OxyContin is a prescription painkiller which contains the substance oxycodone, its main ingredient. It has been used for moderate to high pain relief. Since the introduction of OxyContin in 1996, there has been a rise in oxycodone abuse. OxyContin comes in various tablet forms and is commonly known on the street as OC, OX, Oxy, Oxycotton, kicker, blue, and hillbilly heroin.

**EFFECTS**

Short-term effects of OxyContin use include sedation, constipation, cough suppression, elation, euphoria, analgesia, and respiratory depression. A large single dose of the drug could result in severe respiratory depression, its most serious side effect, which could eventually lead to death. Long term effects of OxyContin, or more specifically oxycodone, can lead to abuse, dependence and tolerance. Chronic use of OxyContin can lead to tolerance of the drug; this means that higher doses of the drug must be taken by the user in order to attain the same effects. Physical dependence and even addiction to OxyContin, or oxycodone, can develop with long term use.
INCIDENCE & PREVALENCE
The nonmedical use of pharmaceuticals, such as OxyContin, has been on the rise in recent years. According to SAMHSA’s Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) 2006 estimates, over 740,000 emergency department (ED) visits that year involved the nonmedical use of prescription or other pharmaceutical drugs; this is an increase of 38% from the 2004 figures. Over half of these particular visits involved central nervous system agents, the most frequent being opiate/opioid analgesics such as oxycodone; a little over 64,000 ED visits involved oxycodone. Emergency visits involving oxycodone increased 56% from 2004 to 2006. From 1997 to 2005, sales of OxyContin rose over 500% across the state of Indiana; however, several counties in southern Indiana saw an even higher increase of sales of the drug, particularly in Clark, Crawford, Floyd, Harrison, Scott, and Washington counties.

Emergency Department Visits involving oxycodone products, 2004 and 2006

LAW & CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Oxycodone products, including OxyContin, are classified as Schedule II controlled substances by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration under the Controlled Substance Act of 1970. They have legitimate medicinal uses but are potentially susceptible to abuse and could produce dependency. In response to the growing abuse of oxycodone products and other pharmaceutical drugs, the state of Indiana has implemented prescription monitoring programs to detect suspicious prescriptions and those who are involved in doctor shopping, where individuals visit many doctors in order to obtain large amounts of the drug.

Indiana Prevention Resource Center
501 N. Morton St. Suite 110
Bloomington, IN 47404
Indiana Toll Free: 800-346-3077
Telephone: 812-855-1237
Fax: 812-855-4940
drugprc@indiana.edu
http://www.drugs.indiana.edu