Nonmedical Use of Prescription Pain Relievers and Tranquilizers

According to the Center for Substance Abuse Research, or CESAR, U.S. residents continue to be more likely to report the nonmedical use of prescription drugs than the use of almost all types of illicit drugs. Based on recently released data from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), approximately 5% of persons ages 12 or older reported using prescription pain relievers nonmedically in the past year and 2% reported the nonmedical use of prescription tranquilizers. These rates are higher than any type of illicit drug with the exception of marijuana. The nonmedical use of prescription stimulants was slightly less prevalent at 1.1%. All other substances, including ecstasy and prescription sedatives used nonmedically, were used by 1% or less of U.S. residents. According to CESAR, these rankings have remained relatively unchanged over the past five years.

The percentage of U.S. residents (age 12 or older) reporting past year substance use in 2010:

- **Marijuana** = 11.5%
- **Nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers** = 4.8%
- **Nonmedical use of prescription tranquilizers** = 2.2%
- **Cocaine** = 1.8%
- **Nonmedical use of prescription stimulants** = 1.1%
- **Ecstasy** = 1.0%
- **Inhalants** = 0.8%
- **Nonmedical use of prescription sedatives** = 0.4%
- LSD = 0.3%
- Heroin = 0.2%

For a more complete list of information, please see the CESAR FAX Volume 15, Issue 36 at www.cesar.umd.edu or contact CESAR at 301-405-9794.

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