

# Stimulant use in medical students and residents requires more careful attention.

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Abstract

## BACKGROUND:

Stimulant pharmaceuticals are abused among academic students to elevate mood, improve studying, intellectual capacity, memory and concentration, and increase wakefulness. This study was designed to evaluate the current situation of stimulant use among medical students and residents of Babol University of Medical Sciences.

## METHODS:

This cross-sectional study was conducted among 560 medical students and clinical residents of Babol University of Medical Sciences during the academic year 2014-2015. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection.

## RESULTS:

Four hundred and forty-four (79.3%) students filled out the questionnaires. 49 (11%) individuals reported amphetamine and methylphenidate (ritalin) use. The mean age of the stimulant drug users was  $24.6 \pm 4.8$  years. The main initiator factor was to improve concentration (29 persons; 59.2%). There were significant statistical correlations between stimulant drugs abuse and male gender, living in dormitor in residence and internship and past medical history of psychiatric disorders (depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and substance abuse) ( $p < 0.05$ ). 16 (32%) students started the drug use on their friends' advice; 15 (30%) due to self-medication and 12 (24%) persons with physician's prescription.

## CONCLUSIONS:

Because of significant prevalence of stimulant use, regulatory governmental policies and also planning to improve essential life skills, awareness about the side effects and complications of these drugs, screening of at-risk college students and early identification of the abusers are suggested.