

# Prescription Drug Misuse and Addiction

Prescription drug misuse and addiction refers to the use of medications in a way other than for which they were originally prescribed or to a much greater extent. There are three key categories of prescription medication open to misuse:

**Narcotic painkillers:** Opiates (codeine, oxycontin)

**Stimulants:** Ritalin, Dexamphetamines

**Sedatives and Tranquilizers:** Benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax); Tranquilizers (Stilnox, Rohypnol)

## Factors influencing the increase in Prescription Drug Addiction:

### Misconceptions about the safety of prescribed medication:

Many people assume that because a drug is prescribed it is safe to take, even in doses and ways other than how it was originally prescribed. However, prescription drugs act directly or indirectly on the same brain systems affected by illicit drugs so they carry the same risk of addiction, and can lead to a variety of other adverse health effects if misused.

### Increasing environmental availability:

There is increasing access to prescription medication through online pharmacies and illegal supply strategies.

### Varied motivations for their misuse:

People misuse prescription medications for a variety of reasons: to manage anxiety, pain, or sleep problems; to counter the side effects of illicit drugs (used as uppers or downers), to enhance performance, or to get "high."

### Signs and Symptoms of Prescription Drug Misuse or Addiction:

- Exceeding the recommended dose or frequency of a medication
- Increased tolerance (needing more of the medication to have the same effect)
- Mood swings
- Desensitized emotions
- Decreased motivation
- Blackouts and forgetfulness
- Defensiveness around medication use
- Hiding, or lying about, medication use
- Complaining of vague symptoms to get more medication
- Seeing several doctors and/or pharmacies to get more medications
- Using pills prescribed for others
- Lack of interest in treatment options other than medications



Prescription Drug Addiction is characterised by continued use of the drug despite negative consequences and efforts to control or stop using. Negative consequences of Prescription Drug Addiction may include health, financial, career, legal, family and relationship difficulties, and poor self care.

## The South Pacific Private approach to treating Prescription Drug Addiction

Overcoming Prescription Drug Addiction is very difficult to do alone because, as with all addictions, there are underlying causes and environmental factors which need to be addressed to support you in finding and sustaining the motivation to stop using, and start living a life free of the compulsion to medicate yourself.

At South Pacific Private we treat your problem holistically with an integrated treatment plan tailored to your specific needs through a supported detox and comprehensive psychotherapeutic program.

Recovery from Prescription Drug Addiction requires both removing the drug from your life, and learning to live purposely with all the personal and recovery resources needed to prevent relapse.

### Addiction Realities:

Recovery from Prescription Drug Addiction is likely to be more successful when underlying causes and environmental factors are addressed at the same time as you stop using.

Withdrawing from a Prescription Drug Addiction can be challenging, uncomfortable and even dangerous when attempted alone. For this reason a professionally supervised detox is strongly recommended.

Addiction is a cunning, baffling and deadly disease and is most effectively treated in a therapeutic environment supported health professionals specialising in addiction.

## South Pacific Private Recommendations

SPP has a range of Inpatient and Day Programs to meet the needs of the individual. If you are concerned about yourself or someone you care about please phone SPP to arrange for a free private and confidential assessment.

## For treatment options, other resources, or a complimentary assessment

Phone: 1 800 063 332 Email: [info@southpacificprivate.com.au](mailto:info@southpacificprivate.com.au)

Website: [www.southpacificprivate.com.au](http://www.southpacificprivate.com.au)