

More Teen Athletes Abusing Prescription Painkillers, Study Finds

/ BY [JOIN TOGETHER STAFF](#)

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A growing number of teen athletes are abusing prescription painkillers, according to a new study. Football players are more likely than other athletes to abuse prescription painkillers, [HealthDay](http://consumer.healthday.com/general-health-information-16/drug-abuse-news-210/abuse-of-prescription-painkillers-on-the-rise-among-high-school-athletes-survey-690253.html) [http://consumer.healthday.com/general-health-information-16/drug-abuse-news-210/abuse-of-prescription-painkillers-on-the-rise-among-high-school-athletes-survey-690253.html] reports.

The study looked at results from a survey of almost 2,300 high school seniors. The researchers found 12 percent of male athletes and 8 percent of female athletes reported abusing painkillers in the past year, an increase from previous surveys.

“I’ve studied the use of performance-enhancing substances in sports for about 15 years, and this study extended that line of research to mind-altering substances,” lead researcher Bryan Denham of Clemson University in South Carolina said in a [news release](http://newsroom.taylorandfrancisgroup.com/news/press-release/new-research-describes-trends-in-substance-use-among-high-school-athletes-a#.UDcZthozIU) [http://newsroom.taylorandfrancisgroup.com/news/press-release/new-research-describes-trends-in-substance-use-among-high-school-athletes-a#.UDcZthozIU]. “Alcohol has always been available, as has marijuana, but young people also may look to stronger drugs for euphoric effects. If prescription pain relievers are over-prescribed in certain regions, their use may trickle down to adolescents. Use of narcotic pain relievers may become a habit with some adolescent athletes.”

The study found teen athletes used illegal substances more frequently than their peers who did not play sports. Boys were more likely than girls to abuse substances. The study appears in the [Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1067828X.2012.750974#.U-Db39hozIU) [http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1067828X.2012.750974#.U-Db39hozIU].

A survey released last month [http://www.drugfree.org/newsroom/pats-2013-teens-report-higher-use-of-performance-enhancing-substances] by the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids confirmed a doubling in the reported lifetime use of synthetic human growth hormone (hGH) among teens. According to the latest Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, 11 percent of teens in grades 9-12 reported “ever having used” synthetic human growth hormone without a prescription, up dramatically from just 5 percent in 2012.

1 Response to this article



Andrea Zapcic / August 5, 2014 at 1:01 pm

REPLY

I came across a study conducted at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia that reported a 400% increase in knee injuries in teen athletes between 1999 and 2011. Not surprising given the professionalization and hyper-specialization of youth sports in the last two decades.

With regard to the data in the article above, I’d be interested to know how many of the teen athletes abusing prescription painkillers had their first exposure as a result of medication prescribed for injury.

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