

“Adderall Abuse”

Drugs seem to come and go in cycles. In the late 90's "ecstasy" was the teen & young adult drug-abusers drug of choice for the weekend. The use of that drug significantly decreased by 2002. However, 3 years ago it made a comeback and was renamed "Thizz" and the price went from \$25.00 a pill to \$6.00. You can learn more about the variables contributing to that in my newsletter at:

<http://www.recoveryhappens.com/E%20resurgence.pdf>.



8 years ago, Ritalin and then Adderall were being abused. Many clients shared in session that they would purposely convince their doctor that they had ADD/ADHD so as to get a prescription that

they could use to get high, enhance their focus on the football field, cram for tests and lose weight. We are seeing this reoccur in our program and thought it would be good to remind the community of the abuse potential of this type of medicine. Certainly it is important to screen for this substance and include it on drug-testing panels. Below is an article that I sent out in 2002 and apparently it is time to resend it.

From the Chronicle Online at Duke University

The potential for abuse

by Molly Nicholson

Faced with all-nighters, some Duke students are bypassing Red Bull, lattés and caffeine pills for something that works much more effectively-- Ritalin.

While some students take this prescription drug for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, studies show that the abuse of the drug has increased across the country. The Drug Enforcement Administration has listed methylphenidate, the generic name for Ritalin, as one of its Schedule II drugs, those with the highest potential for addiction and abuse.

Abusing Ritalin is not a foreign concept at the University either. Aron Grossman, a sophomore who transferred from Duke to Emory last year, says he knew about 10 to 20 Duke students last year who took the methylphenidate without a prescription.

"It's like speed. They snort it," he says. "I think most people take it not to go out and party but to stay awake and work even if they don't have ADD."

Jeff Kulley, a psychologist with Counseling and Psychological Services, says that is exactly how it works. "Some [students] will use the drugs... to help them concentrate if they are tired or have a hard time focusing," Kulley says. "They'll use it similarly to the way a person might use caffeine pills... to enhance their concentration or studying." But Ritalin and Adderall, an amphetamine also prescribed for ADHD, are not just

study aids.

They can also be used to get high.

"It's very similar in its action to cocaine when it's snorted," Kulley notes.

The pills can also be taken

orally, or ground up, mixed with water and injected intravenously, though insoluble fibers in the tablets can block small blood vessels.



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So do these psychoactive stimulants work? While the drugs definitely enhance studying and concentration, the material that someone learns while under the influence may not stick.



"There's a concept called state-dependent learning," Kulley says. "It shows that when a person learns something, they recall it better in that state." So taking Ritalin and

studying hard all night may not win you an 'A.' "They may not retain the information," Kulley explains. "Now if they end up taking Ritalin on the day of the test--you can see how the use of the drug might increase."

Both Ritalin and Adderall are very addictive. When someone is abusing those drugs, they are taking doses much larger than are prescribed to patients. "Those dosages are just like speed," Kulley says. "Many students are taking them nasally. The effects are much quicker, and a person is more prone to become addicted."



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Recovery Happens Counseling Services

Clinically Directed by

Jon Daily, LCSW, CADC II

7996 Old Winding Way #300

Fair Oaks, CA 95628

(916) 966-4523 Ext. #4

WWW.RECOVERYHAPPENS.COM

info@recoveryhappens.com

LCSW #620952, CADC#3819299

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