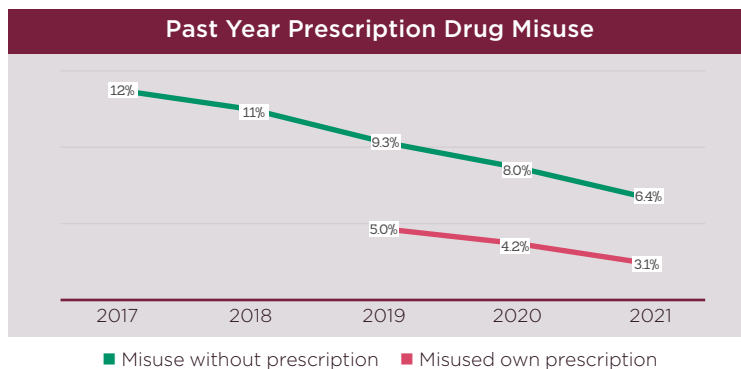


Prescription Drug Misuse

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance misuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 24 public and private colleges and universities in the state working to prevent high-risk behaviors by implementing evidence-based strategies. To measure progress and obtain data needed for the implementation of programs, PIP created the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) Survey. The MACHB is an annual, online survey that has been implemented each spring since 2007. The survey assesses the roles that alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), tobacco/nicotine, interpersonal violence, and mental health have on student health and wellness. This brief will focus on prescription drug misuse among Missouri college students.

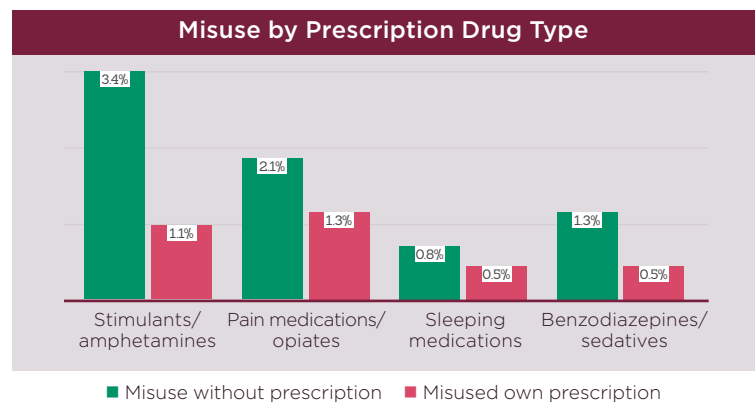
Prevalence

The MACHB survey defines prescription drug misuse in 2 ways: 'using a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription for your use' or 'misusing a prescription drug that was prescribed to you (meaning taking in a manner other than prescribed).' According to the 2021 MACHB, 6.4% of Missouri college students have used a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription and 3.1% of students have misused their own prescription in the past year. These rates have declined steadily since 2016.



The MACHB asks about misuse of the following prescription drug categories, as they are the most commonly misused types of prescription drugs among college students: stimulants/amphetamines (Adderall, Ritalin, etc.), pain medications/opiates (Vicodin, OxyContin, etc.), benzodiazepines/sedatives (Xanax, Valium, etc.), and sleeping medications (Ambien, Halcion, etc.) The reported rates of misuse both with

and without a prescription in the past year are shown in the following chart*.



Among students who misuse prescription drugs without a prescription, most report being given them (50%) or purchasing them (25%).* Of students who were given the prescription drugs, the majority got them from friends (60%) or family (37%).

Motivations for Misuse

When asked about motivations for misusing various types of prescription drugs*, students who had misused in the past year reported they most commonly misused stimulants 'to help concentrate' (72%) and 'to help be alert/stay awake' (54%). The top reasons for misusing pain medications were 'to relieve/manage physical pain' (64%) and 'to relax/relieve tension' (35%). In 2021, new questions were added about motivations for misusing both sleeping medications

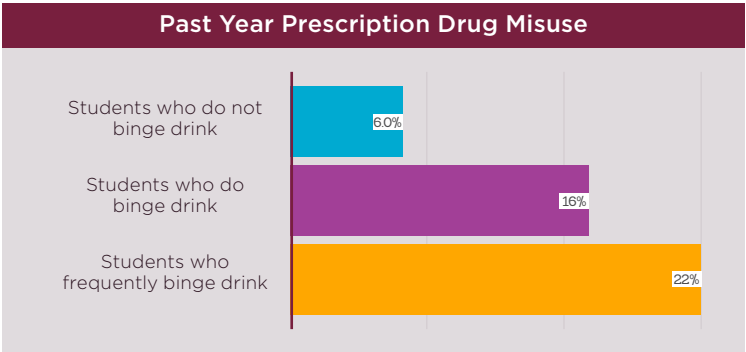
and benzodiazepines/sedatives, the top reasons reported being ‘to help with sleep’ (69%) and ‘to relax/relieve tension’ (44%) for sleeping medications and ‘to relax/relieve tension’ (60%) and ‘to help with feelings or emotions’ (44%) for benzodiazepines/sedatives.

Prescription Drug Misuse and Other Behaviors

Prescription drug misuse can sometimes occur with other high-risk alcohol or drug use, along with other health and safety behaviors. Among students who had misused prescription drugs in the past year, 29% reported mixing them with alcohol at least once. Additionally, 9.7% of students who had misused reported driving at least once after misusing. While not all medications impair driving, many common prescription drugs can cause reactions that may affect an individual’s ability to drive.

Students who reported binge drinking (consuming approximately 5 or more drinks for males and 4 or more drinks for females in a 2-hour period at least once in the past 2 weeks) and frequent binge drinking (binge drinking 3 or more times in the past 2 weeks) had higher reported rates of prescription drug misuse in the past year than students who do not report that they binge drink.

MoSafeRx



MoSafeRx is a program from Missouri Partners in Prevention focused on preventing prescription drug misuse. The main goals of the program are to educate on the risks of prescription drug misuse, promote safe medication use and disposal, help students

recognize the signs of an opioid overdose and know how to respond, and to understand Missouri’s Good Samaritan Law. Visit mopip.org/RX to learn more.

MoSafeRx Training

MoSafeRx provides a free, online training for college students that covers the scope of the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse, recognizing and preventing prescription drug misuse, and responding to an opioid overdose. Take the training today at mopiptraining.org/msrx

Proper Medication Storage and Disposal

Since most students report obtaining prescription medications from friends and family, it is important to safely store valid prescriptions and dispose of old/unused medications. Lock boxes or locking cap pill bottles are a good option for safe storage, and PIP offers free locking cap pill bottles for campuses. Drug deactivation pouches are also a good option for proper medication disposal, and PIP can provide Detera brand bags free of charge in various sizes. Please contact our staff at pip@missouri.edu if your campus is in need of items related to preventing prescription drug misuse.

Drug Take Back Locations

The DEA also hosts National Prescription Drug Take Back Day events periodically to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs. There are also permanent controlled substance public disposal locations where medications can be disposed of. Find a location near you!

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

Report prepared by Margo Leitschuh, Communications Coordinator. Data prepared by Dong Ding and Kayleigh Greenwood, Research Coordinators. Published March 2022.

*question is select all that apply