

Club Drug, Prescription Drug, and Over-The-Counter Medication Abuse: Description, Diagnosis, and Intervention

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Abstract

Abuse of club drugs, prescription medicines, and over-the-counter (OTC) medications is a growing problem among adolescents and young adults. The use of so-called club drugs became popular during the 1990's. The latest trend in drug abuse by adolescents is "pharming" that is, the nonmedical use of prescription and OTC cough and cold medicines. The steady growth in pharming since 2002 contrasts with the decline seen in the rate of use of any illicit drug. Currently, only alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis have higher rates of use by adolescents than prescription drugs. Pharming is associated with an increased risk of polysubstance abuse with alcohol and other drugs, which can cause additional morbidity and potential substance use disorders. In this chapter I address the abuse of club drugs, prescription medications, and OTC medications. The following drugs and associated treatment-related issues are reviewed: MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine), commonly known as "ecstasy"; GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate); ketamine; methamphetamine; LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide); opiates such as hydrocodone; benzodiazepines; and dextromethorphan (d-3-methoxy-N-methylmorphinan), which is an active ingredient in cough suppressants and cold medicines.

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