

The Impacts of Marijuana and Opioids On Today's Workplace

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The Big Picture

- In 2017, an estimated 271 million people worldwide aged 15–64 had used drugs at least once in the previous year.
 - This corresponds to 5.5% of the global population, representing one in every 18 people.

The Big Picture (United States)

- 70% of Americans who use illegal drugs are employed
- In 2018, the % of job candidates who failed a drug test reached the highest level in 14 years.
- One study showed that in certain rural areas, 1/2 of job applicants failed a drug test.

Leading cause of missed workdays in US

COMPARED TO THE 10 DAYS MISSED BY THE GENERAL WORKFORCE

pain medication use disorder (29 days)

illicit drug use disorder (18 days)

marijuana use disorder (15 days)

any substance use disorder (15 days)

Alcohol use (14 days)

How do employers feel?

NSC - NATIONAL EMPLOYER DRUG SURVEY

concerned about
the costs of
benefits (95%)

ability to hire
qualified workers
(93%)

costs of workers'
compensation
(84%)

concerned over
drug misuse
(67%)

concerned over
illegal drug sale
or use (61%)

US marijuana laws

- “Medical” Marijuana
34 states and the DC

- Recreational Marijuana
11 states plus the DC

“Medical” Marijuana in the Workplace

According to a survey by drugabuse.com

- people are most likely to stick to their recommended amounts if they use medical marijuana.
- 20% of people use more than recommended during work hours
 - people who work from home full time are most likely to use more than recommended

“Recreational” Marijuana in the Workplace

According to a survey by drugabuse.com

- more than one in five respondents said they use marijuana recreationally at work during work hours
- nearly 5% admitted to daily use
- more than 13% use it more than once a month.

Marijuana in Workplace

RATE OF WORKFORCE DRUG (+) HIT A 14-YEAR HIGH IN 2018

Urine Testing

General Workforce:

8% increase from 2017-2018. **17%**
increase since 2014.

Federally Mandated:

5% increase from 2017 to 2018. **24%**
increase since 2014.

Marijuana in the Workplace

YEAR-OVER-YEAR INCREASES WITH AT LEAST 20% INCREASES IN MJ (+) RATES BETWEEN 2015 AND 2017

- Transportation & Warehousing (33.3%)
- Manufacturing (23.1%)
- Other Services (except Public Admin.) (33.3%)
- Accommodation & Food Services (20.7%)
- Construction (26.7%)
- Administrative Support, Waste Mgmt. & Remediation Services (19.0%)
- Wholesale Trade (23.5%)
- Retail Trade (18.5%)

US State Laws

- Most state marijuana laws either specifically permit employers to restrict marijuana use by employees or do not mention employers or the workplace at all.
- No mention = status quo remains in place. Employers may test for and discipline for marijuana use in the same manner as other illegal drugs.

Recommendations

- **All employers should continue to test for marijuana**
- Employers and managers should be trained to identify marijuana impairment and know what to do when an employee is suspected of impairment on the job.
- In states/countries where marijuana users receive protection from workplace discipline
 - policies should require employees to verify their MMJ authorization to a MRO
 - work with HR to develop a policy for employees who request accommodation of MMJ use, taking care to comply with state disability discrimination laws.
 - Prohibit any marijuana use by employees in safety-sensitive positions

Its not just marijuana!

BETWEEN 2015-2017

- Retail Trade sector: 43% increase in cocaine (+) and marijuana (+) increased more than 18%
- Transportation and Warehousing sector: cocaine (+) increased more than 22% and Marijuana (+) increased 33%
- Educational Services: amphetamine increase of 14%
- Construction sector: cocaine (+) more than 33% higher the general U.S. workforce and a 26% increase in marijuana (+)
- Manufacturing sector: both marijuana and methamphetamine (+) increased by 23% and 27%

Employees seeking help on a confidential cocaine hotline revealed the following:

64%

Drugs negatively impacted their job performance

44%

Sold drugs to other employees

18%

stole from co-workers to support their drug use

10%

Missed work because of a hangover

6%

Went to work high or drunk in the past year

18%

Skipped work in the past month

Opioids

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are a class of drugs that include:

- Illicit drug heroin
- Synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription
 - Such as oxycodone (OxyContin[®]), hydrocodone (Vicodin[®]), codeine, morphine, and many others.

