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### Statistics

\* Since 1980, the number of deaths related to drug overdoses has risen over 540 percent.

\* Since 1990, the number of individuals who take prescription drugs illegally is believed to have risen by over 500 percent.

- <http://www.michaelshouse.com/drug-addiction/the-statistics/>

## Overdose Surge Has City Reeling - Officials Confer on Epidemic

TAUNTON — In the last month and a half, 64 people have overdosed in Taunton, five fatally, and at a community meeting, Police Chief Edward Walsh asked a question that no one can yet answer. "When will this end?"

Bristol District Attorney C. Samuel Sutter told the crowd that for years, a bag of heroin cost \$20 on average. Now, around Taunton, he said, a bag can be found for \$7.

Since 2007, Sutter said, overdoses have at least doubled in the county, with admittances to treatment centers rising by nearly 50 percent.

Susan Cyr's 32-year-old son, Eric, died of a heroin overdose in January. Eric, she said, shot up bad heroin laced with fentanyl in his car in a CVS parking lot on Jan. 24. He died alone and sat in his car for a day before he was discovered.

Although police did not immediately confirm Cyr's account, authorities across New England have warned people that heroin laced with fentanyl, a powerful narcotic, is a particularly

dangerous and potentially fatal combination.

Throughout Massachusetts, State Police have been compiling numbers to help quantify the spike in heroin overdoses, said David Procopio, a spokesman for the State Police.

"In just about every county in the state, we've seen an increase [in usage]," said Procopio. "It's happening in the city, it's happening in towns, it's happening across the socioeconomic spectrum," he said.

Taunton police have developed a strategy this month to combat the abuse of heroin and opiates in the city, and have posted it on the department's website.

"The grade of the heroin on the streets of Taunton is high," Taunton police stated in their strategy plan.

"The price is low. Cheaper than cocaine. Cheaper than painkillers. Because of the low price and purity of the heroin in Taunton, we have become a regional market where individuals as far away as New



Hampshire will come to Taunton to purchase it."

"We are currently on track to have more heroin overdoses in the first three months of the year than we had in the entire year of 2013," the department's plan said.

Advocates at the community meeting stressed that most users do not start off with heroin, but transition to the drug after first being prescribed opiates to treat pain. "Not everyone began as an addict; sometimes they began as a patient," said Joanne Peterson, founder of Learn 2 Cope, a support group for relatives of drug users.

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/02/18/month-and-half-overdose-heroin-taunton-community-gathers-address-spike-usage/jZud80JHqpIYYnwVw7pYqI/story.html>

### Notes from Ray Kubacki

*Dear Valued Clients and Friends,*

*We've been talking about the increase in prescription drug abuse for a long time, and as discussed in the above article, now we see that this problem is leading to a heroin explosion as well. It's a sad fact that people who are addicted to pain pills often end up resorting to heroin because it can be cheaper and easier to obtain.*

*This destructive drug is ravaging communities everywhere -- in Maine, 7% of babies are born addicted to opiates; in Vermont, the governor dedicated his entire State of the State address to the heroin crisis there; and on Cape Cod, officials are calling it a "crisis that is rapidly cutting across racial, income, and geographic lines."*

*Our patented hair testing technology accurately picks up heroin abuse because the record of use is permanently embedded in the hair. Urinalysis, however, easily misses heroin because it only stays in the system for a short time. Fortunately, you can be assured that our test is clearly detecting heroin users and identifying those in need of help.*

*Best Regards,*

*Ray*



Raymond Kubacki, Chairman & CEO,  
Psychemedics Corporation

## The Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic - Overview and Future Outlook

(This article was written by Psychemedics and featured in the Fall 2013 edition of DATIA Magazine)

Prescription drug abuse is the nation's fastest growing drug problem and is classified as an "epidemic" according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC also states that more Americans now die from painkillers than from heroin and cocaine combined, and prescription drug-induced deaths are higher than those from automobile accidents.

The landscape of America's drug problem has changed, and familiar street drugs are being replaced by the nonmedical use of prescription drugs -- an issue that affects businesses, industries and schools throughout the world.

The class of narcotic pain relievers known as opioids is largely contributing to the prescription drug abuse epidemic, apparent by the fact that the use of these powerful medications increased by a staggering 380% in only 10 years!

### What Are Opioids And How Do They Work?

Opioids (also called narcotics) are drugs that alleviate pain, depress body functions and reactions, and when taken in large doses, cause a strong euphoric feeling. They are considered Schedule II drugs under the Controlled Substance Act because they have a strong potential for abuse or addiction.

The opioid class of narcotics includes morphine, codeine, and heroin. Synthetic opiates are hydrocodone (Vicodin<sup>®</sup>), hydromorphone (Dilaudid<sup>®</sup>), oxycodone (Oxycontin<sup>®</sup>, Percodan<sup>®</sup>), meperidine (Demerol<sup>®</sup>) and propoxyphene (Darvon<sup>®</sup>, Darvocet<sup>®</sup>) and methadone. Common side effects include drowsiness and mental confusion, and depending on the dosage, can depress respiration -- leading to respiratory distress and death.

### An Overview Of The Problem

In a 2011 survey by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, it was reported that after marijuana and alcohol, prescription drugs are the **most commonly abused substance in the U. S.**, accounting for one death every 19 minutes. In fact, enough opioid pain relievers are sold every year to medicate **every adult in the United States** with a typical dose of 5 mg of hydrocodone every four hours for a month.

