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Opioids, Helpful or Harmful?

Opioids are a growing problem in America, but also in Canada and other major countries around the world. Opioids are exceedingly harmful and they should not be prescribed by medical doctors because they are easily abused; other pain management treatments are less risky and just as successful. Many people throughout the world abuse opioids and overdose on them as well. Opioids are meant to help people with pain but instead they are harmful and end their life when they need to extend it. Other pain management solutions have been tried and prove that they are just as good as opioids and without the risk factor of overdosing. Many doctors are afraid of prescribing opioids to a patient for fear of the patient abusing it. Other, non opioid, pain management treatments are highly sought after instead of using opioids because of their effects on the body. Doctors refer to opioids as a last option as treatment, so basically if a patient is feeling unbearable pain and no other alternative is working, then he or she would be prescribed an opioid type pain killer.

Opioids are too often a danger to the patient using them. Opioids have horrid side effects and are a giant risk to an individual's health. Researcher Elahe Izadi did a study and said, "In 2014, 47,055 people died of drug overdoses, according to the CDC. A record number died from prescription opioids and heroin". Opioids are one of the main drugs in drug overdoses in America. A prescription drug given to patients with pain kills as many people by overdosing as

does the illegal drug heroin. If a drug that is illegal in America kills as many people from overdoses just as much as a prescription drug, why is the prescription drug not illegal, also? Tara Gomes, a scientist with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Toronto, called “the proposed tamper-resistant regulations a good first step, one that could help deter street abuse of opioids. She is one of the co-authors of the new Ontario study, which drew on coroners' records to conclude that opioid-related deaths rose 242 per cent between 1991 and 2010, from 12.2 deaths per million in the first year of the study to 41.6 deaths per million in its last year of the study”. The regulations that were passed in Canada on opioids has been a major development in stopping the use and addiction to opioids. This will prompt many people to go through an abundant amount of other treatments before they resort to using opioids, thereby decreasing the risk of abusing and overdosing on them.

There have been many different tests to find different drug alternatives and different pain management treatments. One development for a newer and different pain and recovery treatment is the K-laser. “The K-Laser helps Impact Health clients with a number of conditions, including ligament sprains; muscle strains; rheumatoid arthritis; shoulder, back and knee pain; tennis elbow; carpal tunnel syndrome; and sports injuries” (Beall). The K- laser is a new and better way of using human technology, the K-laser helps with hurt muscles, torn ligaments, back and shoulder pain, and arthritis. The K- laser helps with all of these ailments and has nothing to do with opioids. It does the treatment without the risk of getting addicting and then abusing opioids. It does not even require the patient to take non opioid medicine in order to do the procedure and it be successful. Many other painkillers work just as well as opioids but are not actually opioids; they are just opioid free painkillers that work just as good. Pharmacist Lauren B. Mcknight said,

“A desirable effect of these agents is improvement in depression and sleep disruption, common problems among chronic pain patients” (Mcknight). If opioid free painkillers can help patients with chronic pain and not have the risk of overdosing and drug abuse, why do doctors not try this first? Pain management and opioid free pain killers are just as effective as opioids and they get rid of the risk factor of opioids to a person.

Opioids present such a great risk that doctors are afraid to prescribe it to their patients. Many countries are trying to prohibit and completely wipe out the use of opioids by their citizens. As Patricia Chisholm says, “ Even though they are effective, it can be hard to find a physician who will prescribe the morphine-like drugs known as opioids for chronic, non-malignant pain. That is because the medications can also be addictive. Although it is not illegal to use such drugs under a doctor's care, some physicians worry that prescribing them regularly could get them into trouble with their regulatory bodies.” If doctors are afraid of the damage opioids will do to their patients, then why are opioids legal and prescribed by some doctors? “ Opioid addiction has become a major public-health crisis in the past 15 years, with Canadians consuming more of the morphine-like drugs per capita than the citizens of any country except the United States” (Ottawa set to crack down on opioid manufacturers). Two major countries in the world have the most addiction problems than any else in the world. This shows how addictive opioid drugs are and that the more addictive they are, there more likely people are going to abuse them. “More people are dying of drug overdoses every year; since 2000, the rate of drug overdose deaths increased by 137 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention” (Izadi). The rate of people dying from drug overdoses has

increased by 137 percent. It is ridiculous that so many people have died from overdoses since 2000 and that the two main drugs they overdose on are opioids and heroin.

There are many other pain management methods and other drugs that are opioid free and they work just as well as opioids. Lauren Mcknight proved that “ A desirable effect of duloxetine in the setting of chronic pain is thought to be improvement in depression” (McKnight). Some of the drug alternatives contain duloxetine which, unlike opioids, helps with depression in chronic pain patients. Not only does this help with a person's chronic pain but also with their mental state and how they view their life. There is even an antidote for the harmful effects of opioid drugs. “ Naloxone is an opioid antagonist, which reverses the effects of opioids, including heroin, but also prescription painkillers commonly taken by the elderly” (Opioid antidote can now be prescribed by pharmacists). Opioids are so harmful that scientist had to come up with a drug to reverse the effects it has on people. Why use opioids if opioid free drugs produce the same result and are less risky or harmful? Opioids are so bad that they had to come up with another drug to counteract the effects that it had on people. Opioids should not be legal since their effects cause people to take another drug to counteract it the opioid.

Alcohol has been known to enhance the effects of opioid. "Intoxications involving prescription opioids are a major public health problem in many countries. When taken with opioids, alcohol can enhance the effects of opioids, particularly in the central nervous system."(New Addiction Research Findings from BIPS discussed:The Risk of Opioid

Intoxications or Related Events and the Effect of Alcohol-Related Disorder). If alcoholic drinks, which many people drink affect the use of opioids that bad, why would opioids still be a legal drug? There are specific treatments for people that have a history of alcohol abuse.

Medical examiner Donna V. Wright conducted a study and came to the result that “Once the diagnosis has been confirmed, the practitioner may want to consider using conservative nonpharmacologic treatment options. These options can be crucial if the patient has a history of alcohol and/or substance abuse”. There are special treatments that doctors have created because the mix of opioids and alcohol is so deadly. The problem with this mix is alcohol enhance opioids therefore the person has a super high tolerance for pain so if something happens they will not feel the pain until it is too late.

Opioids are a horrendous way of helping a patient, they are very risky and harmful and should not be prescribed to anyone. If doctors have a fear of prescribing opioids and countries have restrictions on them, then why use them? If other non opioid drugs work just as well and do not have the risks that opioids do, then why not use them instead? There is a senior that goes to this high school whose father was put on oxycodone, and he drank alcohol with it to. That night the medicine with the alcohol over worked his heart, and he had a heart attack and died. This person who lost her father is very close to me, and she has seen first hand how harmful opioids are with the death of her father. Opioids are a danger to society, not a healing.

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