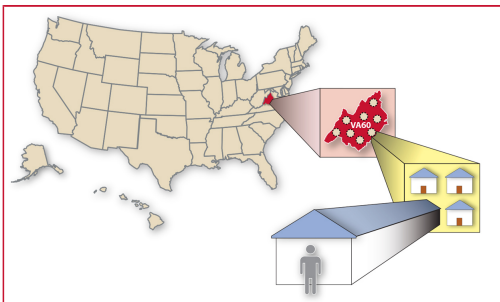


The CBHSQ Report

Spotlight

July 25, 2017

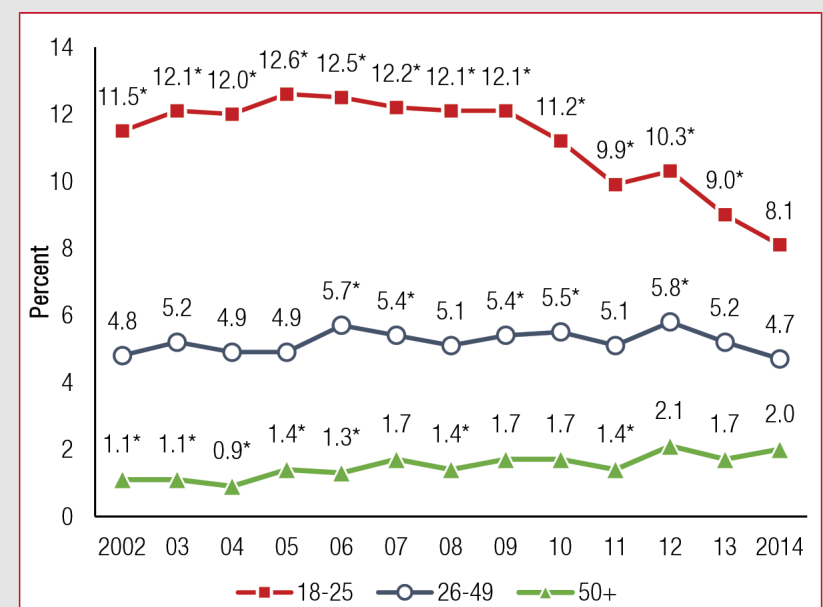


OPIOID MISUSE INCREASES AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Opioid misuse among older adults is an important public health concern. Opioid misuse includes either the use of heroin or the nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers.¹ Heroin is an extremely dangerous drug with no accepted medical use in the United States. Nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers among older adults is associated with negative health outcomes, including falls, hip fracture, and traffic accidents.^{2,3} Given the dangers associated with heroin use and the nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers, it is useful to monitor trends in opioid misuse.

According to the 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), about 9.5 million adults aged 18 or older misused opioids in the past year (data not shown). Across age groups in 2014, adults aged 50 or older were least likely to misuse opioids in the past year (2.0 percent), while young adults aged 18 and 25 were most likely (8.1 percent). Opioid misuse among adults aged 50 or older in 2014 was higher than most years between 2002 and 2011. In contrast, opioid misuse among young adults decreased from 11.5 percent in 2002 to 8.1 percent in 2014. Even though the proportion of older adults who misuse opioids is relatively small compared to young adults, the NSDUH data suggest opioid misuse is increasing among older adults. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides resources for addressing opioid misuse; <https://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>, and <http://store.samhsa.gov/apps/mat/>.

Past year opioid misuse among people aged 18 or older, by age group: 2002-2014 NSDUH



*Difference between this estimate and the 2014 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

1. Nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers include use without a prescription of one's own or use only for the experience or feeling the drugs cause.
2. Buckeridge, D., Huang, A., Hanley, J., Kelome, A., Reidel, K., Verma, A., Winslade, N., & Tamblyn, R. (2010). Risk of injury associated with opioid use in older adults. *J Am Geratr Soc*, 58, 1664-1670.
3. Miller, M., Sturmer, T., Azrael, D., Levin, R., & Solomon, D. H. (2011). Opioid analgesics and the risk of fractures among older adults with arthritis. *J Am Geratr Soc*, 59(3), 430-438.

Source: National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2002 to 2014. 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/>.