

Stimulant prescription has increased more than 40 percent since 1993, according to a report in the Journal of American College Health. Many students are using these drugs to help improve concentration.

**Study drugs could lead to addiction** By [Chris Perry](#) *Contributing Writer* Published: [December 04, 2008](#)

On Monday night of finals week, many students will make the pilgrimage to what some consider the mecca of studying. That proverbial area is the fourth floor of the Edmon Low Library.

Some college students have no problem concentrating on their studies. They are the norm, students who sit down, open a book and absorb the material in a way that comes as naturally to them as breathing.

However, not all students fit that mold: many use prescription medication to illicitly help their studies.

More than 8 percent of college students admitted to using prescription drug stimulants to aid studying in a 2006 study, according to *Pharmacotherapy*, a pharmacology and drug therapy journal.

In another study, 16.6 percent of college students from a random sample of 283 said they used the drugs — but not illicitly, according to *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, another journal.

OSU student Andrew Eaton is among the 8 percent who do use the drugs illicitly. Eaton said he uses prescription drugs, including Adderall, to help him study.

Prescription stimulant prescription has increased more than 40 percent since 1993, according to a report in the Journal of American College Health. Stimulants are the fourth most prescribed drug in the United States, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Adderall, which is used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, attention-deficit disorder and narcolepsy, has become a common drug on college campuses. Eaton said he has a prescription for the drug, but has none of these medical conditions — its only approved uses in the United States.

“I went to the doctor and told him that I study for four hours and feel like I learned nothing,” Eaton said. “He wrote me a prescription for Adderall on the spot and I’ve been taking it ever since.”

The drug has varying effects on people, including its ability to aid study habits, said Barry Herman, a pharmacist at Razook’s Drug.

“(The effect) varies from person to person,” Herman said. “It helps people that have ADD, but someone who doesn’t have ADD; I don’t know how well it would help.”

Some users of the drug, like Eaton and fellow OSU student Cal McMahon, disagree with Herman’s assessment of Adderall’s effects. They said the drugs help all students with their concentration.

“I struggled in high school with my grades, so I got a prescription to Adderall when I came to college,” McMahon said. “I’ve had a 4.0 grade point average for my first two semesters of college.”

According to a study in *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 58 percent of lifetime Adderall users said they used the drugs to increase concentration and 43 percent said they used the drugs to increase alertness.

The drug is considered addictive, though few cases of addiction have been linked to the use of Adderall.

“For some people, it could be addictive,” Herman said. “That’s why it is a C2: because it has a high potential for abuse.”

C2 is a term used by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities to rank the addictiveness of prescription medication. C2 means that the drug is mentioned in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and in Part 2 of the Food and Drugs Act.

“I don’t think that students become addicted to Adderall,” Eaton said. “It seems more likely that students will become addicted to the tasks that they can accomplish while on the drug. It truly is a miracle drug for a stressed and overwhelmed college student.”

According to a study by the University of Ohio, students who illicitly use prescription drugs are more likely to engage in binge drinking, mixing alcohol with prescription drugs, use tobacco and engage in some other type of drug use.

The most likely users are “males that abide by a fraternity college lifestyle,” according to the Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy report.

However, the dangers of the drugs reach further than just the tendency to engage in other risky behaviors; the drugs can cause emotional liability, anxiety and other medical issues. About 25 emergency room deaths per year are associated with the illicit prescription drug use, according to the report.

The most evident danger associated with the use of Adderall is its increasing availability to students who don’t have a prescription to it. It has become a popular drug sold on many college campuses.

Cody Thompson, another OSU student and occasional user of Adderall, said the drug is easily attainable for students without a prescription. Although Thompson has a prescription, he said he could easily find the drug if he needed it.

“I’ve run out of my prescription before and didn’t have time to get it filled before I needed to study,” Thompson said. “It’s a fairly simple drug to get if you know where to look. People know that the demand for the drug is high so they are going to try to sell it.”

Preventing the spread of the “study drug” epidemic is critical, according to the Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy report. It suggests those who have legal prescriptions to the drugs, such as people with ADD and ADHD, should be more closely monitored to ensure they are not distributing the drugs to those not prescribed to them, according to the report.

Herman said he disagrees that the spread of the drug is on the rise. He said that Razook’s Drug fills fewer prescriptions than in the past.

“It is used quite a bit, but I don’t think we use it as much as we used to,” Herman said.

However, users of the Adderall agree that they will continue using it as long as it remains available. Because of its effectiveness on people with ADD and ADHD, it will continue to be a prevalent prescription drug on the market.

“As long as I have a prescription to Adderall, I will continue to use it to aid my studying,” McMahon said. “It has done wonders for me since I came to college and if it helps me with my grades, I don’t see why I would quit taking it.”