



Non-Medical Use Of Prescription & OTC Drugs

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❖ Abstract:

Misuse, abuse, and nonmedical use of prescription and OTC drugs are terms used to describe the misuse of these drugs. Misuse refers to using drugs for purposes other than those prescribed or recommended. The scope and magnitude of the problem of misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is increasing worldwide. The main factors are availability, Accessibility, affordability, perceived safety, and self-medication. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance misuse, it's important to seek help from a healthcare provider or a local support group.

Conclusion In conclusion, the misuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs is a growing public health concern. This review has Highlighted the various ways in which these drugs are Misused, the reasons behind this misuse, and the potential Health risks associated with such behavior. It is clear that more Needs to be done to educate the public about the dangers of Misusing these drugs, and to provide better support for those Who are struggling with addiction. Furthermore, stricter Regulations may be needed to prevent these drugs from falling into the wrong hands. Ultimately, it will require a concerted Effort from healthcare professionals, policymakers, and Society at large to address this issue effectively.

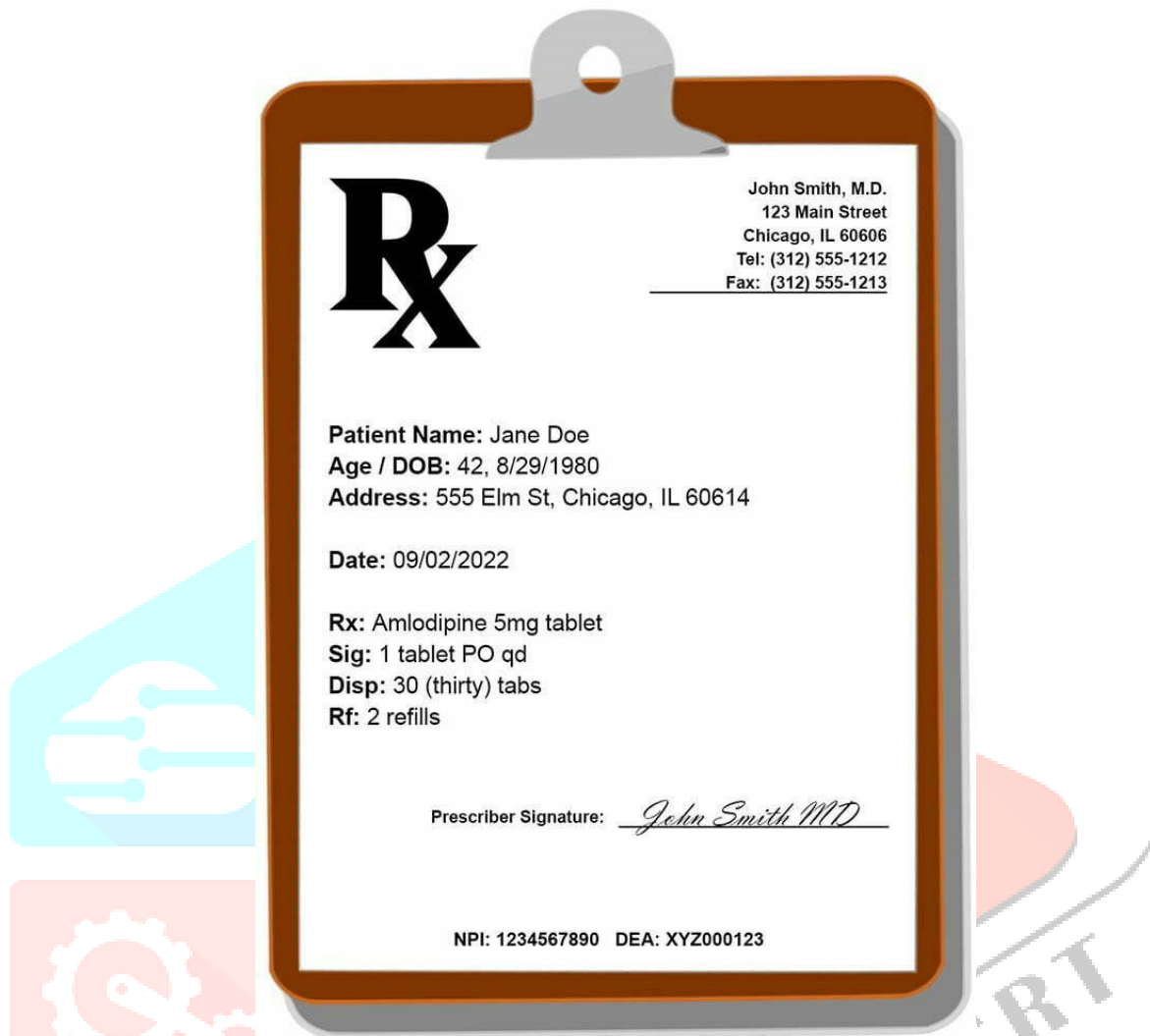
❖ Introduction:

Misuse, abuse, and nonmedical use of prescription and OTC drugs are terms that Describe the Intentional or unintentional use of these drugs for purposes other than those Prescribed by a health care Provider or recommended by the label. Misuse refers to using a drug in a different Dose, frequency, Duration, or route than prescribed or recommended. Abuse refers to using a drug to get high, alter one's Mood, or enhance one's



performance. Nonmedical use refers to using a drug Without a prescription or for reasons other than medical.

