Quick Facts: Non-Medical Use of Prescription Opioid Pain Relief Pills (March 2016)

Public Health Monitoring of Risk Factors in Ontario (PMO)
A Collaboration with Durham Region Health Department and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Percentage of Students Who Use Opioid Pain Relief Pills Non-Medically, Durham Region and Ontario, 2014-2015

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<th>Durham</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
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| **Elementary School**
  Students Grades 7 and 8 |        |         |
  No               | NR     | 92      |
  Yes              | NR     | 8       |
| **Secondary School**
  Students Grades 9 to 12 |        |         |
  No               | 88     | 89      |
  Yes              | 13     | 11      |

Notes:
Results are weighted and sex-by-grade adjusted to the Ontario 2012-13 student enrollment.
“Use opioid pain relief pills non-medically” is defined as using pain relief pills without a prescription or without a doctor telling you to take them, in the past year.
Error bars represent the 95% confidence intervals around the percentage. The true or actual percentage falls within the range of values, 95 out of 100 times.
C- Interpret with caution as the coefficient of variation (CV) is between 16.6% and 33.3%, inclusive.
NR- Unreliable and not releasable as the CV is greater than 33.3%.

Summary
More than one in 10 (13%) Durham Region secondary school students reported using of prescription opioid pain relievers non-medically in the past year. This was similar to Ontario. For elementary school students, the estimate was too unreliable to report for Durham Region however, in Ontario, 8% of students in grades 7 and 8 reported using opioid pain relievers non-medically in the past year. One-third (31%) of Durham Region users (grade 7 to 12) reported getting them from family members.

Among all students (grades 7 to 12), 23% reported that it was very easy or fairly easy to get prescription pain relief pills if they wanted them, and 16% felt that taking them when not prescribed for them posed no risk or a slight risk of harming themselves.

Question
In the LAST 12 MONTHS, how often did you use PAIN RELIEF PILLS (such as Percocet, Percodan, Tylenol #3, Demerol, OxyNeo, OxyContin, codeine) WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION or without a doctor telling you to take them? (We do not mean regular Tylenol, Advil, or Aspirin that anyone can buy in a drugstore.)(Response options: 1 or 2 times, 3 to 5 times, 6 to 9 times, 10 to 19 times, 20 to 39 times, 40 or more times, used without a prescription, but not in the last 12 months, never used without a prescription in lifetime, don’t know what pain relief pills are).

Survey Methods
The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) targets students, grades 7 to 12, enrolled in the public and Catholic regular school system. The OSDUHS uses a two-stage (school, class) stratified (region and school type) cluster sample design, and oversampling in PMO-participating public health units. The survey is self-administered in the classroom, taking, on average, 35 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. Students, 17 years old and younger, absent or without signed consent forms on the day of the survey do not participate.

This survey excluded groups, such as street youth and dropouts, in which health behaviours such as healthy eating, physical activity, drug use, etc. may be underestimated. In addition, self-reporting may result in under-reporting whether from social desirability or recall bias.

For a detailed description of the OSDUHS, visit the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health website.

Data Analysis
Data were analyzed using SPSS 23 Complex samples. For 2014-15, the analysis was based on a design of 21strata (10 geographical strata for elementary schools and 11 for secondary schools), 220 schools, 750 classes and 10,523 students. Variables accounting for the probability of selection, stratification and clustering are used when analyzing the data. The final sampling weight was based on each regional stratum’s sex-by-grade structure according to the provincial population structure.

Differences in two percentages may be clinically important. However, when error bars overlap, the difference cannot necessarily be interpreted as real or ‘statistically significant’.

Acknowledgement
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For more information, contact Durham Region Health Department at 1-800-841-2729, by fax at 905-666-6241 or by visiting the Durham Region website.