



Increase in Prescription Stimulant Abuse Likely Linked to Increases in Methamphetamine Use

The Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network (OSAM) is reporting that more focus group participants (i.e., active and recovering drug users) are talking about prescription stimulant use in several regions of OSAM network. Prescription stimulants are medications often used to treat attention deficit disorders (ADD), yet many of these prescriptions are being illicitly used throughout Ohio. OSAM data shows an increase in percentage of participants who illicitly used prescription stimulants during the past six months in five of the eight OSAM regions covering the east and southern parts of Ohio; in other words, over half the state saw an increase in reports of illicit use of prescription stimulants (see Figure 1).

Media substantiated the reporting of OSAM participants. In July, the Ohio State Highway Patrol reported that the number of prescription stimulant pills seized during the first half of the year had increased 101% (www.daytondailynews.com, July 27, 2013).

Legend

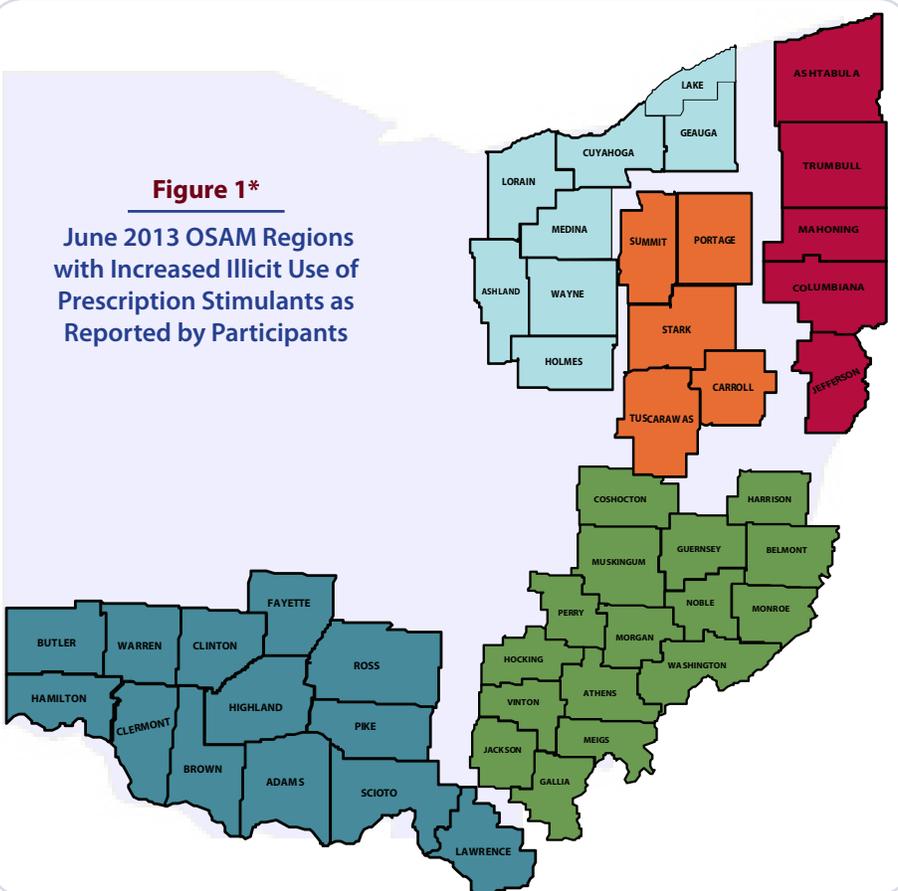
Regions that reported increased illicit use of prescription stimulants are Akron-Canton, Athens, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Youngstown.

- Youngstown region
- Akron-Canton region
- Athens region
- Cincinnati region
- Cleveland region

* Regions that reported same or decreased illicit use of prescription stimulants are Columbus, Dayton and Toledo.

Figure 1*

June 2013 OSAM Regions with Increased Illicit Use of Prescription Stimulants as Reported by Participants



Collaborating data also indicated that prescription stimulants are increasingly more available. According to a recent report of the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS), Ohio's state prescription monitoring program, there were 27,612,209 solid oral doses of prescription stimulants dispensed statewide in the fourth quarter of 2013. This number represents a statewide increase in the number of prescription stimulants dispensed from the third quarter of 2013, with this increase greater in OSAM regions where participants noted an increase in illicit use during the past six months than in regions where no such increase was noted (4.15% vs. 3.55%).

Adderall® is the number one reported prescription stimulant in widespread use throughout all regions. Other prescription stimulants reported as available include Concerta®, Ritalin® and Vyvanse®. The BCI Richfield Crime Lab in northeast Ohio also reported cases involving Dexedrine.® The Lake County Crime Lab (Cleveland region) reported an increase in the number of Adderall® cases it processes. Similarly, the Miami Valley Regional Crime Lab (Dayton region) reported an overall increase in the number of prescription stimulant cases it processes.

Participants reported the following prices specific to Adderall®: 20 mg sells for between \$2-5; 30 mg sells for between \$5-10; an entire prescription sells for \$100. Participants often reported that users can get prescription stimulants for free or for as little as \$0.50 a pill because users reportedly do not typically obtain these drugs from dealers, rather they're obtained more often than not from friends and family or from individuals who have prescriptions or from physicians who prescribe them. As a result, pricing is often not an issue and users can often get prescription stimulants for a lot less than the street prices reported above.

Participants and community professionals discussed using prescription stimulants with sedative-hypnotics, heroin, prescription opioids, marijuana and Suboxone®. Treatment providers and participants linked cocaine and methamphetamine users to prescription stimulants explaining that these users will use the drugs when they cannot find their drug of choice; thereby substituting prescription stimulants for cocaine or methamphetamine. Street jargon supports this claim as prescription stimulants are often referred to as "kiddie meth," "poor man's coke [cocaine]" or "synthetic coke."

With the increase in methamphetamine throughout OSAM regions, there is concern of increased abuse of prescription stimulants as these drugs appear to be highly correlated (see Table 1). In October, Columbus police reported a 45% increase in methamphetamine lab seizures across the state (<http://impact.cleveland.com>, October 21, 2013).

Table 1: OSAM Regions with Reported Increases in Prescription Stimulant Use between January and June 2013 as Compared to Methamphetamine and Cocaine

Region	Prescription Stimulants	Methamphetamine	Cocaine
Akron-Canton	↑	↑	↑
Athens	↑	↑	
Cincinnati	↑	↑	↑
Cleveland	↑		↑
Youngstown	↑	↑	

