

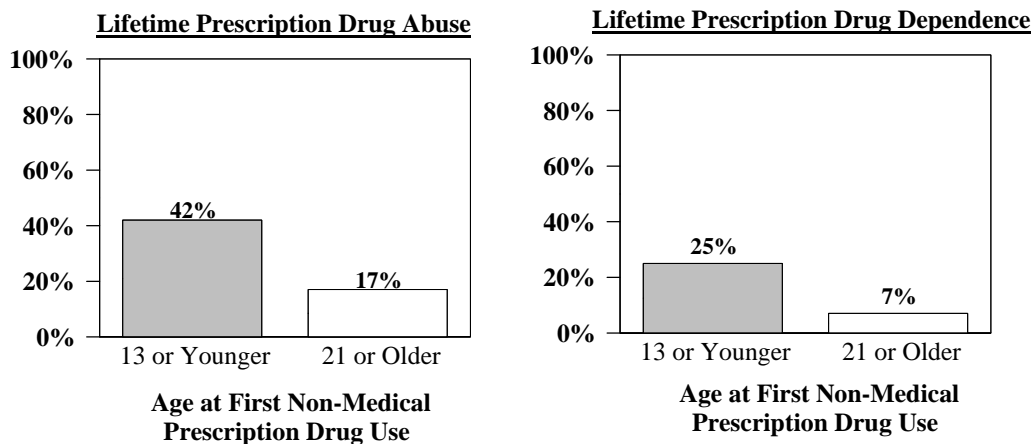
**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

***Early Non-Medical Prescription Drug Use Related to Lifetime Diagnosis of Prescription Drug Abuse and Dependence***

Persons who begin using prescription drugs non-medically at an early age are more likely to be diagnosed with lifetime prescription drug abuse and dependence, according to an analysis of data from a national household survey.\* An estimated 42% of those who reported that their first non-medical use of prescription drugs was at age 13 or younger also had a lifetime diagnosis of prescription drug abuse, compared to 17% of those who first used prescription drugs non-medically at age 21 or older. Similar results were found for lifetime prescription drug dependence (25% vs. 7%). Interestingly, “early non-medical users of prescription sedatives, tranquilizers, and opioids were generally more likely to become non-medical users of other prescription drug classes than to develop sedative, tranquilizer or opioid use disorders” (p. 1925). For example, persons who initiated non-medical use of prescription sedatives at age 13 or younger were more likely to eventually report non-medical use of prescription tranquilizers (75%), opioids (72%), or stimulants (70%) than to be diagnosed with a sedative use disorder (43%). The exception was for non-medical users of prescription stimulants, who were more likely to develop stimulant use disorders than to become non-medical users of other prescription drugs (data not shown).

**Estimated Prevalence of Lifetime Prescription Drug Abuse and Dependence,  
by Age at First Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs**



\*Findings are based on an analysis of data from the 2001-2002 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, a household survey of U.S. residents ages 18 and older.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from McCabe, S.E., West, B.T., Morales, M., Cranford, J.A., and Boyd, C.J. “Does Early Onset of Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs Predict Subsequent Prescription Drug Abuse and Dependence? Results from a National Study,” *Addiction* 102(12): 1920-1930, 2007. For more information, contact Sean Esteban McCabe at [plius@umich.edu](mailto:plius@umich.edu).

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