



Uniting the communities of Southeastern Connecticut in order to reduce the impact of substance abuse and other addictive behaviors.

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# Take Action

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## Association Between Sources of Misused Prescription Medications and Likelihood of Other Substance Use

According to the National Survey of Drug use and Health conducted in 2008 by the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), more than 1 in 5 individuals 12 years of age or older in the United States report non-medical use of prescription medications such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants and sedatives in their lifetime. About 6% report having used these medications in the past year while about 2.5% report use in the past month. Many people perceive that misuse of legal prescription medications is not as dangerous as use of illicit drugs. However, use of these legal medications without a prescription can be associated with serious side effects, risk of dependence and even death.

In a study published in the August 2009 issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology, two Yale University researchers found that the sources from which adolescents obtain these prescription medications may predict the likelihood that they are also abusing other substances.

Drs. Ty Schepis and Dr. Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin from the Yale University College of Medicine used data from the 2005 and 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) to evaluate sources of misused prescription medications and the likelihood of misuse of other substances. They found that regardless of class (opioids, tranquilizers, stimulants and sedatives) about one half of drugs were obtained for free from family and friends. For opioids the second most common source was a physician. For tranquilizers, stimulants and sedatives, the second most common source was purchase from friends or relatives or a drug dealer. Some sex and race differences were found. For opioids, for example, females were more likely to steal or obtain the medications for free while males were more likely to purchase them or get them from a doctor. White adolescents were more likely to buy opioids and African American

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## Rx Drugs—continued

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adolescents were more likely to obtain them from a physician.

The authors say their findings indicate that "...the group with greatest odds of concurrent other substance use may be those who purchased their medication for misuse from friends, family or drug dealers." Compared to those who misused medications obtained from a physician, those who purchased their medications were more likely to report binge drinking, daily cigarette use, past month marijuana use and past year cocaine use.

They point out that when used in concert with information regarding misuse of prescription medications, information regarding the source of those misused medications may be useful in identifying those "...sub-groups of adolescent prescription misusers who are most vulnerable to consequences from misuse or other substance use."

Sources:

<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2K8NSDUH/tabs/Intro.htm#TopOfPage>

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/158097.php>

[http://journals.lww.com/jaacap/Abstract/2009/08000/Sources\\_of\\_Prescriptions\\_for\\_Misuse\\_by.11.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/jaacap/Abstract/2009/08000/Sources_of_Prescriptions_for_Misuse_by.11.aspx)

## FDA Bans Candy/Fruit Flavored Cigarettes

As of September 22, 2009, the FDA has placed a nationwide ban on the manufacture, distribution or sale of candy or fruit flavored cigarettes. The new ban, authorized by the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, "...highlights the importance of reducing the number of children who start to smoke, and who become addicted to dangerous tobacco products."

Nationwide, smoking continues to be the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. More than 3,600 youth begin smoking everyday. Studies have shown that 17 year old smokers were 3 times more likely than 25 year old smokers, to choose flavored cigarettes.

The FDA is also considering regulations for menthol cigarettes and other tobacco products that may seem appealing to youth (i.e.: fruit flavored cigars/chewing tobacco).

Source: <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm183211.htm>

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## Higher Density of Alcohol Outlets Correlated with Higher Suicide Rates

*There is a strong relationship between drinking alcohol and access to alcohol suicide. Each year, individuals with alcohol dependence account for 20% of suicides in the United States. Eighty to ninety percent of alcohol dependence-related suicides are by men, most of whom are white. According to a new study which will be published in the December issue of Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, in rural American there is an association between attempted and completed suicides and bar density.*

According Fred W. Johnson, associate research scientist at the Prevention Research Center and corresponding author for the study, the question that he and his fellow authors hoped to answer was "Is increased alcohol-outlet density associated with increased rates of completed suicide and of suicide attempts?" To answer that question, the authors examined data including population characteristics such as age as well as place characteristics such as alcohol outlet density from the 581 zip code areas of California from 1995 to 2000. They also examined hospitalization data regarding suicide attempt-related injuries.

The authors found that both attempted and completed suicides "...occur at greater rates in rural communities with greater bar densities." The data show that although in terms of absolute numbers more suicides occur in urban areas (because of a greater population density), the rate of suicide is actually higher in rural areas. They point out however that this study does not prove that having more bars *causes* suicide. Instead, they say their findings are consistent with *what one might expect to find if in fact patronizing a bar or other alcohol outlet did cause suicide*. It is also likely that there are other factors involved. For example, one of the authors states that " the average age of farmers is now rising toward 60, an age when suicide rates increase as medical problems multiply and social isolation increases..." The authors also note that firearms possession is more common in rural areas. Nationally, about 75 percent of rural completed suicides involve firearms.

Source: [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2009-09/ace-tmb091109.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-09/ace-tmb091109.php)

### Do you have unused prescription medications? Don't flush them!

SERAC is sponsoring local prescription medication disposal events. We will offer free collection and safe disposal of unwanted medications. All medicines must be in original containers with name crossed out.

The following will be accepted

- Expired or unwanted prescription medications
- Over-the-counter medicines (cough and cold remedies, pain relievers, etc...)
- Vitamins/nutritional supplements
- Veterinary medications

#### Safe RX Disposal Locations

Tuesday October 20, 2009	Wednesday October 21, 2009	Thursday October 22, 2009	Wednesday October 28, 2009
9:00 a.m - 12:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	12:30 - 4:00 p.m.
Stonington Human Services 166 South Broad Street Pawcatuck, CT 06379	Colchester Town Hall 127 Norwich Avenue Colchester, CT 06415	Montville Senior Center 12 Maple Avenue Oakdale, CT 06382	Norwich Recreation Dept 75 Mohegan Road Norwich, CT 06360

## What is Happening?

### October

- 13 Tobacco Laws Regional Meeting
- 18-24 Prescription Take Back Week
- 23 Workshop: Current Drug Trends SERAC

### November

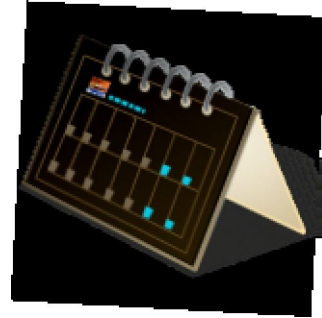
- 10 Regional Youth Prevention Council Kick-Off
- 13 Workshop: Advanced Stress Reduction For Professionals

### December

- 12 Workshop: Adolescent Development and Substance Abuse

### January 2010

- TBA Workshop: Violence Prevention



We're on the web!  
[www.sectrac.org](http://www.sectrac.org)

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