



INTERACT  
FOR HEALTH



OHIP • 2014  
Ohio Health Issues Poll

September 2014

# Prescription drug misuse, heroin use by Ohio adults

Since 2007, unintentional drug poisoning has been the leading cause of injury death in Ohio, surpassing traffic accidents, suicide and falls. According to the Ohio Department of Health, an average of five people per day dies because of drug overdoses in our state. The rate of drug overdose deaths increased by 366% between 2000 and 2012. The majority of these deaths are from opioid use: either the misuse of prescribed opioids or the use of heroin.<sup>1</sup>

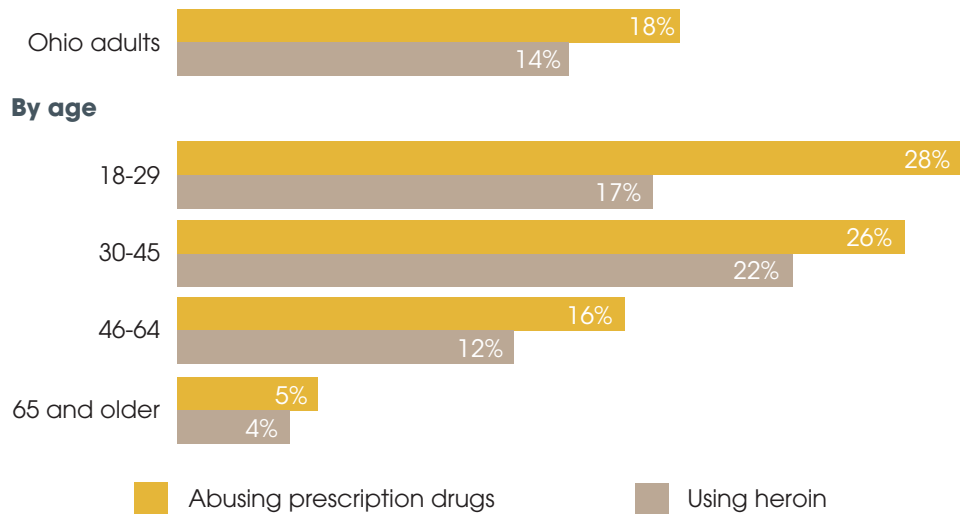
## Two in 10 Ohio adults know someone who has abused pain pills

The **Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP)** asks Ohio adults, “Thinking about your friends and family, have any of your family members or friends experienced problems as a result of abusing prescription pain relievers such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet or codeine?”

In 2014, nearly 2 in 10 Ohio adults (18%) said yes. This translates into more than 1.6 million Ohio adults. This percentage is similar to the

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Department of Health: [www.healthy.ohio.gov/vipp/drug/dpoison.aspx](http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/vipp/drug/dpoison.aspx)

**Percentage of Ohio adults who report that family members or friends have experienced problems as a result of using heroin or abusing prescription pain relievers such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet or codeine**



20% of Ohio adults who said yes in 2011, but lower than the 27% of Kentucky adults who said yes in 2013.<sup>2</sup>

## More than 1 in 10 Ohio adults know someone who has used heroin

OHIP also asks, “Thinking about your friends and family, have any

of your family members or friends experienced problems as a result of using heroin?” In 2014, more than 1 in 10 Ohio adults (14%), about 1.2 million, answered yes.

Heroin is a growing problem in our state and around the country. During the past decade the majority of drug overdose deaths in Ohio have been caused by prescription drugs. However, in 2012 the percentage of drug overdose deaths caused by heroin (35.5%) was

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<sup>2</sup> 2013 Kentucky Health Issues Poll. “Misuse of Prescription and Illegal Drugs in Kentucky.” February 2014. Retrieved from [https://www.interactforhealth.org/upl/Misuse\\_of\\_prescription\\_and\\_illegal\\_drugs\\_in\\_Kentucky.pdf](https://www.interactforhealth.org/upl/Misuse_of_prescription_and_illegal_drugs_in_Kentucky.pdf).

These findings unless otherwise noted are from Interact for Health’s Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP) conducted May 7-20, 2014, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 820 adults throughout Ohio was interviewed by telephone. This included 489 landline telephone interviews and 331 cell phone interviews. In 95 of 100 cases, statewide estimates will be accurate to  $\pm 3.4\%$ . There are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about OHIP, please visit [www.interactforhealth.org/ohio-health-issues-poll](http://www.interactforhealth.org/ohio-health-issues-poll). If you have questions about the data in this document, please contact Jennifer Chubinski, Director of Community Research, at 513-458-6608 or [jchubinski@interactforhealth.org](mailto:jchubinski@interactforhealth.org).

nearly equal to those caused by prescription opioids (36.4%) for the first time.<sup>3</sup> Heroin is also a major challenge in Northern Kentucky. In 2013 30% of Northern Kentucky adults said they knew a friend or family member who used heroin.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ohio Department of Health: [www.healthy.ohio.gov/vipp/drug/dpoison.aspx](http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/vipp/drug/dpoison.aspx).

<sup>4</sup> 2013 Kentucky Health Issues Poll. "Misuse of Prescription and Illegal Drugs in Kentucky," February 2014. Retrieved from [https://www.interactforhealth.org/Upl/Misuse\\_of\\_prescription\\_and\\_illegal\\_drugs\\_in\\_Kentucky.pdf](https://www.interactforhealth.org/Upl/Misuse_of_prescription_and_illegal_drugs_in_Kentucky.pdf).

Research has shown a link between prescription opioid misuse and the rise in heroin use. A recent report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found that 4 of 5 new users of heroin had previously abused prescription drugs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> SAMHSA News Release, "Nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers may raise the risk of turning to heroin use." August 2013. Retrieved from [www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1308215815.aspx](http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1308215815.aspx).

## **Younger adults more likely to know of drug-use problems**

Adults younger than 45 are more likely than older adults to report knowing someone who is using either heroin or misusing prescription drugs. Among Ohio adults ages 18-45, about 2 in 10 know someone using heroin, and nearly 3 in 10 know someone abusing prescription drugs. (See chart on front page.)