which some experts call "sudden sniffing syndrome."

"If a young person is breathing from a rag or a bag and they get grossly intoxicated within seconds, they then may pass out, fall forward with their face in the bag or in the rag, and then they are going to continue to breathe these fumes and overdose," said Robert Balster, a scientist at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. "It is like turning on an anesthesia machine in an operating room and then walking away."

Some parents fear that anti-inhalant campaigns might unintentionally suggest the idea, or specific techniques, to children who do not know about them. But ignorance may be the bigger problem, said Weiss and parents whose children had died. It is the parents, not the children, who seem to be in the dark, they said.

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2. Household Medicine Abused by The Young Trend Alarms Activists, Officials

By Rebecca Dana
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, October 8, 2004; Page A01

At CVS pharmacies, you now have to be at least 18 to buy Coricidin Cough & Cold medicine. At Walgreens, there's a three-pack limit on an extra-strength variety of those pills. And at some independently owned drugstores, syrup bottles and blister packs of cough suppressants have vanished from shelves and reappeared behind the counter, near the cigarettes or the prescription drugs.

The nation's pharmacy giants are taking precautions in response to a trend that doctors and anti-drug abuse activists say could grow into an epidemic: teenagers and young adults using medicine to get high.

There are other, darker signs: One morning in May, on a lark, five ninth-graders in Loudoun County swallowed a "cocktail" of Coricidin and the motion-sickness drug Dramamine. Nauseated and loopy, they were rushed to Loudoun Hospital Center, where an emergency room physician explained that the drugs -- considered safe when used as intended -- can be fatal in very large doses.

From acid to ecstasy, patterns of substance abuse have evolved with the times, and in recent years, illicit use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs has soared among a certain demographic -- mostly suburban, mostly young and mostly middle class, according to researchers. They get the drugs through the Internet, at school and from their parents' medicine cabinets.

"We feel this is going to be the next big wave of substance abuse in the country," said Steve Dnistrian, executive vice president of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. "It's limited to no one prescription drug or over-the-counter drug. It's a new and emerging category we've been watching over the last two years, and we've seen it's going to be a significant problem in the years to come if the data continue to head where they're heading."

The data, to some, are startling. Prescription drugs are now second only to marijuana as a category of illicit substance abused by teenagers, according to the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The number of teenagers calling into poison control centers nationwide about cough medicine abuse has doubled in four years.

In a survey of more than 7,000 teenagers by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, one in five reported taking a prescription painkiller without a doctor's prescription.

"Prescription drug use is all over the place," said Chrissy Trotta, a student at George Washington University and the founder of a campus group aimed, in part, at preventing that type of behavior. "Often painkillers, things like Vicodin, are mixed with other drugs. . . . It's a tremendous problem."

The motivation is often boredom and a sense of rebellion -- not unlike what motivated drug users of their parents' generation, according to interviews with more than a dozen Washington area high school students and an equal number of college students from across the country. Most spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of repercussions from their parents and their schools.

Alex Kaplan, 17, a high school senior from Anne Arundel County, said that he has never used prescription or over-the-counter drugs to get high but that abuse of both is prevalent among some of his peers.

"When it comes to Robitussin," he said, "it's not like what you would drink if you had a cold, but kids, like, actually drinking half a bottle or 75 percent of the bottle. It just, like, makes you really out of it, I guess. When you're looking at them, it's just kind of creepy looking."

At a high school party on a Friday night, you won't always hear: " 'Want to smoke pot?' 'No, let's Robotrip, man,' but you will hear it sometimes," he said.

The mix of abused medicines has changed. Quaaludes, a type of sedative, are no longer widely available, but today's college students sometimes encounter punch bowls filled with drugs such as the painkiller Percodan at parties, said Andrea Barthwell, deputy director for demand reduction in the Office of National Drug Control Policy. And unlike their parents, young people can go to online pharmacies, where they sometimes can get those drugs.

"If you're going out in college, you're going to come across someone who's doing this," said a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania, who spoke on the condition that he not be identified because of the illicit nature of the activity. "You'll go to frat houses. There'll be kids in a room. You'll just be drinking, and one kid will be like, 'Hey, I got some Xanax,' " a tranquilizer.

He added: "When somebody's drunk and they take Xanax, it's a horrible thing to watch. They're completely out of it."

Dnistrian compares the current surge in the abuse of illicitly obtained prescription medicines to the ecstasy boom of the 1990s or the increase in cocaine use in the 1980s. Some doctors and researchers attribute the trend more to fashion than to the drugs' effects.

