

What are the inherent risks in stimulant medications for the treatment of ADHD and how can we measure those risks to make appropriate policy decisions?

Problems With ADHD Medication

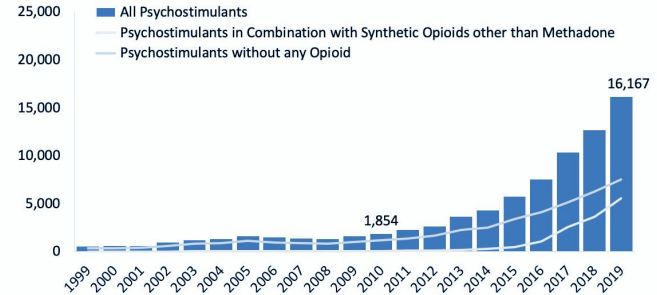
- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Overprescription/
Overdiagnosis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Broad diagnostic criteria ✓ Diagnosis not required for medication |
| 2 | High Instance of
Dependence/abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Releases dopamine, an addictive substance ✓ Increase in instances of abuse |
| 3 | North Carolina Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High psychostimulant abuse in Appalachia/NC universities ✓ Federal drug laws barely effective |

Problems With ADHD Medication

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Overprescription/
Overdiagnosis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stricter diagnostic criteria for ADHD ✓ Require a diagnosis for prescription |
| 2 | High Instance of
Dependence/abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Alternative therapy to treat ADHD: Executive Functioning, Impulse Control, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy |
| 3 | North Carolina Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Less criminalization of psychostimulant abuse, more geared towards recovery and treatment |



Figure 6. National Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Psychostimulants with Abuse Potential (Primarily Methamphetamine)*, by Opioid Involvement Number Among All Ages, 1999-2019



*Among deaths with drug overdose as the underlying cause, the psychostimulants with abuse potential (primarily methamphetamine) category was determined by the T43.6 ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death code. Abbreviated to *psychostimulants* in the bar chart above. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 12/2020.