

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Data Brief

Prescription Drug Misuse among Vermont High School Students

In 2011, the Vermont High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) asked students, in grades 9-12, two questions about prescription drug misuse. They were: “During your life, how many times have you taken a prescription pain reliever such as OxyContin, Vicodin, or other prescription pain reliever not prescribed to you?” and “During your life, how many times have you taken the prescription stimulant Ritalin or Adderall not prescribed to you?”

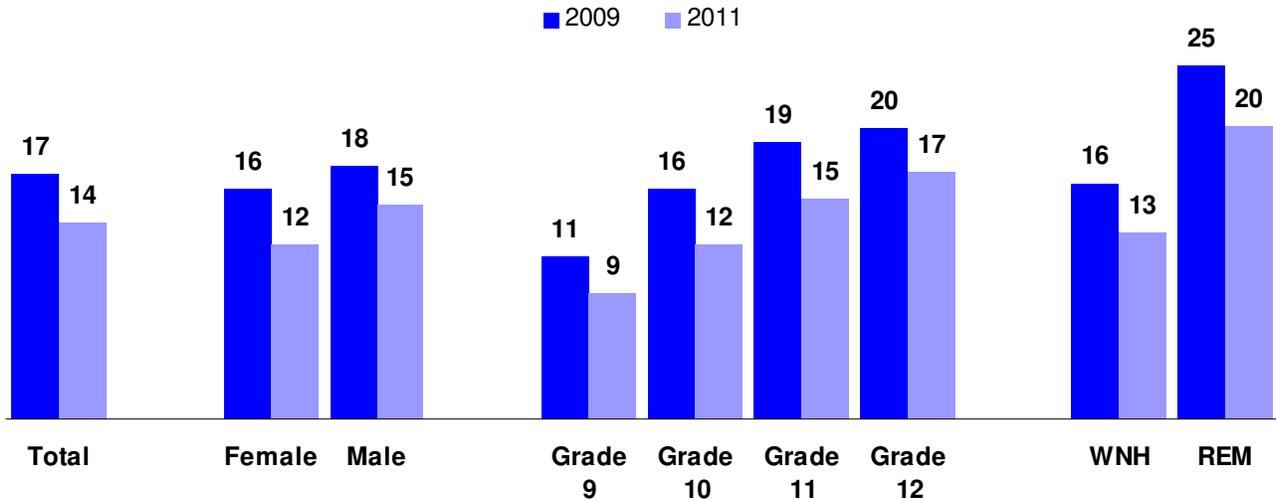
Overall 14% of students in grades 9-12 reported ever taking a prescription pain reliever or prescription stimulant without a prescription, a significant decrease from 17% in 2009. Of all students, 6% misused only a pain reliever, 2% misused only a stimulant, and 6% misused both.

Prescription drug misuse did not differ by gender. Compared to students in grade 9, students in grades 11 and 12 were statistically more likely to report any prescription drug misuse, pain reliever misuse, and stimulant misuse. Students who identified as racial or ethnic minorities were statistically more likely to report stimulant misuse, but not more likely to report pain reliever misuse or any prescription drug misuse. Students whose mothers did not graduate from high school were more likely to report stimulant, pain reliever, and any prescription drug misuse.

	Any prescription drug misuse	Any pain reliever misuse	Any stimulant misuse
Total	14%	12%	7%
Sex			
Female	12%	11%	6%
Male	15%	13%	8%
Grade			
9	9%	8%	4%
10	12%	11%	6%
11	15%	13%	8%
12	17%	15%	9%
Race/Ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	13%	11%	7%
Racial or ethnic minority	20%	18%	13%
Mother's Education			
Did not graduate from high school	26%	23%	16%
High school graduate	14%	12%	7%
Some college	17%	15%	8%
College graduate	11%	10%	6%

The percentage of students reporting any drug misuse overall decreased significantly between 2009 and 2011. However, when looking at year comparisons by sex, grade, and race/ethnicity, the only significant decreases were seen in female and white non-Hispanic students.

Percent of Students with Any Prescription Drug Misuse
By Sex, Grade, and Race/Ethnicity
Data Source: VT HS YRBS, 2009 and 2011



Note: WNH (White non-Hispanic), REM (Racial or Ethnic Minority)

Only students in Windham County were statistically more likely to misuse prescription drugs*, compared to the statewide rate.

	Any prescription drug misuse	Any pain reliever misuse	Any stimulant misuse
County			
Addison	11%	10%	5%
Bennington	16%	15%	7%
Caledonia	13%	12%	6%
Chittenden	13%	11%	7%
Essex	15%	14%	8%
Franklin	12%	11%	6%
Grand Isle	10%	9%	5%
Lamoille	16%	15%	7%
Orange	14%	13%	6%
Orleans	15%	14%	7%
Rutland	14%	13%	6%
Washington	13%	11%	7%
Windham*	21%	17%	14%
Windsor	16%	14%	8%

Students who misused prescription drugs were more likely to report other substance use behaviors, such as drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, marijuana use, and other drug use.

Distribution of selected risk behaviors by prescription drug misuse

	Ever misused prescription drugs	Never misused prescription drugs
Smoked cigarettes before age 13	26%	4%
Smoked in the past 30 days	51%	7%
Drank before age 13	42%	10%
Drank in the past 30 days	76%	29%
Binged in the past 30 days	58%	15%
Used marijuana before age 13	30%	3%
Used marijuana in the past 30 days	70%	17%
Ever use inhalants, heroin, methamphetamines, or hallucinogens	64%	7%

Those who misused prescription drugs were less likely to perceive great risk from alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana use, less likely to think that their parents would disapprove of use of these substances, and less likely to express disapproval of peer use. They were more likely to think that it is easy or very easy to obtain cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana than other adolescents.

Students who used prescription drugs were statistically less likely to report all youth assets except volunteering.

Distribution of youth assets by prescription drug misuse

	Ever misused prescription drugs	Never misused prescription drugs
Parents talk about school at least weekly	63%	78%
Earn mostly As or Bs	69%	84%
Agree or strongly agree that students help decide what goes on in school	40%	54%
Agree or strongly agree that in your community you feel like you matter	38%	58%
Agree or strongly agree that your teachers really care about you and give you a lot of encouragement	45%	64%
Volunteer 1+ hours	54%	56%

For more information on this data brief, contact Katie Jones, M.S., Shayla Livingston, MPH (Katherine.Jones@state.vt.us; 802-651-1516 or shayla.livingston@state.vt.us; 802-863-6337)

For the YRBS Data Brief Archive, visit: http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data_briefs.aspx