"We're on the upswing with these prescription drugs, and usage is increasing more for social reasons than for medical ones," said Daniel Z. Lieberman, director of the Clinical Psychiatric Research Center at George Washington University Medical Center. "It's simply the thing to do among high school students who have an intense need to fit in."

In response, the Bush administration unveiled an anti-drug policy this year that focused on prescription drug abuse. The plan would dedicate nearly \$150 million to augment prescription monitoring programs, to train physicians to combat abuse and to establish education programs on the dangers of taking such drugs recreationally.

"It's clearly a serious problem that we are working hard to correct," said Michael D. Maves, chief executive of the American Medical Association. "And it's a difficult problem, honestly. Some of this can go on and not be noticed by parents and peers because it doesn't have the same connotation of purchasing and using . . . drugs like heroin. It sometimes doesn't stand out like other things, in terms of truly illegal drugs, but it's no less serious."

The effect of many abused medications is psychological, Lieberman said, "a very relaxed and mellow high that can be accompanied by a powerful sense of well-being. It's not like cocaine, where you're feeling very energized, where you're able to stay up all night drinking and dancing."

But each category of medication has plenty of negative side effects. "Robotripping" -- one of the terms for abusing dextromethorphan, the active ingredient in cough medicines such as Robitussin -- can cause hallucinations, and it's almost always accompanied by the unpleasant symptoms of overdose, such as vomiting, said Rose Ann Soloway, clinical toxicologist at the National Capital Poison Center.

Linda Simoni-Wastila, a professor in the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy and an expert on youth prescription drug abuse, said perhaps the best way to combat the trend is through improvements in the drugs themselves. This summer, representatives of 20 pharmaceutical companies said they were working on ways to make drugs less addictive and less easily abused.

Still, many are unsure about the scope of the problem, let alone the best way to address it.

"I've been working in this area for a decade, and I still contend that prescription drug abuse is different from other abuse," Simoni-Wastila said.

"The truth is, we really don't know how to prevent it. We don't have specific guidelines on treatment. Right now, it's all very hush-hush."

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3. Study Says More Teens Smoking Cigars

December 5, 2005

Research Summary

Both male and female adolescents are smoking more cigars, with some surveys finding that more teens reported smoking cigars than cigarettes, HealthDay News reported Nov. 28.

Teens have been attracted by cigar celebrity marketing campaigns and new flavors, including grape, cinnamon, and apple, said study author Cristine Delnovo of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. "The cigar industry (has) successfully marketed their products to adult women and adolescents of both sexes," she said.

Delnovo and colleagues estimated that cigar consumption rose about 28 percent in the U.S. between 2000 and 2004, even as cigarette smoking declined. The 2004 New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey found that 17 percent of high-school boys in the state smoked cigars, compared to 16 percent who said they smoked cigarettes. A survey of Cleveland, Ohio-area teens also found that cigar smoking had become more popular than cigarette smoking.

"We may be deceiving ourselves into thinking that we are winning the war against smoking based solely on the figures relating to cigarette smokers, without focusing on the figures related to cigar smokers," said John Banzhaf III, executive director of Action on Smoking and Health.

The research was published in the December 2005 issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

Delnevo, C. D., Foulds, J., and Hrywna, M. (2005) Trading Tobacco: Are Youths Choosing Cigars Over Cigarettes? *Am J Public Health*, 95: 2123.

KEY: Person Place Time Hypothesis

4. Most Boston Overdose Victims are White

March 28, 2006

News Summary

Up to three-quarters of drug-overdose victims, in Boston are white, even though whites comprise only half of the city's population, the Boston Globe reported March 25.

Documenting a 50-percent rise in overdose deaths between 1999 and 2003, the Boston Public Health Commission reported that 94 of the city's 145 overdose victims in 2003 were white, compared to 32 blacks and 19 Hispanics.

Researchers said that not only do the figures counter the myth that drug addiction is primarily an inner-city, minority problem, but also points to the rising popularity of drugs like heroin and OxyContin. Whites tend to use these drugs more than blacks or Hispanics, who tend to prefer crack or cocaine.

The heroin being sold in neighborhoods like South Boston, Charlestown, North Dorchester, and East Boston is particularly potent, raising the risk of overdose. The death rate from drug use in South Boston and Charlestown was double that in the rest of the city in 2003.

"There is a much larger use of heroin now in the white neighborhoods than there ever was before," said state Rep. Brian P. Wallace (D-South Boston). "The heroin is rampant. It's cheaper, purer, and people are buying it. We're seeing people in their 40s who are OD-ing."

