

DRUG FREE PAIN HEALTH AWARENESS

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illicit drug heroin as well as the licit (legal) prescription painrelievers, oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, fentanyl and others.

Opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the brain and nervous system to produce pleasurable effects and relieve pain. Addiction is a primary, chronic and relapsing brain disease characterized by an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Of the 21.5 million Americans age 12 or older that had a substance use disorder in 2014, 1.9 million had a substance abuse disorder involving prescription pain relievers and 586,000 had a substance abuse disorder involving heroin.

It is estimated that 23 percent of individuals who use heroin develop opioid addiction.

Overdose deaths involving prescription opioids have quadrupled since 1999, as have sales of these prescription drugs. From 1999 to 2014, more than 165,000 people --- three times the U.S. military deaths during the twenty years of the Vietnam War -- have died in the U.S. from overdoses related to prescription opioids. Today, at least half of all U.S. opioid overdose deaths involve a prescribed opioid. In 2014, more than 14,000 people died from overdoses involving these drugs, with the most commonly overdosed opioids -- Methadone, Oxycodone (such as OxyContin®), and Hydrocodone (such as Vicodin®) -- resulting in death. Regrettably, overdose deaths resulting from opioid abuse have risen sharply in every county of every state across the country, reaching a new peak in 2014: 28,647 people, or 78 people per day -- more than three people per hour.

The newest estimates on the cost of opioid abuse to U.S. employers is estimated at \$18 billion in sick days, lost productivity and medical expenses.

An important non-pharmacologic approach in helping to solve this crisis is chiropractic care.

This discussion offers greater understanding of the scope of the opioid situation, the elements that have contributed to it and an approach that emphasizes non-pharmacologic care. Collectively, we must begin to extricate ourselves from our current ineffective, dangerous and often fatal reality.

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Physical therapy

Physical therapy can be an effective first step in addressing many common sources of pain, like those in the back, knee, and shoulder. In fact, a study published in the May 2018 Health Services Research found that people with low back pain who first consulted a physical therapist were less likely to receive an opioid prescription compared with those who went to a primary care doctor first. A therapist works with you to create individualized exercises, stretches, and body alignment positions that help relax tight muscles, decrease back and joint pain, and improve range of motion.

Yoga

Much research has supported using yoga to help with pain, especially back pain. A 2017 study from the National Institutes of Health found that people with low-back pain who took weekly yoga classes for 12 weeks experienced less pain and greater physical function compared with people who received educational information about how to deal with back pain. The yoga classes emphasized poses to help strengthen back and core muscles. Best of all, the yoga group was also more likely than the education-only group to stop taking pain relievers after a year.

Mind-body therapies

Pain is often made worse by your reactions to it, like stress and anxiety. "A therapy like cognitive behavioral therapy can help manage how you think and react to pain," says Dr. Jamison. "It doesn't directly heal the cause of your pain, but it may diminish the perception of its severity and perhaps prevent future episodes." With cognitive behavioral therapy, you learn how to respond to negative thinking in a positive way. The therapist helps to explore your negative thinking patterns, finding out what triggers these thoughts and how you react to them. Taking this information into account, the therapist helps develop strategies for you to use when pain brings on negative thoughts.

Information Courtesy
of <https://www.health.harvard.edu/pain/the-drug-free-approach-to-pain-management>
