

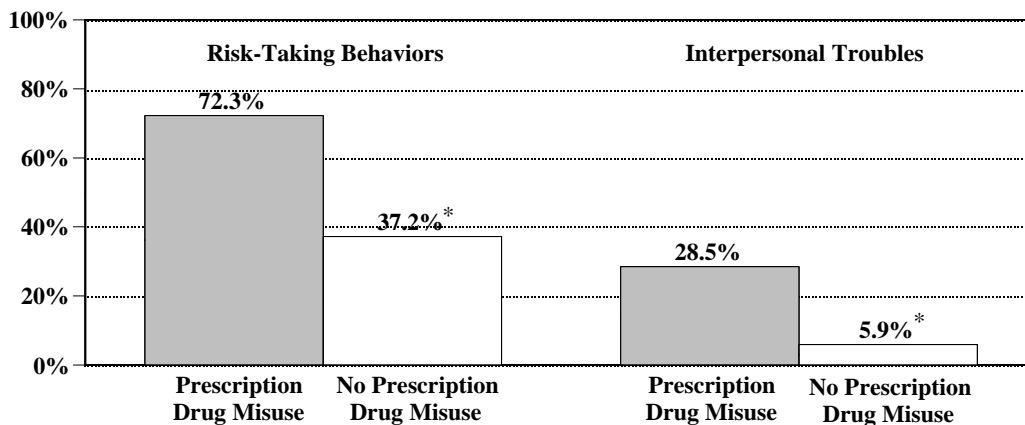
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Drinkers Ages 18 to 34 Who Misuse Prescription Drugs More Likely to Experience Alcohol-Related Problems

“Among young drinkers, misuse of prescription drugs...may be an important risk factor for increasing alcohol problems,” according to a recent analysis of data from the National Epidemiologic Survey of Alcohol and Related Conditions. Nearly three-fourths (72.3%) of U.S. drinkers ages 18 to 34 who also misused prescription drugs reported experiencing one or more alcohol-related risk-taking behaviors in their lifetime—such as driving while drinking, getting involved in a physical fight during or after drinking, and being arrested or having legal problems due to drinking—compared to 37.2% of drinkers who had never misused prescription drugs. Drinkers who misused prescription drugs were also nearly five times more likely to report having alcohol-related interpersonal troubles (28.5% vs. 5.9%), including job or school problems due to drinking. These elevated risks remained significant even after taking into account demographics, family histories of alcohol or drug problems, age of drinking onset, heavy or dependent drinking, and cannabis use.

Percentage of U.S. Young Adult Drinkers (Current and Former) Ages 18 to 34 Reporting Alcohol-Related Behaviors and Problems, by Prescription Drug Misuse



*P<.001

NOTES: Drinkers were defined as those who drank 12 or more drinks in at least one year of their life. Prescription drug misuse was defined as use of prescription drugs used without a doctor's prescription, in greater amounts, more often, or longer than prescribed, or for a reason other than a doctor said they should be used.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Hermos, J., Winter, M., Heeren, T., and Hingson, R. "Alcohol-Related Problems Among Younger Drinkers Who Misuse Prescription Drugs: Results from the National Epidemiologic Survey of Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC)," *Substance Abuse* 30:118-126, 2009. For more information, contact Dr. Hermos at jhermos@bu.edu.

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