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Opioids: Painful and pathological medications

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Despite the widespread prescribing of opioid medications for the treatment of chronic pain there is little or no evidence for its efficacy. In fact, the studies show that long-term prescribing of opioid medications leads to significant morbidity and mortality. The Controlled Substance Laws define prescription opioid medication as dangerous and addicting medications. Despite the classification and scheduling of opioid medication, their prescribing continues to be widespread and adverse. Of central importance is there are few studies of the addicting properties that drive the high rates of prescribing and adverse consequences. It is a myth that most people treated with opioids never become addicted and addiction does not develop if you are prescribing for pain.

Why are opioid medications prescribed in large quantities and high frequency when there is little or no proven efficacy for their therapeutic value? Why are opioids the most commonly prescribed medication in the United States for the past decades when the adverse consequences continue to grow? Why does the medical profession continue to prescribe opioid medications that result in increased pain and increased disability? This article summarizes the inherent addictive pharmacologic properties that are the impetus and basis for America's current opioid epidemic.

Biography

Norman S Miller, MD, JD, PLLC, is the Medical Director, Detoxification and Residential Programs, Bear River Health at Walloon Lake, and the President, Health Advocates PLLC. He is a psychiatrist in East Lansing, Michigan and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Covenant Medical Center and DMC Detroit Receiving Hospital. He received his medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine and has been in practice for 41 years. He is one of 6 doctors at Covenant Medical Center and one of 26 at DMC Detroit Receiving Hospital who specialize in Psychiatry.

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