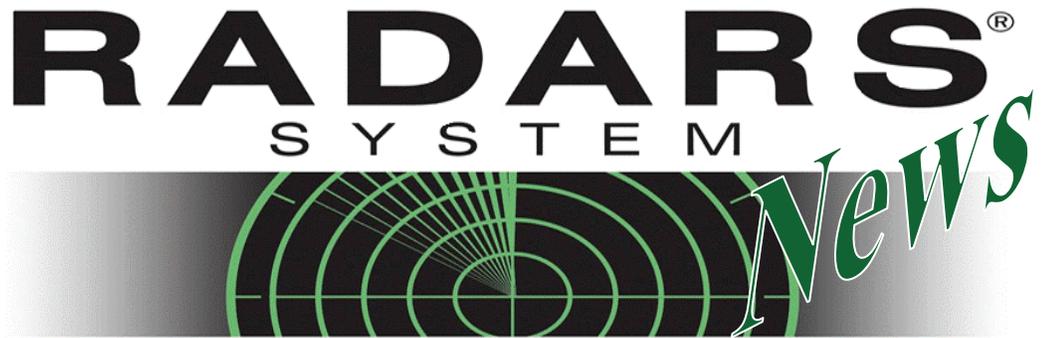


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# RADARS<sup>®</sup> SYSTEM



*Researched Abuse, Diversion, and Addiction-Related Surveillance (RADARS<sup>®</sup>) System*

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## RADARS System Holds its First-Annual Meeting on Prescription Drug Abuse

The abuse, misuse and diversion of prescription drugs are major public health concerns affecting diverse populations in the United States. Balancing the benefits of relief and the potential for addiction to prescription medications is also an important issue for prescribing physicians, governmental regulatory agencies, drug makers and the general public. To address and openly discuss these issues, the RADARS System organized its first annual scientific meeting which focused on new developments in prescription drug abuse.

The meeting held on Thursday, April 12, 2007, discussed issues related to prescription drug abuse including post-marketing surveillance efforts that may prove effective in lowering rates of prescription drug abuse in the United States.

Attendees at the meeting included representatives from government regulatory agencies, pharmaceutical manufacturers, policymakers and researchers in the field of prescription drug abuse. "This meeting was an opportunity to bring together representatives from the pharmaceutical industry and federal regulatory agencies to evaluate and discuss the problem of prescription opioid abuse in the United States," said Dr. Richard C. Dart, Executive Director of the RADARS System. "We were able to present the information statistically so that we can collaboratively begin to develop risk management and surveillance strategies in response to growing safety and societal concerns."

At the meeting, researchers with the RADARS System presented national data collected in 2006 from poison centers, law enforcement agencies, methadone clinics, and key informants. RADARS System Principal Investigators provided attendees with a brief overview of each signal

detection system and 2006 annual data. Industry experts participated in panel discussions about current risk management efforts, therapeutic use and addiction, and field research and interventions.

Dr. Nathaniel Katz of Analgesic Research, a panel member for the discussion on Risk Management Programs, noted that prescription opioid abuse is a public health problem and that "there needs to be a more clear articulation, at a national level, about what public health authority is responsible for prescription opioid abuse...and pharmaceutical companies need to support that public health authority in its prosecution of this public health initiative."

According to RADARS System 2006 data, prescription drug abuse occurs in essentially every town, large or small, in the United States, but is most common in suburban and rural areas of the nation, countering the notion that prescription drug abuse trends follow illegal drug abuse trends in urban areas.

"Understanding prescription drug abuse in its current state is the first step in developing effective intervention efforts and possibly decreasing prescription drug abuse throughout the nation," said Dart. "If we understand how these prescription drugs are being misused and abused, what populations are being affected, and what drug safety and intervention measures are working, then we have a good chance at reducing the abuse, misuse and diversion of prescription medications in the future."

To find more information on the RADARS System and the first annual scientific meeting, please visit [www.radars.org](http://www.radars.org).

## INCB: Prescription Drug Abuse is Expected to Exceed Illicit Drug Abuse Worldwide

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) reports that worldwide prescription drug abuse is expected to exceed illicit drug use. The Annual Report from the INCB, released on March 1, 2007 states that “in the United States, the abuse of prescription drugs, including pain killers, stimulants, sedatives and tranquilizers has gone beyond the abuse level of practically all illicit drugs, with the exception of cannabis.”<sup>1</sup> The INCB also noted that narcotic containing medications are the primary drug of choice and are not being used as a substitute to other illicit drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Additionally, the INCB reports that the use of cannabis and other illicit drugs by students in secondary schools has declined, however as these rates decline, rates of prescription drug abuse have increased. The INCB states that “the high and increasing level of abuse of prescription drugs by both adolescents and adults is a serious cause of concern.”<sup>2</sup>

In his message accompanying the annual report, INCB president Philip O. Emafo stated that “governments should also recognize the importance of drug demand reduction activities in alleviating the

drug problem.”<sup>3</sup>

These drug demand reduction efforts would include treatment and rehabilitation programs; however, U.S. congressional leaders have also identified the need for an overhaul of the U.S. drug safety system and have identified the need for postmarketing surveillance that would recognize these patterns of prescription drug abuse. Dr. Richard C. Dart, Executive Director of the RADARS System states, “this report from the INCB confirms that prescription drug abuse is a growing concern, not only in the U.S., but worldwide. Real-time prescription drug abuse monitoring systems and effective risk management strategies are quickly becoming key components needed for drug safety in the nation today.”

