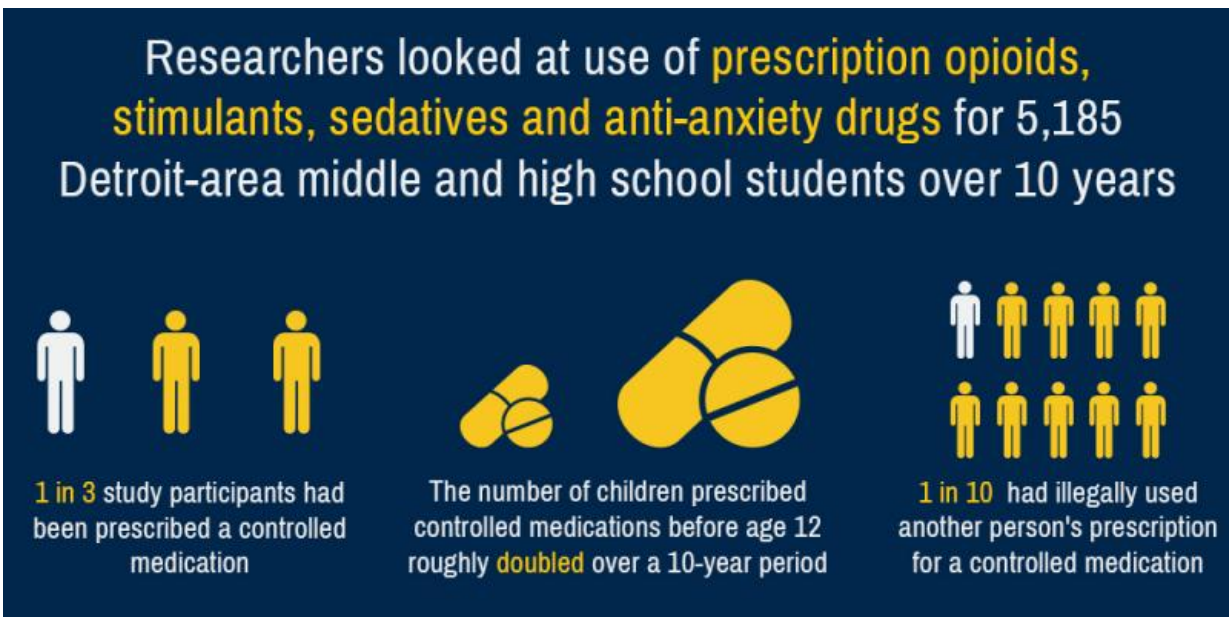


# Kids are prescribed, abusing controlled drugs earlier in life

August 27 2015, by Laura Bailey



A new University of Michigan study of Detroit-area middle and high school students showed that the number of children prescribed controlled medications before age 12 roughly doubled over a 10-year period.

Researchers looked at four [drug](#) classes (opioids, stimulants, sedatives and anti-anxiety drugs) for use patterns among two [age groups](#). They

analyzed retrospective data from students born over a 10-year span and divided students into two study groups: those born between 1991-1995 and those born between 1996-2000.

The study doesn't establish trends, but it's unique in that it's the first known to ask when kids received their first prescription for a controlled drug or used another's medications (no association existed between early prescription use and early illegal use with stimulants).

The researchers found marked differences in use patterns between the two age groups:

- In the younger group, 82 percent reported receiving a prescription by age 12, compared to 42 percent in the older group.
- In the younger group, 76 percent who illegally took another's prescription drug reported doing so by age 12, compared to 35 percent in the older group.

Across both groups:

- One-third reported having been prescribed a controlled medication.
- More than one in 10 reported illegally using another's prescription.
- They were most likely to receive a first prescription at 16.
- They were most likely to begin using another's prescription at 16.
- Receiving a first prescription prior to [age](#) 12 was associated with starting to use another's prescription drug more than two times earlier.

Researcher Elizabeth Austic, a postdoctoral translational scholar at the U-M Injury Center and first author of the study, suspects the Detroit results

mirror trends elsewhere in the nation. Carol Boyd, U-M professor of nursing, is the principal investigator on the paper. She is also affiliated with the Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

The study appears in the *Journal of Addiction Medicine*: "Age and Cohort Patterns of Medical and Nonmedical Use of Controlled Medication Among Adolescents."

**More information:** "Age and Cohort Patterns of Medical and Nonmedical Use of Controlled Medication Among Adolescents." *Journal of Addiction Medicine*: August 17, 2015 [DOI: 10.1097/ADM.0000000000000142](#)

Provided by University of Michigan

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