A National Perspective on the Abuse and Diversion of Prescription Drugs

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ARSH: Center for Applied Research on Substance Use and Health Disparities

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Prescription Drug Abuse Targeted as a 'Public Health Crisis'

BY: BETTY ANN BOWSER

The Obama administration launched a major campaign Tuesday to combat prescription drug abuse, which it says is the nation's fastest growing drug problem.
Pharmacies Besieged by Addicted Thieves

By ABBY GOODNOUGH

Published: February 6, 2011

BINGHAM, Me. — The orange signs posted throughout Chet Hibbard’s pharmacy here relay a blunt warning: We Do Not Stock OxyContin.
New push for Vicodin restrictions

Patients could see more hurdles for popular painkiller; DEA cites epidemic of abuse

Donna Leinwand Leger
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USA TODAY

The DEA for nearly a decade has pushed for tighter restrictions on Vicodin, the nation’s most widely prescribed drug. The chronic abuse of such painkillers, and devastating toll associated with this abuse, has reached epidemic proportions in the United States.

The agency could get its wish later this month...
Prescription drug abuse has escalated dramatically in the past 15 years, particularly opioid analgesics.

- Treatment and prescribing practices
- Opioid product availability

Diversion is defined as the unlawful channeling of regulated pharmaceuticals to the illicit market; it occurs through a variety of mechanisms.
RADARS System History

- 2001: Founded by Purdue Pharma
- 2006: Independently owned and operated by Denver Health & Hospital Authority
RADARS® System Goals

- Measure rates of abuse, misuse and diversion of prescription drugs
- Identify sentinel events involving the abuse, misuse and diversion of prescription drugs nationwide
RADARS® System Mosaic Approach

- College Survey
- Early Experimenters
- Poison Center
- Acute Events
- OTP Opioid Tx Program
- Patients in Treatment
- SKIP Survey of Key Informant Pts
- Patients in Treatment
- Drug Diversion
- Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement
RADARS® Programs

- **College Survey**
  - Self-reported nonmedical use of prescription drugs in previous semester on web-based survey

- **Poison Centers**
  - Spontaneous reports of intentional exposure mentions of acute medical events associated with one or more prescription drug of interest

- **SKIP/OTP**
  - Opioid dependent persons seeking treatment; Self-reported use of prescription opioids to “get high” in the past 30 days
Drug Diversion (DD)

- Number of new cases of pharmaceutical diversion investigated by law enforcement units or reported to state regulatory boards

- Coverage
  - 260 reporters from 49 states

- Reporting Timeframe
  - 3 months
RADARS® System
Data Analysis

COUNTS BY SYSTEM
UNITED STATES POPULATION

= POPULATION RATE
- Relates abuse/diversion events to disease burden in entire population

COUNTS BY SYSTEM
URDD

= UNIQUE RECIPIENTS OF DISPENSED DRUG (URDD) RATE
- Relates abuse/diversion events to corresponding patient benefit
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Impact Assessment

- Introduction of abuse/tamper deterrent formulations for long-acting prescription opioids
- An interesting example involves the examination of trends in the diversion of OxyContin®
Background

- OxyContin® is a Schedule II opioid analgesic originally released in 1996.

- OxyContin is an extended release opioid: each tablet contains a 12-hour dose of oxycodone. This contributes to OxyContin’s effectiveness as a pain reliever for persistent pain, but also makes it a target for drug abusers.

- Abusers crush, break or chew the tablets to destroy the time-release delivery.

- Crushing the tablets results in a powder that can be readily swallowed, snorted or dissolved for injection.

- OxyContin has been widely diverted and abused, and is believed by many to have been a major driver of the prescription opioid abuse epidemic over the past 15 years.
Background

- After several years in the clinical development and FDA approval processes, Purdue Pharma released a new formulation of OxyContin® in August 2010. The original formulation is no longer manufactured or distributed in the U.S.

- The new formulation of OxyContin is tamper-resistant: using a physical barrier it is designed to resist crushing and other manipulation, in order to deter abuse.
Reformulated OxyContin

- August 2010

OxyContin OC

OxyContin OP
OxyContin Reformulation

New formulation

Original formulation
Law Enforcement Cases Down 50%

The RADARS® System Drug Diversion Program

OxyContin Cases Population Rates,
4th Quarter 2008 to 4th Quarter 2011

Before Introduction of OxyContin-reformulated
After Introduction of OxyContin-reformulated
Discussion

- Overall, the tamper-resistant formulation appears to have dramatically decreased the diversion of OxyContin.
- Comprehensive surveillance data from law enforcement can be useful in informing important policy and regulatory decisions at the state, regional, and national levels.
- Surveillance data are also useful for documenting emerging trends in drug diversion that warrant monitoring.
Top Ten Non-Opioid Drug Mentions

- Alprazolam
- Carisoprodol
- Clonazepam
- Diazepam
- Zolpidem
- Lorazepam
- Tenofovir/emtricitabine
- efavirenz/emtricitabine/teno.
- Propoxyphene
- Cyclobenzaprine
- Atazanavir
- Butalbital

1Q2011

2Q2012
Thank you!

arsh.nova.edu