Prescription Drug Misuse and Suicidal Ideation

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An analysis of data from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found a significant association between the misuse of prescription drugs—specifically pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives—and suicidal ideation. The authors concluded that “these findings speak to the importance of screening for the misuse of prescription opioids when assessing suicidality.” They also suggested that drug treatment providers should be made aware of the association between prescription drug misuse, especially prescription opioid misuse, and suicidal ideation.

The presence of serious psychological distress, marijuana use, and other illicit drug use were also found to increase the risk of suicidal ideation. The authors suggested that people who use prescription drugs to self-medicate because of mental health problems may be more at risk of suicidal ideation than people who use prescription drugs for recreation.


About Suicide: Behavioral Health Disorders, Substance Abuse, Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior, Ideation