The scope and magnitude of the problem of misuse, abuse, and nonmedical use of prescription and



OTC drugs are alarming and increasing worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, about 31 million people have disorders related to the use of prescription opioids, and about 11 million people Inject prescription opioids. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the global Prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription opioids increased by 56% between 2010 and 2019, Reaching 4.6% of the population aged 15-64 years. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health in the United States, about 18 million people aged 12 or older misused Prescription drugs in the Past year, and about 2 million people misused OTC drugs in the past month.

The main factors and motivations that contribute to the misuse, abuse, and Nonmedical use of Prescription and OTC drugs are complex and multifaceted. Some of the common Factors are availability, Accessibility, affordability, perceived safety, self-medication, and recreational Purposes. Availability Refers to the ease of obtaining these drugs from various sources, such as Pharmacies, health care Providers, friends, family, or the internet. Accessibility refers to the lack of Regulation, monitoring, or Enforcement of the prescription and OTC drug market, which allows for diversion, Counterfeiting, or Falsification of these drugs. Affordability refers to the lower cost of these drugs Compared to illicit drugs, which makes them more attractive to users with limited resources. Perceived Safety refers to the belief That these drugs are less harmful, addictive, or stigmatized than illicit drugs, which Lowers the perceived Risk of using them. Self-medication refers to the attempt to treat one's physical or Mental health Problems, such as pain, anxiety, depression, or insomnia, with these drugs, without consulting a health Care provider. Recreational purposes refer to the desire to experience euphoria, Relaxation, stimulation, Or enhancement of one's senses, cognition, or performance with these drugs.

Misusing prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs can lead to a variety of Harmful consequences:

- 1. Addiction:** Both prescription and OTC drugs can lead to addiction if Misused. This is a chronic disease that can cause compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences.
- 2. Overdose:** Misuse can result in an overdose, which can be life-Threatening. This is particularly true for opioids, which can cause severe Respiratory depression.
- 3. Adverse Effects:** Misuse of these drugs can lead to numerous physical and mental health effects. For instance, misuse of opioids can cause Constipation, nausea, drowsiness, confusion, and poor coordination. Misuse of stimulants can cause irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, Reduced appetite, insomnia, agitation, anxiety, and paranoia.
- 4. Interactions:** OTC and prescription drugs can interact with other Substances, leading to harmful effects. For example, certain ingredients in Some OTC drugs may be extracted and used to manufacture illegal drugs Like crystal meth.
- 5. Withdrawal:** Abruptly stopping the use of these drugs can lead to Withdrawal symptoms, which can be uncomfortable and, in some cases, Dangerous.
- 6. Other Health Problems:** Misuse can also lead to other health Problems such as anxiety, depression, psychosis, personality disorder, Suicide, lung damage, cardiovascular disease, blood borne viruses, and Arthritis.
- 7. Socioeconomic Impact:** Drug misuse can have a significant Socioeconomic impact on the person, their friends, family, and the wider Community.

❖ Keywords:

Misuse, Drug interaction, OTC Drugs, Prescription, Medicine, Patient, Pharmacist, Prescriber, Abused, Non-Medical.

❖ Aim and Objectives:

Identify the most commonly misused, abused, or nonmedically used prescription and OTC drugs, according to the existing literature. - Describe the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the users of these drugs, and the Factors that influence their use.

❖ Finding:

• Commonly Misused Medicines

-Pain relievers, such as opioids (e.g., oxycodone, hydrocodone, Tramadol), codeine (often combined with paracetamol or ibuprofen), And non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (e.g., diclofenac, Naproxen).

-Tranquilizers, such as benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam, alprazolam, Clonazepam), z-drugs (e.g., zolpidem, zopiclone), and gabapentinoids (e.g., pregabalin, gabapentin).

-Stimulants, such as methylphenidate (e.g., Ritalin), modafinil (e.g., Provigil), bupropion (e.g., Wellbutrin), and pseudoephedrine (a nasal Decongestant).

-Sedatives, such as barbiturates (e.g., phenobarbital, secobarbital),

-Antihistamines, (e.g., diphenhydramine, promethazine, Chlorpheniramine), and dimenhydrinate (an antiemetic).

-Antidepressants, such as venlafaxine (e.g., Effexor), trazodone (e.g., Desyrel), mirtazapine (e.g., Remeron), and fluoxetine (e.g., Prozac).

