

BROWARD BRIEFINGS

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INFORMATION FOR ACTION



October 2021

Prevalence of Prescription and Illicit Drug Use in Florida, 2020

New, publicly available from the Survey of Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs highlight national- and state-level prevalences of prescription and illicit drug use. The data are collected online twice per year with a general adult population sample. Findings document behaviors reported in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen in the table below, compared to national-level data, Florida reports a higher prevalence of the use of all drug categories except for marijuana. Specifically, past 12-month use of prescription opioids in Florida was 5.81%, slightly higher than the U.S. prevalence. The same is true for the prevalence of prescription sedatives (e.g., benzodiazepines such as Xanax or Klonopin; 4.33%) and prescription stimulants (e.g., medications to treat ADHD such as Ritalin or Adderall; 2.27%). Gabapentoid medications (e.g., gabapentin and pregabalin) are prescribed for neuropathic pain or off-label for mental and physical pain and are commonly used in combination with prescription and illicit opioids. The Florida prevalence was 1.44%.

Drug Use Prevalence in the U.S. and Florida, 2020		
Drug category	National	State
Prescription opioids	5.57%	5.81%
Prescription sedatives	3.66%	4.33%
Prescription stimulants	2.21%	2.27%
Prescription gabapentoid	1.25%	1.44%
Marijuana	19.51%	18.24%
Illicit drugs (not marijuana)	5.73%	6.38%

Findings from the survey indicate a higher prevalence of marijuana use nationally than within Florida. This is likely because of legal recreational use in states, including Oregon, Colorado, and Washington where the prevalence rates are double that of Florida. Finally, the illicit drugs prevalence is higher in Florida compared to the U.S. as a whole. This category is comprised of a range of substances, including stimulants (e.g., powder and crack cocaine; methamphetamine), opioids (e.g., illicitly manufactured fentanyl; heroin), and others (e.g., LSD; MDMA).

One thing to note is that while several data sources indicate that past year use of many prescription drugs is declining year over year, overdoses and deaths continue to increase. This is likely an indication of polysubstance use in which individuals are using illicit drugs with higher potencies and greater potential for addiction, such as illicitly manufactured fentanyl or counterfeit prescription pills. Continued preventative measures and surveillance of illicit drugs is warranted.

Source: Survey of Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs Program;
https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/rmpds.research/viz/NMURx_16236956588100/StateDashboard

Broward Briefings may be copied. Please cite United Way of Broward County Commission on Behavioral Health & Drug Prevention.



www.drugfreebroward.org