Even as overdose rates rise, however, treatment availability in the city has fallen; Boston has lost 39 percent of its detox beds in recent years, and the number of residents getting treatment fell to its lowest level in three years in 2004. Wallace is among a group of residents and legislators trying to increase treatment funding.

The drug-related death rate among whites in 2003 was 32.9 per 100,000 population, compared to 25.2 percent of blacks and 22.6 percent of Hispanics. Drug use was the sixth-leading cause of death among men in Boston, trailing only heart disease, cancer, injuries, chronic pulmonary disease, and stroke.

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5. Drug Use Among Ind. Youth Sees Biggest Drop In Years

August 2, 2005

Research Press Release

Indiana University
107 S. Indiana Ave.
Bloomington, IN 47405
newsinfo.iu.edu

New Data Also Include First Report on Methamphetamines and Gambling

Bloomington, Ind. - A new report on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University Bloomington demonstrates a significant downward trend in youth drug use and includes the agency's first compilation of data concerning methamphetamine use and gambling by sixth- through 12th-grade students. For most drugs, rates of use are at their lowest since 1991.

The full report, which is the IPRC's 15th annual report on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by Indiana adolescents, is available [online](#).

The following are major points from the survey results:

- *Gateway drugs drop steeply* -- Reported use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants continued to decline this year, in many cases by more than three percentage points. Binge drinking and marijuana use continued to fall further below the national average. Overall, rates of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use were among the lowest seen in the state in years. Statewide prevention initiatives appear to be experiencing continued success, based upon the findings of the statewide survey.
- *Alcohol use declines significantly* -- Indiana alcohol prevalence rates fell below the national rates for the third consecutive year. Binge drinking rates in grades six through nine saw their first decline in several years. Overall, alcohol use rates among Indiana youth are experiencing what appears to be a steady decline.
- *Tobacco use down sharply* -- Daily cigarette use among sixth- through 12th-graders fell to 9.3 percent, a proportion less than half that of 1996 rates. Use of smokeless tobacco also declined among most grades. Cigar smoking showed a slight increase among 12th-graders, but remained stable or declined in other grades.
- *Inhalant use falls from last year's increase* -- After three years of increasing rates, inhalant use among all grades saw a decrease or a plateau. However, younger students (grades eight, nine and 10) were more likely to have tried inhalants than older students (11th and 12th grade).

- *Methamphetamines* -- Of 12th-graders surveyed, 5.5 percent reported using methamphetamines at least once, which is slightly lower than the national rate for this grade (6.2 percent). However, monthly methamphetamine use among eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders in Indiana appears to be higher than national rates.
- *Gambling* -- The large majority of Indiana youth do not engage in gambling behaviors, with less than 22 percent of youth placing bets on games or sports. Among those who did engage, most did not consider their behaviors to be problematic. However, younger students were more likely than older students to report feeling unable to stop betting.

The 2005 results were obtained from analyses of data from 140 separate local surveys of 136,782 students in grades six through 12, attending 435 schools in Indiana. The purpose of the survey is to measure alcohol, tobacco and other drug use on a statewide and local basis for planning and evaluation of prevention programs.

The IPRC is operated by the Indiana University Department of Applied Health Science and the IU School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation and is affiliated with the department's Institute for Drug Abuse Prevention.

The IPRC is funded, in part, by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, financially supported through the HHS/Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

For more information, contact Barbara Joan Seitz-De-Martinez, Mi Kyung Jun or JoBeth McCarthy-Jean at 812-855-1237 or mkjun@indiana.edu. For additional assistance, contact [Elisabeth Andrews](#), IU Media Relations, 812-856-3717 or [Tracy James](#), IU Media Relations, 812-855-0084.

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6. Cincinnati: Survey Shows Fewer Youth Drug Users

May 23, 2006

Announcement

Contact: Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati
2330 Victory Parkway, Suite 703
Cincinnati, OH 45206
www.drugfreecincinnati.org

The Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati's 2006 Student Drug Use Survey data indicates that one-third fewer seventh through twelfth graders are regular users of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in 2006 than in 2000. (all part of the time factor)

Data from 52,203 seventh through twelfth grade students across the tri-state region reveal that regular use rates, defined as the percent of youth who report having used at least once in the past 30 days, continue to decline. Since the Coalition's first implementation of the Survey in 2000:

- Beer use is down 28%
- Tobacco use is down by 33%
- Marijuana use is down by 27%

"The Coalition is excited to share this news of a continuing decline in adolescent drug use," said Holly James, Coalition President/Executive Director.