Opioids

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE CRISIS?

- Roughly 21 to 29% of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.
- Between 8 and 12% develop an opioid use disorder.
- An estimated 4 to 6% who misuse prescription opioids transition to heroin.
- About 80% of people who use heroin first misused prescription opioids.

Vowles KE, McEntee ML, Julnes PS, Frohe T, Ney JP, van der Goes DN. Rates of opioid misuse, abuse, and addiction in chronic pain: a systematic review and data synthesis. *Pain*. 2015;156(4):569-576. doi:10.1097/01.j.pain.0000460357.01998.f1.

Muhuri PK, Gfroerer JC, Davies MC. Associations of Nonmedical Pain Reliever Use and Initiation of Heroin Use in the United States. *CBHSQ Data Rev*. August 2013.

Cicero TJ, Ellis MS, Surratt HL, Kurtz SP. The Changing Face of Heroin Use in the United States: A Retrospective Analysis of the Past 50 Years. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2014;71(7):821-826. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.366.

Carlson RG, Nahhas RW, Martins SS, Daniulaityte R. Predictors of transition to heroin use among initially non-opioid dependent illicit pharmaceutical opioid users: A natural history study. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2016;160:127-134. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2015.12.026.

Opioids

According to the CDC, in 2017:

- “more than 17% of Americans had at least one opioid prescription filled, with an average of 3.4 opioid prescriptions dispensed per patient.
- Average number of days per prescription was 18.

