

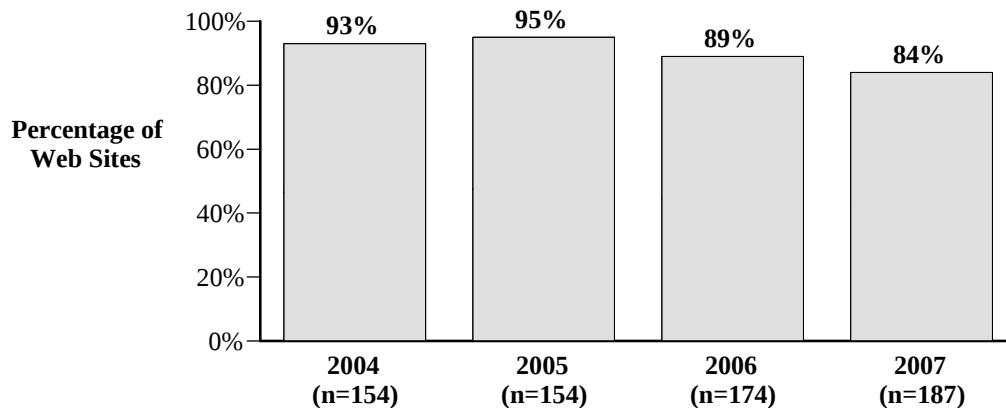
**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

***Majority of Websites Selling Controlled Prescription Drugs Still  
Do Not Require a Prescription***

Controlled prescription drugs continue to be widely available on the internet without a prescription, according to a study of the dispensing requirements of internet sites selling opioid, depressant, and stimulant prescription drugs. Of the 187 internet sites selling such drugs during a one-week period in 2007, 84% did not require a valid prescription, slightly less than in previous years. (see figure below). There were no conditions to purchasing the controlled drugs at one-third of the sites not requiring a prescription, while slightly more than half (53%) required an “online consultation” in lieu of a prescription, where the “consumer fills out an online questionnaire that is reportedly evaluated by a physician affiliated with the online pharmacy” (p. 6). Only 30 sites (16%) required that a prescription be faxed or mailed or that the patient’s doctor be contacted for the prescription. In addition, none of the websites identified utilized mechanisms to deny children the ability to purchase controlled prescription drugs. The authors note that “this easy availability has enormous implications for public health, particularly the health of our children, since research has documented the tight connection between availability of drugs to young people and substance abuse and addiction” (p. 8).

**Percentage of Web Sites Selling Prescription Drugs Without Requiring a Prescription**  
(During a One Week Period, 2004 to 2007)



NOTES: Web sites selling controlled prescription drugs were identified using internet searches and spam email advertisements. The number of web sites represent the sites that could be identified in a similar one-week period of time each year, not the total number of sites advertising or selling controlled prescription drugs online. The number of sites and percentages not requiring a prescription are slightly different from those reported in previous surveys because “adjustments were made in classification of data from previous years to assure consistency of reporting.”

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), “You’ve Got Drugs!” IV: *Prescription Drug Pushers on the Internet*, May 2007. Available online at <http://www.casacolumbia.org/supportcasa/item.asp?cID=12&PID=157>.

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