"We can see from the data that prevention efforts are working here in Greater Cincinnati. The Coalition and its partners' collaborative, community-wide efforts continue to be focused on increasing the protective factors and reducing the risk factors for youth through school, home and community."

The greatest reductions in youth initiation into drug use are occurring in the middle school years. In fact, between 2004 and 2006, there is a 25% reduction in the number of youth who are trying drugs for the first time. Data reveals that 41% of youth who experiment with drugs in this time period will become regular users by the ninth grade. The reduction in initiation rates leads to overall reductions in regular use in the ninth through twelfth grades.

Data indicates that continued reductions can also be attributed to important shifts in attitude, policy and enforcement. Between 2004 and 2006 there is a 3% increase in the number of youth who report that their parents disapprove of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. Further, there is an 8% increase in the number of youth who report that their peers disapprove of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

Regarding policy change, more schools are establishing rules around drug use and consequences for breaking these rules. There is a 5% increase in the number of youth saying that their school is setting clear rules around alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Eleven percent more students report that their schools enforce drug policies.

The enforcement of such policies is a key step in creating this shift. Although the data indicate student use is declining, data shows a 7% increase in the number of students reporting that they have been caught using and 6% more students reported that they "got into trouble" when they were caught using.

David Stelzer, Chairman of the Board for the Coalition reminds us that, "While the sustained decline in adolescent drug use is good news, there is reason for continued, intensive prevention efforts in the home school and community. While fewer kids are initiating use – those who do use are initiating use early and suffering severe consequences as a result of their use." The average age that a child first uses alcohol, tobacco or other drugs remains around 12 years of age in Greater Cincinnati. One in five students report having drunk beer within the past month, and when they drink, they report they are drinking to get drunk. Also, approximately one in seven are regular users of tobacco, and nearly one in ten regularly use marijuana. Regular users of alcohol and marijuana are:

- Three times more likely to miss school
- Four times more likely to cause harm to their parents
- Eight times more likely to carry a gun outside of school, participate in gang activities and get into trouble with the police
- Nine times more likely to carry a gun when in school

"It is critical to recognize that our community still has too many kids putting themselves at risk by regularly using alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. There is still work to be done. Even one young user is one too many," said Stelzer.

"The 2006 data results show us that a collaborative approach to prevention works and most importantly, that a majority of kids are not using drugs. However, the community must continue to enhance its efforts to aggressively address the risk factors youth are exposed to and to send the message that there is significant harm associated with use of drugs by young people. As a community, we have a duty to protect youth from the dangers of drugs" said James.

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7. More Middle-Age Americans Dying from Drug Overdose

April 20, 2006

News Summary

Even as federal officials tout progress in cutting teen drug use, more middle-aged Americans are dying of drug overdoses, experts say.

The Psychiatric Times reported in its April 2006 issue that the typical addict is likely to be in their mid-30s to mid-50s, but that prevention programs often overlook Baby Boomers.

"There is a generational bias going on," said sociologist Mike Males, Ph.D., of the University of California at Santa Cruz. "Of 3,700 drug deaths in California during 2003, only 51 were [in people] under the age of 20."

The Drug Addiction Help Line reported that the typical overdose victim in 2005 was age 43, compared to 32 in 1985 and 22 in 1970. The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) reported that more than half of overdose deaths in 2003 were among 35-to-54-year-olds.

The trend toward older addicts dying holds true in Washington, D.C., said Erin Artigiani, deputy director for policy at the Center for Substance Abuse at the University of Maryland in College Park. "We don't usually see many people under 21," she said. "Mostly, it's the older users -- those with the longest history of drug use, and who are using harder drugs."

Older drug users also predominate in emergency-room visits, according to DAWN data. "I'm surprised the numbers have escaped attention this long," said Males. "How did it get to the level it did with no notice? It's really a remarkable information breakdown. These numbers are not generally picked up in the popular press. People usually look for the heart-wrenching stories, the young person who lost his or her chance at life. Emergency-room doctors and counselors are well aware of the older sector of drug users."

Dr. Males said potent prescription painkillers like the widely abused OxyContin may be contributing to overdose deaths among older Americans. Cocaine and methamphetamines also are factors, although many overdose victims had used more than one substance.

Middle-aged Americans also have been involved in more crimes nationally, a trend that may have its roots in drug addiction.

