

Prescription Drug Misuse in High School

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2013

Background

In 2013, 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?”

Misuse by Demographics

Overall **13%** 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. Overall, **11%** of students reported ever taking a prescription pain reliever not prescribed to them, and **5%** reported taking a prescription pain reliever not prescribed to them in the past 30 days. Overall, **7%** of students reported ever taking a prescription stimulant not prescribed to them, and **4%** reported taking a prescription stimulant not prescribed to them in the past 30 days.

Males were more likely to report any misuse compared to females for both ever and past 30 day misuse of both stimulant and pain relievers. Misuse increased significantly with each increasing grade for ever use, and increased from tenth grade to twelfth grade for past 30 day misuse for both pain reliever and stimulant misuse.

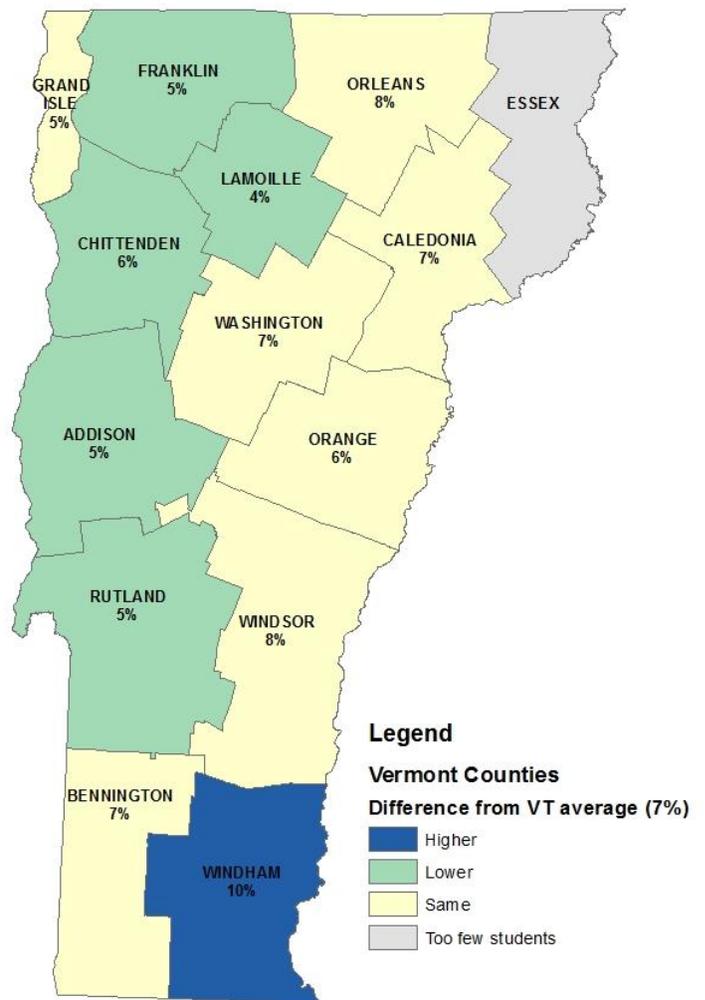
Past 30 day prescription drug misuse varies by county. Essex County did not have enough respondents to represent the data.

For more information on regional variation of prescription drug misuse, please see the maps and trends section of the YRBS website:

<http://healthvermont.gov/hv2020/index.aspx>

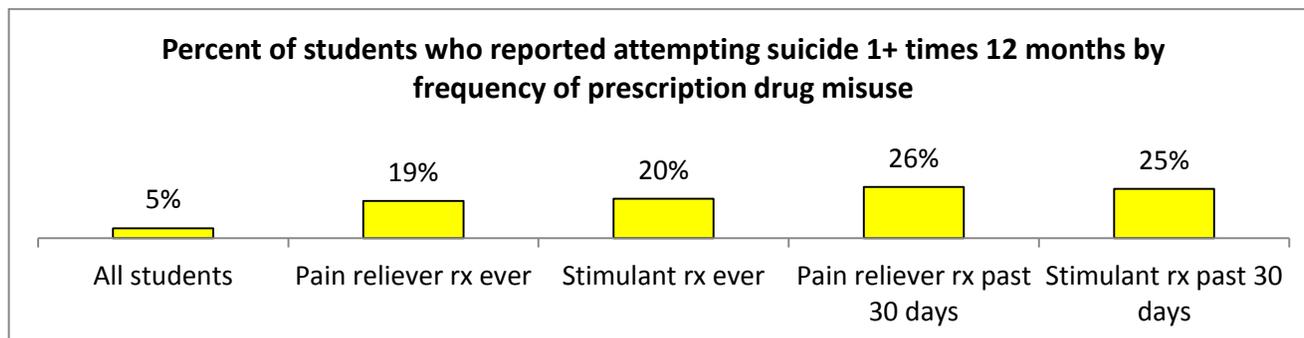
Students whose mothers had a high school degree or less were more likely to have ever misused a prescription pain reliever or stimulant (16%), and misused a pain reliever in the past 30 days (7%) compared to their peers. Misuse of prescription stimulants in the past 30 days did not differ by maternal level of education.

Past 30 Day Prescription Drug Misuse by County



Misuse by Risk Behaviors

Students who misused prescription drugs were more likely to also report other risky behaviors. This was increasingly true for students who misused a prescription drug in the past month. For example, overall, 5% of students reported attempting suicide one or more times in the past year, but among students who reported ever misusing a pain reliever, 19% reported a suicide attempt in the past year.



Percent of high school students reporting certain risk behaviors or student asset by substance use (all subgroups are statistically different from the overall prevalence)

| | All students | Pain Reliever Rx Ever | Stimulant Rx Ever | Pain Reliever Rx Past 30 Days | Stimulant Rx Past 30 Days |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Violence | | | | | |
| Attempted suicide 1+ times 12 months | 5% | 19% | 20% | 26% | 25% |
| Bullied someone else 1+ times past 30 days | 14% | 31% | 32% | 38% | 41% |
| Fought 1+ times 12 months | 20% | 47% | 48% | 56% | 57% |
| Hurt self 1+ times past year | 16% | 40% | 38% | 45% | 40% |
| Mental Health Indicators | | | | | |
| Made suicide plan 12 months | 11% | 28% | 26% | 33% | 28% |
| Sad 2 weeks past 12 months | 21% | 45% | 43% | 48% | 45% |
| Substance Use | | | | | |
| Of those who had sex in the past 3 months, used drugs or alcohol last time | 22% | 45% | 49% | 55% | 61% |
| Used marijuana 1+ times past 30 days | 24% | 67% | 78% | 74% | 84% |
| Five+ drinks 1+ past 30 days | 19% | 56% | 69% | 67% | 77% |
| Used rx pain reliever past 30 days | 5% | 100% | 42% | 100% | 64% |
| Used rx stimulant past 30 days | 4% | 26% | 100% | 46% | 100% |
| Student Assets | | | | | |
| Agree teachers really care | 59% | 44% | 44% | 40% | 40% |
| Agree you matter to community | 50% | 34% | 37% | 33% | 36% |
| Got mostly As and Bs | 79% | 62% | 64% | 56% | 59% |

Contact Information

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For past data briefs please see the YRBS website at: <http://healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs.aspx>