

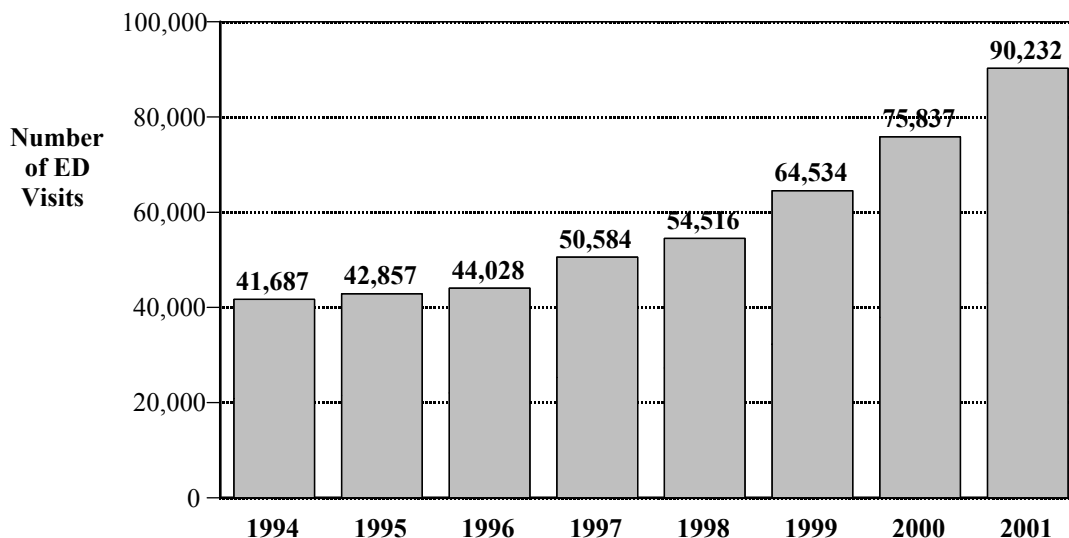
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

U.S. Emergency Department Visits Involving Narcotic Analgesics Have Doubled in Five Years

The number of U.S. emergency department (ED) visits related to the nonmedical use of narcotic analgesics has increased significantly since 1996, according to data from the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN). Narcotic analgesics are pain medications—such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone—that contain opiates. In 2001 there were 90,232 narcotic analgesic-related ED visits, compared to 44,028 visits in 1996 (see figure below). These findings support those of the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse showing an increase in the number of first-time nonmedical users of prescription pain relievers during the 1990s (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 11, Issue 39).

Number of U.S. Narcotic Analgesic-Related ED Visits, 1994-2001



NOTE: A drug-related ED visit is one that was induced by or related to the use of an illegal drug(s) or the nonmedical use of a legal drug for patients age 6 to 97.

SOURCE: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, "Narcotic Analgesics," *The DAWN Report*, January 2003. Available online (<http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/2k3/pain/DAWNpain.pdf>). For more information contact Dr. Elizabeth Crane at ecrane@samhsa.gov.

• 301-403-8329 (voice) • 301-403-8342 (fax) • CESAR@cesar.umd.edu • www.cesar.umd.edu •

CESAR FAX is supported by VOIT 1996-1002, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. CESAR FAX may be copied without permission. Please cite CESAR as the source.