

## **Preliminary Study Suggests Illegal Opioid Analgesic Medications Not Obtained Through Internet Sources: Presented at AAPM**

**By Jerry Ingram**

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NEW ORLEANS, LA -- February 19, 2007 -- The internet might not be the primary source that abusers of illegal opioid medications rely upon, investigators state.

In fact, participants in one particular survey point to another key source.

"The vast majority of [those addicted] say that the source of their primary drug use is a dealer," reported study author J. David Haddox, MD, senior medical director, Purdue Pharma, Stamford, Connecticut.

Dr. Haddox and his colleagues discussed their findings here on February 8th in a posters session at the 23rd annual meeting of the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM).

To analyze how individuals who abuse opioid analgesic medications acquire their drugs, the investigators examined data from a cross-sectional, structured, self-report questionnaire administered at intake to individuals at 69 methadone maintenance treatment programs in the United States between January 2005 and September 2005. The research team compiled data on 5,803 individuals.

Results show that 59% of respondents reported an opioid analgesic as their primary drug of abuse within the previous month. The most commonly reported sources for obtaining opioid analgesics included: dealers (81.6%), friends or relatives (50.4%), and physician prescription (30.5%).

At the bottom of the list for their sources for obtaining opioid medications were emergency room visits (13.9%), theft (62%), forged prescription (2.9%), and the internet (2.4%).

While stating that these preliminary findings are significant, the investigators urged caution, pointing to the vast spectrum of drug abuse in addition to the drawbacks of self-report questionnaires.

[Presentation title: Abuser-Reported Sources of Illegally Obtained Opioid Analgesic Medications. Poster 105]