-Antipsychotics, such as quetiapine (e.g., Seroquel), olanzapine (e.g., Zyprexa), risperidone (e.g., Risperdal), and aripiprazole (e.g., Abilify).

-OTC drugs, such as loperamide (an antidiarrheal), Dextromethorphan (a cough suppressant), benzydamine (an anti-Inflammatory), promethazine (an antihistamine), and hyoscine (an Antispasmodic).

- **Misused drugs:**

- Pain relievers, such as opioids (e.g., oxycodone)



- Tranquilizers, such as benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam)



- Stimulants, such as methylphenidate (e.g., Ritalin)



- Sedatives, such as barbiturates (e.g., phenobarbital)



- Antidepressants, such as venlafaxine (e.g., Effexor)



- Antipsychotics, such as quetiapine (e.g., Seroquel)



- OTC drugs, such as loperamide (an antidiarrheal), dextromethorphan (a cough suppressant),



- **Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the users of these drugs –**

The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of drug Users can vary widely, but some general



trends have been Observed. Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics:

-Socioeconomic status (SES) plays a significant role in drug use. For women, SES, province residence, and age are the most Significant contributors to socioeconomic inequality in drug use. For men, SES, smoking, and alcohol consumption are the main Contributors.

-Certain subpopulation groups may be impacted differently by Drug use disorders, such as women, sexually diverse groups, Indigenous and aboriginal groups, ethnic and immigrant groups, Displaced persons, and those living in rural settings.

-Other socio-demographic characteristics that can influence Drug use include age, sex, residence, economic status, Education status, religion, ethnicity, living status, mother Education level, father education level, and having a substance User friend.

- **Factors Influencing Drug Use:**

- I. **Genetics:** People with a family history of drug use and Dependence are more likely to become addicts themselves.
- II. **Lack of Options:** Boredom, debt, poverty, stress, and even the Lack of a stimulating environment all contribute to drug use and addiction.

- III. **Mental Health Disorders:** Individuals with mental health disorders are more likely to use drugs.
- IV. **Environmental Factors:** The environment, including family relationships, social ties, community attributes, employment Status, stress reactivity and coping skills, physical or emotional pain, personality traits, educational opportunities, compelling goals and progress toward them, opportunities for and access to rewards in life, can influence the development of an addiction.

❖ **Methods to prevent misuse of prescription**

- 1) Follow the directions on the medicine label carefully and do not take More than the recommended dose or for longer than prescribed.
- 2) If you don't understand the directions, ask your doctor, nurse, or Pharmacist to explain them to you.
- 3) Keep a list of all the medicines, vitamins, minerals, and herbs you use and share this information with your doctor at your next checkup. This can help avoid harmful interactions or duplications.
- 4) Make sure you're getting the right medicine for your condition and tell your health care provider about all your prescriptions, as well as OTC medicines, herbs and supplements, and alcohol and other drug Use.
- 5) Store your medicines in a safe place where children, pets, or others Cannot access them. Dispose of any unused or expired medicines Properly.
- 6) Do not share your prescription medicines with anyone else or use Someone else's prescription medicines.
- 7) Be aware of the potential for abuse and diversion of some Prescription and OTC medicines, such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, Stimulants, sedatives, antitussive cough syrups, loperamide, Promethazine, and others¹². These medicines can have serious side Effects and can lead to addiction or overdose if used improperly.
- 8) If you think you or someone you know has a problem with Prescription or OTC drug abuse, seek help from a health care Professional or a support group. There are effective treatments Available for drug addiction.

❖ **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

➤ The main type of misused drugs are:

- Painkillers
- Tranquilizers
- Sedatives
- Stimulant
- Anti-depressant
- Anti- histamine
- Anti- psychotic
- Non-steroidal
- Anti-inflammatory
- Z-drugs
- Cough suppressant
- Anti-plasmodia
- Anti-diarreal
- Anti-emetic
- Nasal decongestant.

➤ Misusing prescription may lead to a variety of harmful consequences:

- Addiction
- Overdose
- Adverse effect
- Drug interactions
- Socio-economic impact
- Other health problems.

It's Important to always use medications as directed by a healthcare professional and to understand the potential risks associated with misuse. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance misuse, it's important to seek help from a healthcare provider or a local support group.

❖ Conclusion

In conclusion, the misuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs is a growing public health concern. This review has Highlighted the various ways in which these drugs are Misused, the reasons behind this misuse, and the potential Health risks associated with such behaviour. It is clear that more Needs to be done to educate the public about the dangers of Misusing these drugs, and to provide better support for those Who are struggling with addiction. Furthermore, stricter Regulations may be needed to prevent these drugs from falling into the wrong hands. Ultimately, it will require a concerted Effort from healthcare professionals, policymakers, and Society at large to address this issue effectively.

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