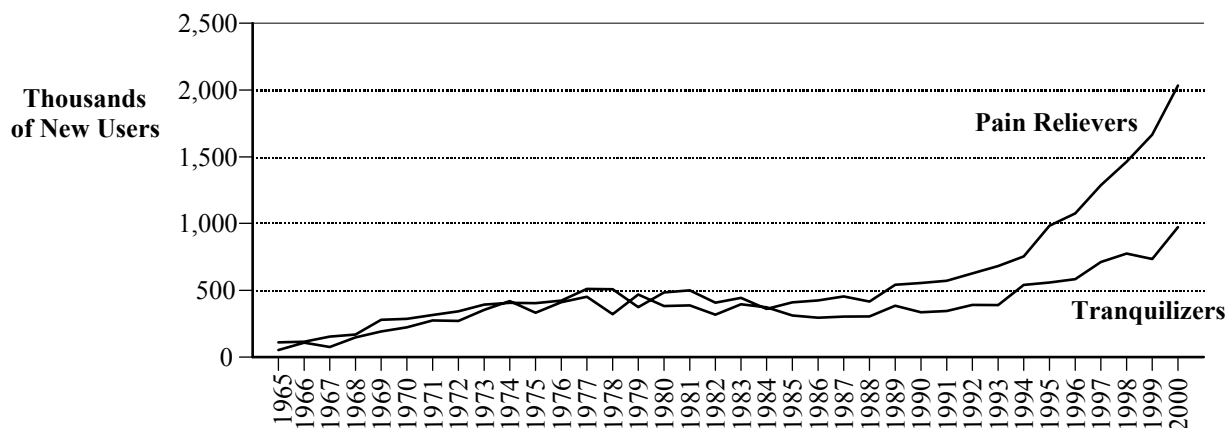


A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**University of Maryland, College Park*****First Time Nonmedical Use of Prescription
Pain Relievers and Tranquilizers Continues to Rise***

Data from the recently released National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) reveal that the number of first time nonmedical users of prescription pain relievers and tranquilizers has risen dramatically over the past decade. The greatest increase was for the nonmedical use of pain relievers (e.g., Percocet®, Dilaudid®)—the number of new users climbed from 554,000 in 1990 to over 2.0 million in 2000. A large portion of this increase is attributable to an increase in the first-time use by youths (ages 12-17). The number of first time users of tranquilizers (e.g., Valium®, Xanax®) also increased over this period, from 335,000 new users in 1990 to 973,000 in 2000. Other studies attributing an increase in the use of pain relievers and tranquilizers to the events of September 11, 2001 should be interpreted in the context of the rising trends evident prior to that date.

**Estimated Number in Thousands of New Nonmedical Users of
Prescription Pain Relievers and Tranquilizers Per Year, 1965-2000**



NOTES: The use of pain relievers and tranquilizers are determined based on responses to the question “How long has it been since you last used any prescription [pain reliever, tranquilizer] that was not prescribed for you, or that you took only for the experience or feeling it caused?” The number of new users is estimated based on retrospective reports of age at first use. The most recent year available for these estimates is 2000.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Volume I. Summary of National Findings*, 2002. Available online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda.htm#NHSDAinfo>.

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