



Lesson Four: Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drug Abuse

Background

Emergency rooms across the country are admitting more and more youth who are overdosing on non-prescription cough and cold medicines. Abuse of non-prescription and prescription drugs now poses a dangerous threat to our youth. One of the most abused substances – Dextromethorphan or DMX – is found in over 100 over-the-counter medicines.

Discussion Questions

1. Other than marijuana and alcohol, what did the video say were drugs widely abused by children and teens? Who can name them for us?
2. Why do you think these drugs are becoming more of a problem with teens?
3. How many of you already knew about the problems with cold medicines such as Coricidin and Robitussin? Did you also know that Dextromethorphan (or DXM) overdose can cause death? Instances where girls didn't know their own names and were disoriented are commonplace.
4. How can a person who "just wanted to have fun" actually end up addicted to more serious drugs? Are teenagers "indestructible?" How many of you feel that nothing wrong or bad will happen to you if you try a drug, like alcohol, just once? Why?
5. Most teenagers do think that "bad things" won't happen to them. Who can give me an example of one of the individuals in the video that felt that way?
6. Why are stores allowed to sell items that have Dextromethorphan (DXM) in them? Do you think they should be regulated like alcohol or other prescription drugs? Why or why not?



Vocabulary Builders

Term	Definition
Ritalin Abuser:	Ritalin is a drug prescribed to treat individuals with Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD). Because this drug (along with other ADD drugs such as Dexedrine, Aderall, and Cylor) is widely used by so many teens, it is easily available and often abused.
Dextromethorphan Abuser:	Dextromethorphan (or DXM) is found in Coricidin HBP, Robitussin, Vicks NyQuil, and over 100 common cough and cold medicines. By taking more than the recommended daily dose, many children and teens have overdosed on this drug.
Over-the-Counter Drugs	Another term used to describe drugs that can be obtained without a doctor's prescription. Also called non-prescription drugs.
Overdose	This is what happens when an individual takes more than the normal amount of a drug, alcohol, or other medication. The active ingredients in the drug cause a person to lose consciousness. This can lead to rape, possible brain damage and death.

Activity

Not My Body!

Note: This is a two-day lesson.

1. Begin the discussion by asking, Why is it important for students to know the facts about drug abuse? Why do people abuse drugs? Why do people think that using prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs for "recreational purposes" is better than abusing illegal drugs?
2. Distribute the list of commonly abused prescription and over-the-counter medicines that follows.

COMMONLY ABUSED PRESCRIPTION OR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES

- Dextromethorphan (cough medicine), Alka-seltzer Plus Cold & Cough Medicine, Coricidin HPB Cough and Cold, Dayquil LiquiCaps, Dimetapp DM, Robitussin cough products, Sudafed cough products, Triaminic cough syrups, Tylenol Cold products, Vicks 44 Cough Relief products and Vicks NyQuil LiquiCaps.
- Opioids/pain relievers: Dilaudid, Lorcet, Lortab, OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Tylox, Vicodin



- Depressants: Valium, Xanax
- Stimulants: Adderall, Concerta, Ritalin

Ask, Has anyone ever taken any one of these medicines because a doctor, nurse, parent, or some other adult has instructed you to do so to get relief from some illness? Did it help? How?

3. Go through the list and have students check off the medicines that can be found in their family's medicine cabinet and discuss the intended use for each.

4. Break them into pairs (or, if necessary, groups no larger than three) and assign each group a specific medicine from the list. Their task is to take one of the medicines and research the following:

- Where it comes from
- Its effect on the human body
- The medicinal use or uses
- How it is legally dispensed
- Common non-medicinal uses
- Illegal uses
- Dangers to the human body

5. Provide students remaining class time to complete their research.

6. On day two, give each group a life-sized piece of paper and have them trace a full-body outline of one of their members. Then, using a science book or other resource, have them label the following: brain, stomach, lungs, spinal cord, heart, muscular system, nervous system, respiratory system.

7. On the left side of the body, they will list the specific positive affects of the medicine; on the right side, they will list the possible adverse affects of the medicine if misused or abused.

Be sure to connect the words to the correct system or area of the body.

8. When they have completed their body maps, display them around the classroom and have the class tour the exhibit.

9. Ask, If you know a medicine can hurt your body in these ways, why would you take it? What attracts people to these medicines? Why do they abuse them? How can we as a society influence teens and even adults to find totally drug-free alternatives for stress, relaxation and even concentration?



Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Ritalin Abuser:	Ritalin is a drug prescribed to treat individuals with Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD). Because this drug (along with other ADD drugs such as Dexedrine, Aderall, and Cylor) is widely used by so many teens, it is easily available and often abused.
Dextromethorphan Abuser:	Dextromethorphan (or DXM) is found in Coricidin HBP, Robitussin, Vicks NyQuil, and over 100 common cough and cold medicines. By taking more than the recommended daily dose, many children and teens have overdosed on this drug.
Over-the-Counter Drugs	Another term used to describe drugs that can be obtained with a doctor's prescription. Also called non-prescription drugs.
Overdose	This is what happens when an individual takes more than the normal amount of a drug, alcohol, or other medication. The active ingredients in the drug cause a person to lose consciousness. This can lead to rape, possible brain damage, and death.



COMMONLY ABUSED PRESCRIPTION OR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES

Dextromethorphan (cough medicine)	Alka-seltzer Plus Cold & Cough Medicine, Coricidin HPB Cough and Cold, Dayquil LiquiCaps, Dimetapp DM, Robitussin cough products, Sudafed cough products, Triaminic cough syrups, Tylenol Cold products, Vicks 44 Cough Relief products and Vicks NyQuil LiquiCaps.
Opioids/ Pain Relievers	Dilaudid, Lorcet, Lortab, OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Tylox, Vicodin
Depressants	Valium, Xanax, Zoloft
Stimulants	Adderall, Concerta, Ritalin



Resources and Referral Guide

Online Resources

www.teenoverthecounterdrugabuse.com

www.medicinenet.com

www.erowid.org

www.abovetheinfluence.com

www.dxmstories.com

www.drugfree.org

www.stopmedicineabuse.org

Contacts

Arkansas Poison Control Center:

- 1-800-222-1222
- 1-800-222-1222

U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration

- *1-800-662-HELP*