To continue reading article, visit: <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A2ikt8/DATIAFocusFall2013/resources/40.htm>



## DRUGS IN THE NEWS

### DEA Statement On Teen Marijuana Use

**DEC 20 (WASHINGTON)** - "Those who aspire to see their own or others' children accomplish great things in life or who want to live in a nation of increasing prosperity should be very concerned about the increase in marijuana use by teenagers, including the fact that a staggering 12 percent of 13 and 14-year-olds are abusing the drug," said Michele M. Leonhart, Administrator of the DEA. "The mixed messages being sent to America's teens about the harmfulness and legality of using record-high-potency marijuana are obscuring kids' awareness of the effects their use will have on them. America owes it to its children to give them the best possible start in life, so they and society are not hindered in the future."

[www.justice.gov/dea/divisions/hq/2013/hq122013.shtml](http://www.justice.gov/dea/divisions/hq/2013/hq122013.shtml)

### Flesh Eating Zombie Drug

A flesh-eating drug that turns people into zombie-like creatures seems to have made its way to the United States.

This extremely addictive injectable opioid is called krokodil (pronounced like crocodile) or desomorphine. It's so named in part because users report black or green scaly skin as a side effect. Krokodil is cheaper than heroin and can be easily cooked up in someone's home much like meth.

Krokodil causes serious damage to the veins and soft tissue infections, rapidly followed by gangrene and necrosis, according to a 2013 study. Mortality rates are high among users, according to the study.

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/16/health/krokodil-zombie-drug/>



## ASTOUNDING FACTS

Krokodil (the flesh eating drug mentioned in the article above) is made by combining the painkiller codeine with easily available chemicals, including: iodine; strong alkalis such as Mr. Muscle, a kitchen/bathroom cleaner; hydrochloric acid; red phosphorous from matches; and/or organic solvents such as gasoline or paint thinner.

Source: [www.cnn.com/2013/10/16/health/krokodil-zombie-drug/](http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/16/health/krokodil-zombie-drug/)



## Americans are smoking more weed, but testing positive less often

*Are urine testing surveys giving people a false sense of security with the low positive rates returned? The article below published in November 2013 discusses this issue.*

There's a peculiar thing happening in the world of marijuana users.

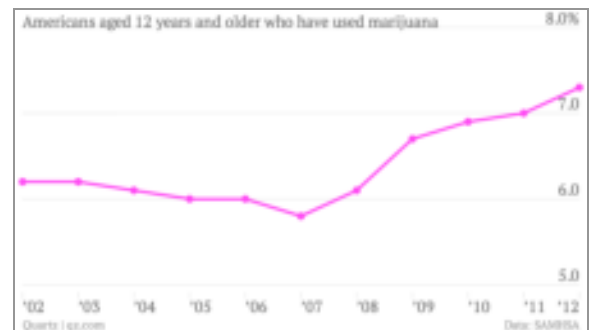
The percentage of US workers testing positive for marijuana has fallen below 2%, according to an analysis released by American medical testing company Quest Diagnostics. The study, based on a scan of millions of patients tested as part of the company's drug monitoring service, shows a marked decline in positive testing over the past 10 years—back in 2002, just under 3% of US workers tested positive for marijuana.



But that runs counter to the direction of actual marijuana usage. A significantly greater percentage of Americans aged 12 years and older now report having used weed (7.3%) in the past month than did back in 2002.

So why the discrepancy? There could be several reasons.

For one, the vast majority of workplace testing happens as part of pre-employment screening. That affords those being tested a warning to curb their usage before the test. Basic urine testing—which is still the most common form of drug screening—often fails to detect traces of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, after only a few weeks. There's an entire section on Reddit dedicated to the discussion of drug tests, in which a handful of purportedly chronic marijuana users claim to have passed urine tests after only two weeks.



Then there's the spread of products that intentionally or unintentionally help drug users pass such tests on short notice. One such example is an "herbal cleanser" sold over-the-counter at nutrition outlet GNC. Although not explicitly advertised as such, the cleanser has been frequently mentioned in drug test-related forums, and includes several references to its use in subverting drug tests in its product reviews section.

Another possibility is that the testing pool is growing as more companies screen for drug use. Revenues at diagnostic testing companies are expected to grow to \$2 billion this year, more than doubling since 1990. If the broader pool of test-takers includes more non-users of marijuana, the percentage of those who test positive for the drug should fall.

*Link to Article: <http://qz.com/148357/americans-are-smoking-more-weed-but-testing-positive-less-often/>*

### Did You Know ??

*Psychemedics offers a broad range of options...*

More than just the **Leader in Hair Drug Testing**, Psychemedics offers a broad range of options to help you achieve a drug free environment. We will consult with and guide you every step of the way to help you determine the right test for the right need. Psychemedics is an authorized provider for DrugCheck - a cost-effective instant drug screening solution, and for TruTouch - a test for frequent verification of alcohol sobriety.



*Superior Detection  
of Drug Abuse*

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### **Why Choose Psychemedics?**

*Psychemedics Corporation is the world's largest provider of hair testing for drugs of abuse and has been successfully operating for over 25 years. Thousands of corporations, nationally and internationally, rely on the patented Psychemedics drug testing services. Psychemedics' clients include over 10% of the Fortune 500, many of the largest police departments both domestic and global, and six Federal Reserve Banks. In addition, the Company serves schools and colleges around the world. Our team of experts stand ready to help through every step: policy development, communication, implementation and sustainability.*

*Since 1987, Psychemedics has offered the most effective hair testing technology, based on scientifically validated drug testing methods. All hair testing is not the same – our patented technology uses a unique process to release the drugs trapped in the hair without destroying the drugs and removes virtually 100% of the drugs from the hair. Our patent is fundamental to hair analysis drug testing because if you cannot get all the drugs out of the hair, you cannot accurately measure them; and if you cannot accurately measure the drugs, you cannot identify all of the drug users. This proprietary technology provides superior detection of drugs of abuse, and is what sets us apart.*

The Psychemedics web site is [www.psychemedics.com](http://www.psychemedics.com)