Misuse of Meth Decreased

Drug *from page 1*

the highest rate of nonmedical use (2.1%), followed by tranquilizers (0.8%), stimulants (0.5%), and sedatives (0.1%).

Of those who misused prescription-type pain relievers, 55% of people 12 years or older got prescription-type pain relievers from a friend or relative for free. More than 17% got their pain relievers from one doctor, 5% got them from a dealer or stranger, and 0.4% bought them on the Internet.

The rate of illicit drug use also rose among U.S. residents aged 50-59 years, from 2.7% in 2002 to 6.2% in 2009 during the month prior to the survey.

The trend, according to the survey, reflects the growing aging population.

The rate of misuse decreased for just two drugs – cocaine and methamphetamine.

Misuse of cocaine decreased from 2.0% in 2008 to 1.4% in 2009 and the rate for methamphetamine decreased from 0.6% to 0.2% over the same period. The rates of alcohol and tobacco use remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2009, according to the survey.

Federal officials called for more community collaboration to increase awareness about the dangers of illicit drug use.

Dr. J. Calvin Chatlos said in an interview that he thinks it is notable that the increase in illicit drug use mostly occurred among those in the 12-17 and 18-25 age groups. The key focus among those groups was on marijuana and psychotherapeutics, mostly painly pain relievers, he pointed out.

"We must ask ourselves to what degree is this related to increased acceptability of medical marijuana and the overall increase nationally in prescribing pain relievers to adults," said Dr. Chatlos, a child and adolescent addiction psychiatrist who serves as associate clinical professor of psychiatry at the Unversity of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Brunswick. "This is supported in the survey results that show a decreased perceived risk of marijuana use for the past 2 years."

Dr. Chatlos also found the increase in past month illicit drug use among people aged 50-54 to be fascinating. "Are these the parents of those in the 18-25 age group that shows increased tolerance or promotion of use?" ■

Smoking Quit Rate Rises With Longer Therapy

FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ADDICTION MEDICINE

SAN FRANCISCO – An intensive smoking-cessation program helped 33% of 202 patients in drug treatment quit smoking, an intent-to-treat analysis found.

A high proportion of patients in treatment for substance use also smoke cigarettes and have a hard time quitting, with previous studies suggesting quit rates of 5%-12%, Dr. Milan Khara said at the meeting.

The study enrolled 252 patients who were in drug treatment programs in 8 weeks of group therapy for smoking cessation plus free pharmacotherapy for smoking cessation during the group therapy and for up to an additional 18 weeks, for a total program length of 26 weeks, said Dr. Khara of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

The overall quit-smoking rate of 33% in the intent-to-treat analysis was exceeded by a quit rate of 43% among 152 patients who completed the program.

Among these completers, the quit rate was 51% in those who attended the 8 weeks of smoking-cessation group therapy and participated in after-care, compared with 18% of completers who only attended the 8 weeks of group therapy. About 80% of people in drug treatment programs smoke tobacco. "Within addiction services, we've largely had a blind spot about tobacco," Dr. Khara said. "We often believe that these patients don't want to quit smoking," but other studies have shown that 44%-80% of patients in drug treatment expressed interest in quitting.

–Sherry Boschert

Disclosures: Dr. Khara has received funding from or been a consultant for Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson, which make smoking-cessation medications. Johnson & Johnson and divisions of the Canadian government funded provision of medications in the study.