

Parent and Adolescent Nonmedical Prescription Opioid Use: Is There an Association?

by Lewis First MD, MS, Editor in Chief, Pediatrics



The opioid crisis in this country continues to be a major health issue despite the efforts of many in trying to educate and prevent teenagers and young adults from becoming addicted to narcotics. While as pediatricians we do all we can to work with parents and other family members to prevent our patients from nonmedical prescription opioid use, have you ever asked parents if they themselves have turned to opioids themselves for nonmedical indications? Will a parent's nonmedical use be associated with their teen's use of these drugs? Griesler et al. ([10.1542/peds.2018-2354](#)) decided to investigate this question by analyzing national data from the National Surveys on Drug Use and Health involving 35,000 parent-teen dyads over a period of 9 years. They used multivariable logistic regression, controlling for a variety of potential confounders, and found that parental nonmedical use of prescription opioids was significantly associated with their teenager's use, and the strength of the association was greater when the mother compared to the father reported nonmedical use of opioids. The authors uncover both risk and protective factors that may surprise you. Although the use of nonmedical prescription opioids is self-reported in this study by both parents and teens, the areas identified that are associated with an increase or decrease in usage may be ones you are not necessarily asking about in your adolescent health maintenance visits. The results may also get you thinking about what you or others in your community can do to educate parents to recognize the influence their use of opioids and even their use of tobacco may have on their teens using narcotics for nonmedical reasons. After getting a good dose of the findings in this study, we think you will want to ask about a number of factors that can contribute or prevent the use of nonmedical prescription opioids by our adolescent patients. [Link to this article and learn more.](#)

- [Prescription Opioid Exposures Among Children and Adolescents in the United States: 2000-2015](#)
- [Prescription Opioid Epidemic and Infant Outcomes](#)
- [Outpatient Opioid Prescriptions for Children and Opioid-Related Adverse Events](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)