

Plenty of Questions for Ask Adam

By Leon Fooksman

The question was simple.

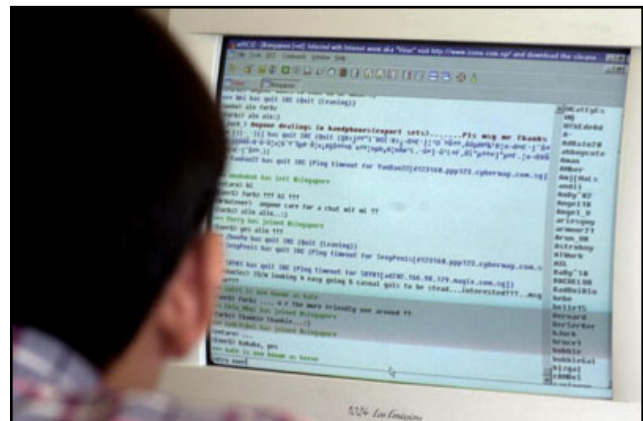
“What is Roxycodone?”

The answer wasn't.

“There are a few ways to answer your question... Roxycodone is an opioid analgesic (part of the opiate family), an analgesic is a drug that is meant to reduce pain without resulting in loss of consciousness... Roxycodone is illegal to possess or use unless it is prescribed to the person who is in possession of, or taking the drug.”

This email exchange between an anonymous writer and a professional drug counselor was part of Ask Adam.

The confidential question-and-answer service for youths and parents seeking advice or help for drug abuse is provided by Narcotic Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE) Task Force and The Hanley Center, an addiction recovery center in West Palm Beach, Fla.



It works this way: visitors to the Ask Adam feature on NOPE Task Force's website (www.nopetaskforce.org) ask questions about any topic related to drugs and alcohol. Their questions are automatically emailed to The Hanley Center where a team of drug counselors evaluates and answers them, usually with links to websites offering more information.

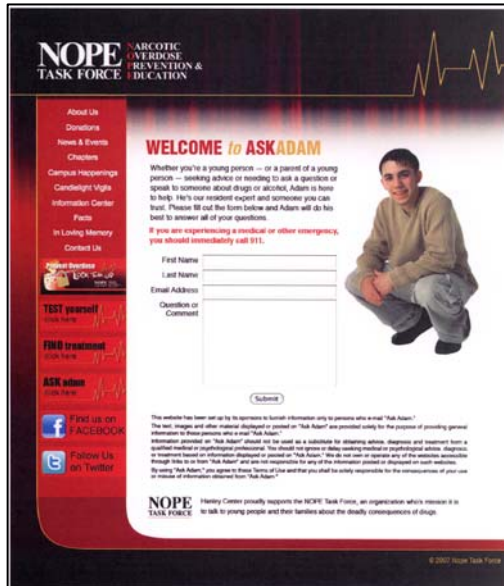
The ability to ask unfettered questions about drugs, overdoses, and treatment options and receive thoughtful, well-researched answers from veteran counselors is vital at a time when prescription drugs abuse is reaching an epidemic level in the United States, said Karen Perry, NOPE's executive director.

“It's a way to ask personal questions about drugs without being in front of someone,” Perry said.

NOPE Task Force advises anyone needing immediate medical or emergency assistance to call 911 instead of sending questions through Ask Adam.

Dozens of questions and answers have been exchanged since Ask Adam started less than a year ago, Perry said.

Kevin Bandy is the adolescent program coordinator at The Hanley Center. He knows of at least one questioner who checked into a drug treatment clinic following a question-answer exchange.



“There’s been some really important questions that have come in,” Bandy said. “We give them frank and honest answers and provide resources to answer the questions further. We’re never going to answer a question with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no.’”

The response to the question about Roxycodone, which is correctly spelled Roxicodone, was nearly 175 words, with links to National Institute on Drug Abuse websites.

“Abuse of Roxycodone can result in coma, fatal overdose, and a number of other consequences. Do me a favor, go to the links that I gave you, research the drug yourself, and write me back. Tell me what you learned.”

Other Ask Adam questions included: “Do you die if you try it?” “My uncle is in rehab for drinking and drug abuse, will he ever get better?” and “My friend took 80 mg Oxycodone and 1 mg Klonopin, is this really harmful?”

Bandy said the service has potential to help scores of people needing sound advice about drugs. Networks of drug counselors, researchers and policy makers from across the nation can be tapped to assist in answering questions, he said.

At presentations in schools, colleges and community centers, NOPE Task Force members are now encouraging more youths and parents to send in questions.

With all the confusing and misleading information in the media these days about drugs, particularly pain and anti-anxiety pills, there should be plenty of questions for Ask Adam, organizers said.

If you value NOPE Task Force’s commitment to preventing drug overdoses, please consider a voluntary payment to support the organization. Donate at www.nopetaskforce.org/donations.asp

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