

ADHD Drugs Outselling Antibiotics in Kids

planet1.com-news

Posted on: Thursday, May 20, 2004

By Michael Dorausch, D.C.

More Kids are on More Drugs.

It's the same news we reported on in January of 2003 and August of 2002. "According to new research, the number of American children being treated with psychiatric drugs (such as Ritalin) has tripled from 1987 to 1996 and is showing no sign of slowing." That was from 2003.

Now in 2004... according to articles, (which was based on a business press release) Americans now spend more on drugs for ADHD and depression than they do on antibiotics, or asthma or allergy medications for children.

The figures...

- a 23 percent increase in usage for all children using ADHD drugs.
- a 49 percent increase in the use of ADHD drugs by children under the age of 5 in the last 3 years.
- a 77 percent increase in spending from 2000 - 2003 on ADHD drugs.
- a 369 percent increase in spending on ADHD drugs for children under 5.
- estimated 3-10 percent of American children now on behavioral medications.

While looking at the data it is important to note that it is business data, the business of selling drugs for kids. The majority of related articles published throughout the U.S. were published in business sections, such as the New York Times Business section. (see links below)

From a business standpoint, the numbers are impressive. From a healthcare standpoint it is an entirely different story. Many will attempt to paint the picture that these drugs are good and that the increase in use is a reflection of how effective they are. Remove the \$\$\$, and you have removed much of the incentive to push drugs to kids.

Questions to ask...

Why the increase?

What is said: "the increase is a sign of the drugs' effectiveness." -- Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics' drug committee.

What is more likely: Cost-saving techniques by insurance companies, marketing by the pharmaceutical industry and increased demands on parents and doctors are driving the increase in ADHD drug use. Drugs are cheaper than therapy.

Where are the clinical studies?

What is said: "Recent studies on the use of antidepressants for children show that, although their use has skyrocketed, most clinical trials have failed to prove that they're effective. Britain has banned antidepressants except Prozac for children." -- Cincinnati Enquirer

"The studies to date are incomplete, and much more needs to be learned about young

children who are treated with medications for all kinds of illnesses." -- The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

It is a fact that few safety studies of these drugs have been done in children. Pharmaceutical companies largely do studies on adults to get new medicines approved or to show that one drug is superior to another. The use of Ritalin, for example, in children under the age of 6 is considered "off label" use. Many medications that are on the market have not been officially approved by the FDA for use in children.

Are there any side effects from medications for ADHD?

What is said: "The side effects of ADHD drugs are mainly reduced appetite and growth."

What is known: All medications have side effects. Side effects for these types of medications most commonly include:

- decreased appetite or weight loss
- reduced physical growth
- headaches
- upset stomach, nausea or vomiting
- insomnia or sleep difficulties
- jitteriness, nervousness, or irritability
- lethargy, dizziness, or drowsiness
- social withdrawal and suicidal tendencies

I have compiled numerous links to articles and resources which are listed below. There are more than forty related articles on **Planet Chiropractic** along with links to even more articles. If you take the time to read through at least a few, you will see more clearly how financial incentives have driven the creation of the disorders as well as the drugs.

Recent News (May 17, 2004)

The New York Times: [Behavior Drugs Lead in Sales for Children](#)

cbsnews.com: [Kids' Behavior Drugs Use Soars](#)

HoustonChronicle.com: [More kids medicated for behavior disorders](#)

NYPOST.COM: [More 'hyper' Toddlers Doped](#)

Omaha World-Herald: [Spending on kids' behavior drugs soars](#)

Get More Articles...

Google News Search: [behavioral drugs](#)

Google News Search: [behavior drugs spending](#)

The following quote was featured in many of the May 17th articles...

"It's not necessarily a bad thing that these medicines are being used more," said Dr. James McGough, associate professor of clinical psychiatry at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, because kids on ADHD drugs tend to avoid substance abuse and other problems and do better in school." The quote was likely based on info from this study... [Studies Link Stimulant Treatment of ADHD in Childhood to Lower Risk of Later Substance Abuse](#)

On May 19th the following article appeared online...

The Greeley Tribune: [Middle school student sells his prescription medicine to classmates](#)

According to police reports, a 14-year-old student sold his Adderall prescription medicine to

at least 10 other students while at school.

Not to poke fun but to show some real world scenarios, we'll take the above quote...
"because kids on ADHD drugs tend to avoid substance abuse and other problems and do better in school"

Kids on ADHD drugs tend to avoid substance abuse... This kid, who was reportedly taking Adderall for ADHD, was avoiding Adderall use. The other 10+ kids could technically be considered substance abusers.

and other problems... Distribution of a controlled substance is a felony. According to the article, the student distributing the drug may face expulsion. And according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the abuse of prescription medications among Americas youth is a nationwide problem. (see link below)

Articles & News published before May 17, 2004

The Wichita Eagle: [Doubts grow over drugs for depressed kids](#)

Pharmaceutical industry marketing and the alliances the industry has made with top psychiatrists is to blame. (article published on April 19, 2004. Read it and compare to any of those published in May.)

The Washington Post: [More Kids Receiving Psychiatric Drugs](#) -- Question of 'Why' Still Unanswered

Insurers have increased their profits by decreasing the use of psychotherapy while adding incentives for prescription behavioral medications.

Sacramento Bee: [Psychiatric drug use in young is exploding](#)

Children and adolescents are taking all kinds of psychiatric medications at nearly the same rate as adults.

Planet Chiropractic Related Articles & News

- [The Drugging of U.S. Children Continues](#) -- "over 7 million children consume over eight tons of Ritalin every year in the United States"
- [Drugs, Drugs, and more Drugs](#) -- "An estimated 5 million to 6 million U.S. children are currently taking at least one psychiatric drug."
- [Cocaine, Adderall, and Ritalin](#) -- According to the article, many of the kids that are misusing the drugs are "grade schoolers" and they're getting the drugs from their classmates.
- [Ritalin Altering Brain Structure](#) -- According to a report on MSNBC, the changes look similar to brain tissue changes seen when using stimulants such as cocaine or other amphetamines (Ritalin is an amphetamine).

Other Possibly Helpful Links

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): [Treatment of Children with Mental Disorders](#) -- A booklet with answers to frequently asked questions about the treatment of mental disorders in children -- includes a medications chart.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) -- The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Michael Dorausch is a chiropractor practicing in Los Angeles, California. His office (ADIO Chiropractic) serves the beach and costal communities of Venice, Marina del Rey,

Westchester, Playa del Rey, Playa Vista, Culver City, and Santa Monica. The office can be reached at **310 301-4448**