

## Research suggests boys are more likely than girls to abuse over-the-counter drugs

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As crackdowns get tougher on alcohol, tobacco sales, and illicit drugs, there's a growing trend among youth to turn to another source to get high: their parent's medicine cabinet. A new University of Cincinnati study suggests adolescent males are at a higher risk of reporting longtime use of over-the-counter drugs, compared with their female peers. Early results of the study by Rebecca Vidourek, a UC assistant professor of health promotion, and Keith King, a University of Cincinnati professor of health promotion, will be presented on October 29, at the 140th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in San Francisco.

The study examined over-the-counter (OTC) drug use among 7th-12th grade students in 133 schools across Greater Cincinnati. The data was collected by the Coalition for a Drug Free Greater Cincinnati as part of the 2009-2010 Pride Survey on adolescent [drug](#) use in America. The survey was distributed to more than 54,000 students.

Early analysis found that 10 percent of the students reported abusing over-the-counter drugs. "Findings from this study highlight and underscore OTC drugs as an increasing and significant health issue affecting young people," says Vidourek, who adds that commonly abused OTC medications include [cough syrup](#) containing [Dextromethorphan](#) (DXM), and decongestants. The researchers say that high rates of OTC use were also found among male and female junior high school students.

Vidourek says that OTC abuse can result in unintentional poisoning, seizures and physical and psychological addictions.

The researchers say that youth who reported involvement in positive activities, such as school clubs, sports, community and church organizations, were less likely to report abusing OTC medications. Teens more likely to report taking OTC drugs were also more likely to report that they had attended parties with the drugs or had friends who abused OTC drugs.

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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