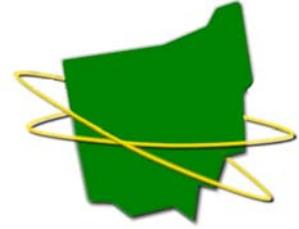




# OSAM-O-GRAM

DATE: June 2004  
DATELINE: Ohio



Wright State University  
The University of Akron

## Increasing Street Availability of Methadone Tablets Reported Across the State

In January 2004, increases in abuse of methadone tablets, typically prescribed to manage pain, were reported in the **Akron, Cincinnati** and **Youngstown** areas. Six months later at the June OSAM Network meeting, this trend was reported in **Dayton, Columbus, Toledo**, and the rural southeast as well.

Methadone tablets are available under the brand names of Dolophine® and Methadose®, and their pain relief potency is similar to that of morphine. According to drug users residing in the **Dayton** and **Cincinnati** areas, methadone tablets sell for \$0.50 and \$1 per milligram on the streets. This is comparable in price to OxyContin® (oxycodone controlled-release).

According to drug users, and substantiated by crime lab professionals in **Dayton**, this increase in street availability of methadone tablets may be related to the fact that prescriptions for OxyContin® are being monitored more closely by law enforcement. As a result, prescription of other narcotic analgesics, including methadone, has increased. These reports are indirectly corroborated by data compiled by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders System.

Prescription volume of oxycodone continues to be among the highest in Ohio (Figure 1). However, the most significant increases in analgesic prescriptions have occurred with methadone (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Prescription Volume of Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, and Methadone in Ohio, 2002

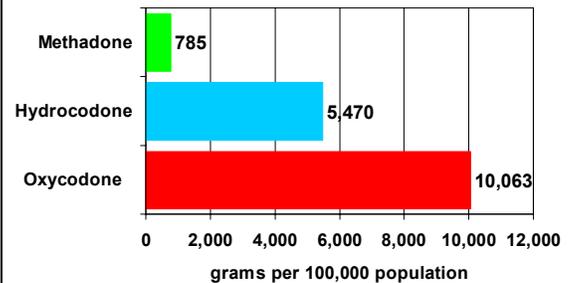
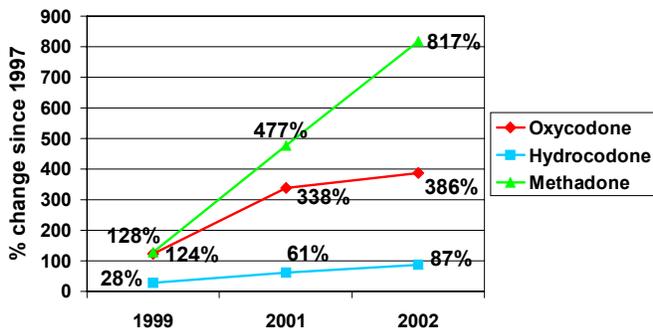


Figure 2. Percent Change in Prescription Volume of Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, and Methadone in Ohio, from Baseline Year 1997 through 2002



According to DEA reports, this growth in prescription of methadone is associated with the drug's use as an analgesic (<http://dpt.samhsa.gov/reports/index.html>).

Increases in methadone abuse are consistent with growing reports of pharmaceutical analgesic abuse across the state. The emerging trend of methadone abuse in the state warrants further monitoring, especially considering recent increases in methadone-related deaths and emergency department visits in several metropolitan areas across the nation ([www.dawninfo.samhsa.gov](http://www.dawninfo.samhsa.gov)).

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Informants located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the June 2004 OSAM Network meeting.

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