



NATIONAL DRUG AND
ALCOHOL RESEARCH CENTRE

ADHD MEDICATION OVERDOSES HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR PARENTS TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

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The incident in Brisbane where a group of Year 9 students shared a packet of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication and then needed to be hospitalised highlights the urgent need for parents to talk to their children about the risks associated with the use of prescription drugs.

The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre's (NDARC's) Information Manager, Mr Paul Dillon believes that there is a real belief by many Australians that drugs prescribed by a doctor are harmless.

"All drugs entail a degree of risk, even pharmaceutical drugs," said Mr Dillon. "With increasing numbers of young Australians being prescribed drugs for a variety of conditions, particularly ADHD, it is vital that parents talk to their children about the dangers of using someone else's medication, and stressing the importance of using your own medication as directed."

There are anecdotal reports of young people 'onselling' their ADHD medication to other students in an attempt to gain a high. ADHD is a neurochemical disorder. People with ADHD benefit from stimulants (such as Ritalin and dextroamphetamine) as they cause increased blood flow to the certain parts of the brain.

"Many school students are prescribed ADHD drugs and these substances are sometimes called 'kiddie speed'," said Mr Dillon. "The fact that these drugs are stimulants and in some cases, actual amphetamine, is known to many young people. It is therefore no great surprise that some students experiment with these substances illicitly."

"It is very important that parents take the opportunity to discuss with their children why people who have ADHD use these medications, but also to take the time to highlight the very real dangers of using them inappropriately."

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