1. International Narcotic Board Press Release No. 4. “Abuse of Prescription Drugs to Surpass Illicit Drug Abuse, Says INCB.” 1 March 2006. Available at <http://www.incb.org/pdf/e/press/2007/annual-report-press-kit-2006-en-4.pdf>
2. International Narcotic Board Press Release No. 3. “Regional Highlights”. 1 March 2006. Available at <http://www.incb.org/pdf/e/press/2007/annual-report-press-kit-2006-en-3.pdf>
3. International Narcotic Board Press Release No. 1. “Message from the President.” 1 March 2006. Available at <http://www.incb.org/pdf/e/press/2007/annual-report-press-kit-2006-en-1.pdf>

## National Institute on Drug Abuse Holds its First-Ever Conference on Pain, Opioids and Addiction

On March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) held its first-ever conference on pain relief and addiction. The meeting *Pain, Opioids and Addiction: An Urgent Problem for Doctors and Patients* included 500 researchers, clinicians and others who discussed pain reliever abuse and the potential addiction associated with therapeutic use. A number of perspectives on the topic were presented by experts in the field of prescription drug abuse. Dr. Pamela Palmer of the University of California at San Francisco presented *New Opioid Formulations: Hope on the Horizon* which outlined three methods for addressing the use and abuse of opioids. These methods included abuse-resistant formulations, safer dispensing of opioids, and efforts to ease “dose escalation aspects of opioid tolerance.”

“As these methods and others are implemented to address prescription drug abuse, the RADARS System will continue to provide postmarketing surveillance that determines the effectiveness of these approaches by providing product specific data in comparison to other monitored drugs which can assist in determining the effectiveness of abuse deterrent formulations. Also, RADARS has the ability to collect information on specific routes of drug administration to help determine if those abusing prescription drugs prefer one route to another,” said Dr. Richard C. Dart, Executive Director of the RADARS System, who was in attendance at the meeting. “This NIDA meeting was an important step forward because it acknowledged the expanding problem of prescription drug abuse and addiction. This meeting encourages researchers and clinicians to openly discuss these issues.”

## Recent Publications & Events

### Using RADARS System Data

- The RADARS System poster, *Prescription Opioid Misuse and Abuse: Surveillance by the RADARS System Poison Centers*, will be presented at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual American Pain Society (APS) meeting in Washington, DC, May 2-5, 2007.
- Smith MY, Schneider MF, Wentz A, Hughes A, Haddox JD, Dart RC. Quantifying Morbidity Associated with the Abuse and Misuse of Opioid Analgesics: A Comparison of Two Approaches. *Clinical Toxicology*. 2007; 45:23-30.
- Hughes AA, Bogdan GM, Dart RC. Active Surveillance of Abused and Misused Prescription Opioids Using Poison Center Data: A Pilot Study and Descriptive Comparison. *Clinical Toxicology*. 2007; 45:144-151.

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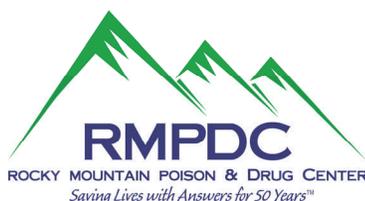
[WWW.RADARS.ORG](http://WWW.RADARS.ORG)

## RADARS System Mission Statement

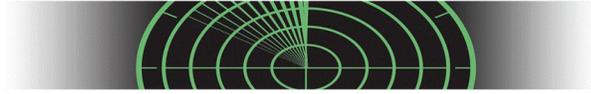
The RADARS System provides timely and geographically-specific data to the pharmaceutical industry, regulatory agencies, policymakers and medical/public health officials to aid in understanding trends in the abuse, misuse, and diversion of prescription drugs in the United States.

## RMPDC and Denver Health

The RADARS System is a governmental non-profit operation of the Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center (RMPDC), an agency of Denver Health and Hospital Authority (DHHA). The RMPDC has been in operation for 50 years, making it one of the oldest poison control centers in the nation. DHHA is the safety net hospital for the City and County of Denver. DHHA is the Rocky Mountain region's academic Level I trauma center and includes Denver Public Health, Denver's 911 emergency medical response system, nine family health centers, 12 school-based clinics, NurseLine, correctional care, Denver CARES, the Denver Health Medical Plan, and the Rocky Mountain Center for Medical Response to Terrorism, Mass Casualties and Epidemics.



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