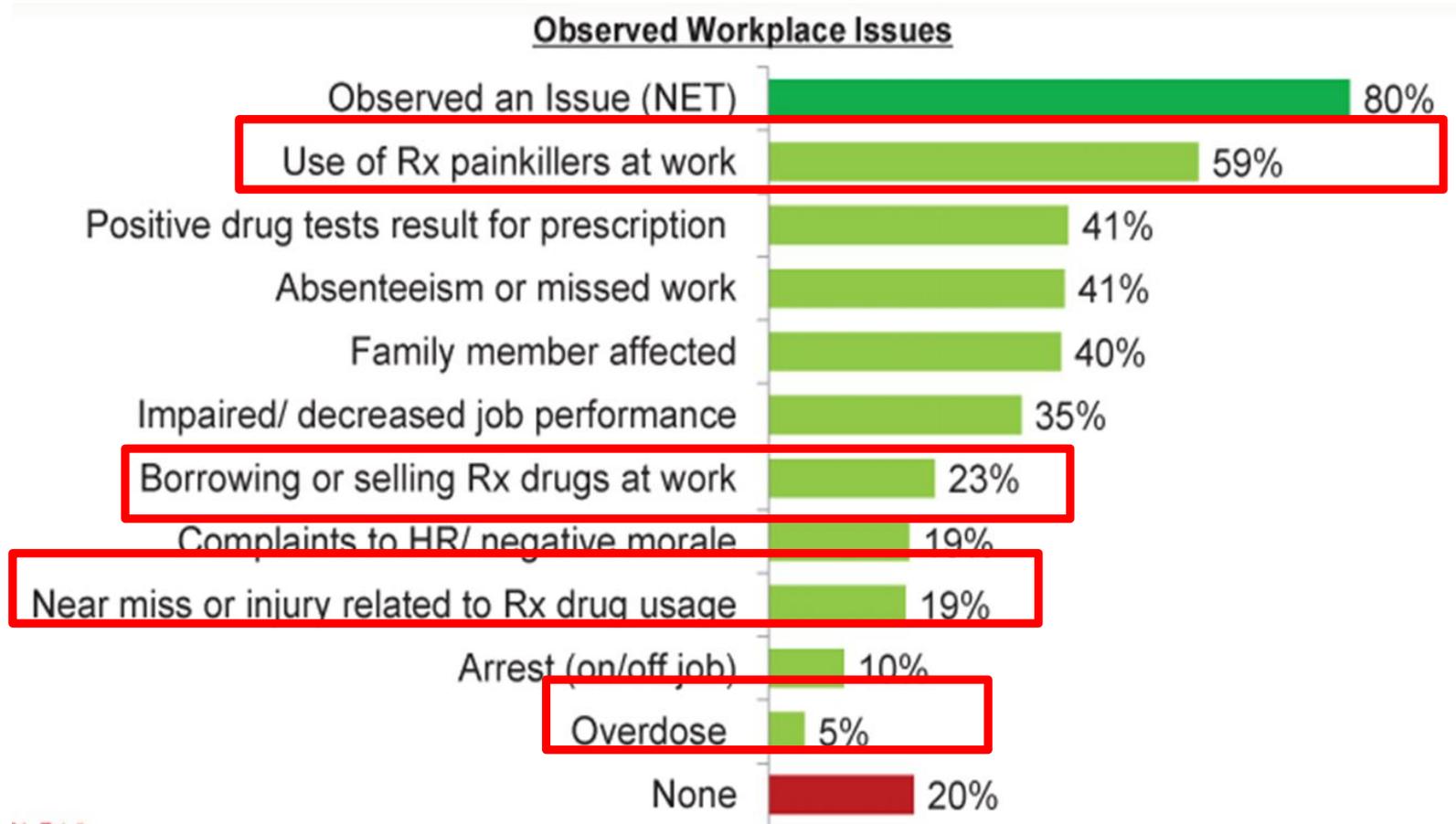
Opioids in the Workplace

Non-medical Use of Rx Drugs in the United States

23% of the U.S. workforce has used prescription drugs non-medically.

According to the CDC, the economic burden of prescription opioid misuse alone in the U.S. is 78.5 billion dollars a year. (includes health care, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement).

Survey of Indiana Businesses



(1 - Total)

Source: The National Safety Council



DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS AT WORK



The number of **drug overdose deaths at work is rising.**

The top 3 industries with the **highest numbers of drug overdose deaths at work** from 2011-2016*



Transportation & Warehousing
116 deaths



Construction
114 deaths



Healthcare & Social Assistance
96 deaths



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health

* Tiesman H, Konda S, Cimineri L, Castillo D [2019]. Drug overdose deaths at work, 2011-2016. Inj Prev. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2018-043104>

Impacts to the Workplace

➤ Safety

- Opioid use can be associated with injury in the workplace, even when taken as prescribed.

➤ Absenteeism

- Individuals suffering from a opioid use disorder are absent almost 50% more work than the general workforce.

➤ Productivity

- Substance misuse and related disorders are estimated to cost more than \$400 billion in lost productivity

➤ Retention

- 36% of people with a SUD and 42% of people with OUD related to pain medication worked for more than one employer in the past year, compared to 25% of the general workforce. It costs a business an average of \$7,000 to replace a salaried worker.

➤ Healthcare

- Healthcare costs for employees who misuse prescription drugs are 3 times higher than those for an average employee.

Impacts to the Workplace

- Tardiness/sleeping on the job
- After-effects of substance use (hangover, withdrawal) affecting job performance
- Poor decision making
- Loss of efficiency
- Theft
- Lower morale of co-workers
- Increased likelihood of having trouble with co-workers/supervisors or tasks
- Preoccupation with obtaining and using substances while at work, interfering with attention and concentration
- Illegal activities at work including selling illicit drugs to other employees
- Higher turnover
- Training of new employees
- Disciplinary procedures

Drug-Free Workplace Programs

WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Boost community prevention efforts
- Educate on the harms of substance use/misuse
- Encourage employees to remain drug free
- Support treatment and recovery efforts
- Help businesses thrive

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DFWP

National Drug-Free Workplace Alliance

www.ndwa.org

Thank You!

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