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8. Study: Students abuse prescription pills

By DON THOMPSON, Associated Press Writer Wed Oct 4, 9:34 PM ET

California students are abusing prescription pills — often stolen from their parents' medicine cabinets — even as their use of alcohol and illicit drugs such as marijuana has leveled off, according to a state survey released Wednesday.

The study of 10,638 middle and high school students found that 15 percent of 11th graders, 9 percent of ninth graders and 4 percent of seventh graders are using pharmaceutical drugs without a prescription.

Prescription drugs such as painkillers trailed only alcohol and marijuana as students' drug of choice. Inhalants had ranked third previously.

"We will be targeting our research now on the issue of prescription drug use to make certain that this does not continue to increase," said Kathryn Jett, director of the state Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

"As a parent, you need to be vigilant as to where those drugs are kept. Or if you have painkillers and don't need them, you need to dispose of them. If you have painkillers and you do need them, count them — know how many are there."

The agency conducts the survey every two years with the state attorney general's office and California Department of Education.

The survey conducted between September 2005 and February of this year was the first one to ask students about their use of pharmaceuticals. Students in 113 middle and high schools took part and answered the questionnaire anonymously.

Besides trolling for pills in their parents' medicine chests, students obtain prescription drugs at parties through an activity they call "pharming," Rodney Skager, who has directed the survey for 20 years. It involves someone setting out a bowl of randomly collected pills.

"Young people come in and grab the ones that look pretty and take them," Skager said. "This is obviously a really dangerous practice. I have no idea how common it is."

The rest of the survey offered more encouraging news.

The percentage of California seventh graders reporting they drank beer or wine in the last six months dropped from 40 percent in the survey taken a decade ago to less than 20 percent in the most recent survey.

Among ninth graders, the drop was from about 60 percent 10 years ago to about 40 percent. Nearly 70 percent of 11th graders reported drinking beer 20 years ago, compared with fewer than half the students in the most recent survey.

The use of inhalants and marijuana are ditto

State officials credited school substance abuse programs for the decline in experimentation with drugs and alcohol this decade, mirroring a national trend.

But researchers found those programs have not made a dent in high-risk drug and alcohol abusers.

Excessive drinkers are those who seek to get drunk or have five drinks in a row on any three days during the last 30 days. Heavy drug users are defined as those who use marijuana frequently, often combine multiple drugs or use drugs such as powdered or crack cocaine.

Excessive alcohol use was reported by 27 percent of 11th graders, 14 percent of ninth graders and 5.5 percent of seventh graders. High-risk drug use was reported by 17 percent of 11th graders, 11 percent of ninth and 4 percent of seventh graders.

"The kids that are using drugs at the schools are the kids that are predominantly responsible for a lot of the violence and actually the school failure that's occurring," said Gregory Austin, who directs the survey with Skager.

Researchers also were concerned about a 3 percentage point increase in drinking and driving among 11th graders since the last survey.

Jack O'Connell, the state superintendent of public instruction, said the survey suggests the need for teachers and parents to watch for warning signs and be ready to intervene with students whose behavior changes. He said students who begin doing poorly in school, who become discipline problems, are inattentive in class or stop showing up at all should be of particular concern.

On the Net: Read the California Student Survey at <http://www.safestate.org/CSS> Copyright © 2006 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. The information contained in the AP News report may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or red

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9. Study Finds Rich Kids More Likely to Use Drugs Than Poor

February 20, 2007

News Summary

Rich kids from Alameda and Contra Costa counties in California were more likely to use alcohol and other drugs than their peers from poor communities, according to data from California's Healthy Kids Survey.

The Contra Costa Times reported Feb. 19 that disposable income, disconnected families, and pressure to succeed all contribute to drug use among upscale youth, adding that parents in these communities add to the problem by denying that it occurs. "Perfection is very, very valued in affluent communities," noted Madeline Levine, author of "The Price of Privilege."

More affluent kids also can afford to buy fake IDs and can drive to places where they can pay someone to buy alcohol for them, experts note.

Binge drinking and past-month alcohol use among high-school juniors were more prevalent in richer areas of the East Bay than in less-affluent areas, according to the survey, and more juniors from rich towns admitted to having gotten high on drugs. "You can make some general assessments that affluent areas have higher alcohol and marijuana use," said Sean Slade, regional manager for the California Healthy Kids Survey.

Kids in affluent areas have lower alcohol and other drug use rates in the lower grades, but often catch up or surpass drug-use rates among poorer youth when they reach high school.

Some upscale communities have turned to "social host" laws to counter permissive attitudes among parents, some of whom believe it is better to allow their children to drink at home with friends than to go out and do it.

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