

Prescription drug abuse overruns US

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A recent survey into overdose on prescription drugs in the US shows over seven million Americans are involved in some kind of improper use of such remedies.

The report released by the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) reveals about 5.2 million Americans are involved in some type of improper use of prescription drugs, such as painkillers Vicodin or OxyContin.

The DEA also said "opioid painkillers now cause more overdose deaths than cocaine and heroin combined."

The overuse of painkillers in the United States accounted for 8,500 deaths in 2005, said the report, warning that the figure indicated a 114 percent increase in the number of fatalities attributed to such abuse since 2001.

More alarming is that more teens are turning to prescription drugs in 'pharm parties', which involves an unregulated intake of such prohibited drugs.

According to the state's Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Kentucky leads the rest of the US with at least 485 mortalities from prescription drug overdoses reported in 2008.

Judicial sources view an addiction to pain medication as a growing "epidemic" which is affecting a whole generation.

Kentucky's Greenup County Coroner Neil Wright says nearly half of the 50 deaths he recorded last year were drug related, and "85 to 90 percent" of those calls involved prescription pill overdoses.

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