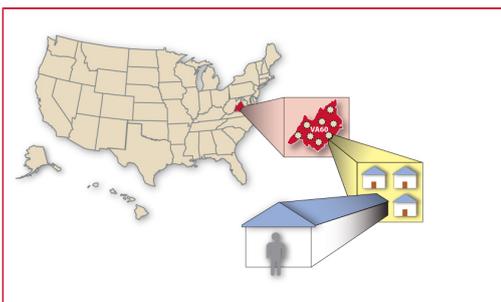


The CBHSQ Report

Spotlight

June 26, 2015

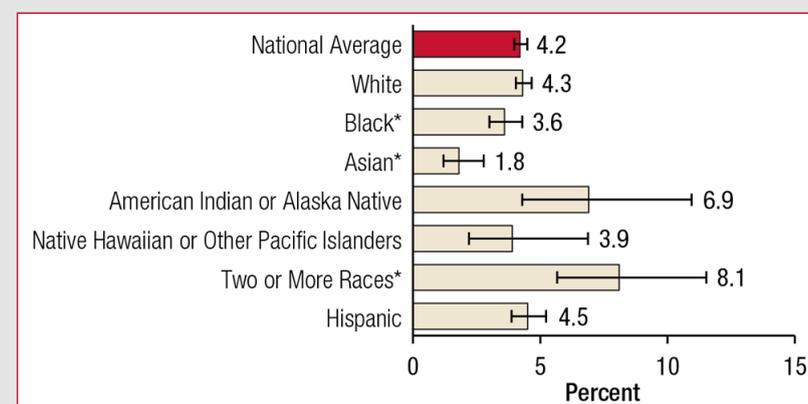


NONMEDICAL USE OF PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVERS VARIES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Misuse of prescription drugs is second only to marijuana use as the nation's most commonly used illicit drug.¹ Pain reliever misuse is a public health concern, with approximately 24 million persons initiating nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers since 2002.² According to the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 4.2 percent of Americans aged 12 or older engaged in nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers in the past year.³ In comparison to the national average, nonmedical pain reliever use was less common among Asian Americans (1.8 percent).

The rate of nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers among Asian Americans was lower than rates for whites (4.3 percent), blacks (3.6 percent), American Indian or Alaska Natives (6.9 percent), two or more races (8.1 percent), or Hispanics (4.5 percent). Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders do not have the same low prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers as the Asian community although they are often grouped together. Past year nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers among Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders (3.9 percent) did not differ from the national average or the other race/ethnic groups.

Past year nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers among people aged 12 or older, by race/ethnicity: 2013



* Difference between estimate for racial/ethnic group and the national average is statistically significant at .05 level.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides information on what communities and local governments can do to help prevent overdoses and deaths related to prescription drug misuse (see <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Opioid-Overdose-Prevention-Toolkit-Updated-2014/SMA14-4742>). For more information on the misuse of prescription medications, see <http://www.samhsa.gov/prescription-drug-misuse-abuse>

1. National Drug Intelligence Center. (2011, August). *National drug threat assessment 2011* (Product No. 2011-Q0317-001). Johnstown, PA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/>
2. The approximate number of persons (24 million) initiating nonmedical pain reliever use since 2002 can be determined directly from Detailed Table 7.36A in Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2014). *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed tables*. Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-DetTabsPDFWHTML2013/Web/PDFW/NSDUH-DetTabsSect7peTabs36to39-2013.pdf>
3. Nonmedical use is defined as the use of prescription-type drugs not prescribed for the respondent by a physician or used only for experience or feeling they caused. Nonmedical use does not include use of over-the-counter drugs.

Source: National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2013. The NSDUH is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their places of residence.



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The Data Spotlight may be copied without permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Find this report and those on similar topics online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>.