

THE FACTS

About Drug Abuse

May 2015

Heroin-Related Deaths Have Quadrupled in America

Heroin-related deaths nearly tripled in the U.S. within just three years and quadrupled in 13, according to new federal data.

The new report from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) shows that from 2000 to 2013, drug-poisoning deaths involving heroin increased fourfold.

Heroin-related drug-poisoning deaths have increased in all age groups, races and ethnic groups, the data shows. Every region in the U.S. also experienced an increase, and the Midwest experienced the biggest jump. One reason for the spike is America's growing painkiller problem. The NCHS released another report showing that significantly more people over age 20 are using opioids.

People who are hooked on painkillers may make the switch to heroin since it's cheaper and doesn't need a prescription, according to Dr. Andrew Kolodny, the chief medical officer of the Phoenix House. Both drugs come from the opium poppy and therefore offer a similar high. "We are seeing heroin deaths sky rocketing because we have an epidemic of people addicted to opioids. There are new markets like suburbs where heroin didn't used to exist," says Kolodny.

Prior data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that painkillers are a growing problem. In 2014, the CDC reported that physicians wrote 259 million painkiller prescription in a single year — the equivalent of a bottle of pills



per American — and almost 50 Americans die every day from a prescription-painkiller overdose.

As states and the White House struggle to tackle opioid addiction, some experts are skeptical about whether such efforts are enough to solve the problem. **"We are dealing with the worst drug epidemic in our history,"** says Kolodny. **"There's no evidence it's plateauing."**

TIME Magazine: <http://time.com/3730128/heroin-deaths-painkillers/>

Statistics

* Drug overdoses are the number one cause of injury related deaths in the United States, with 43,982 deaths occurring in 2013, according to the CDC.

* According to the ONDCP, almost 68% of people who begin using prescription drugs non-medically for the first time get the drugs from a family member or friend.

Notes from Ray Kubacki

Dear Valued Clients and Friends,

We have highlighted the increase in heroin use in our last couple of editions of the newsletter, and unfortunately, the problem is still not slowing down. This epidemic is affecting young and old in regions and states throughout the U.S.

As the prescription drug and heroin epidemics continue to rage on, be assured that your Psychemedics hair test is designed to detect and deter this type of drug use. It is more important than ever to take a look at your overall program, and to consider implementing random testing or sweeps to protect your current program and to ensure a safer workplace and healthier employees.

Psychemedics remains committed to helping you achieve and maintain a drug-free workplace, and our team is always available to answers any questions you have about increasing the effectiveness of your program.

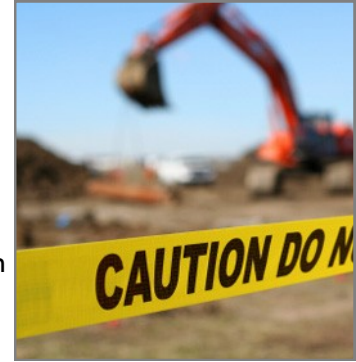
*Best Regards,
Ray*



Raymond Kubacki, Chairman & CEO,
Psychemedics Corporation

Workers Feel Safer With Random Testing In Place

Researchers at a leading business insurance website have revealed that as many as three quarters of construction workers agree with random drug testing while on site. Furthermore, the majority of respondents stated that they would feel a lot safer and more secure if employees operated under rules in which they could be tested and dismissed at any point if they were proved to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.



All participants were initially asked whether they had ever worked on a construction site which carried out random drug testing as part of its policy, with less than one tenth (9%) of workers stating that they had done so. When then asked whether they believe that random drug testing should be made a mandatory procedure carried out across all construction sites, over three quarter of the workers (76%) and half of the employers (49%) agreed that it should be. Construction workers and employers who believed that drug testing should be made mandatory on all sites were then asked to state the reasons behind their beliefs, with the most common answers given as follows:

1. I would feel a lot safer and more secure in my workplace with drug-testing in place- (68%)
2. I don't want to work with people who are putting me in danger- (54%)
3. I don't want poor work carried out if co-workers are under the influence of drugs- (43%)
4. I don't want to work or associate with drug users- (22%)
5. Drug testing may help those who use habitually to quit their habit and put their career first- (15%)

<http://www.thehrdirector.com/features/employment-law/calls-for-random-drug-testing/>

One-Quarter of Narcotic Painkillers Misused

Almost a quarter of powerful narcotic painkillers that are prescribed for chronic pain are misused, and the rate of addiction among patients hovers near 10%, a new review shows. The average rates of misuse were 21 to 29%, while the average rates of addiction were 8 to 12%, according to the review in the April issue of the journal Pain.

<http://consumer.healthday.com/mental-health-information-25/addiction-news-6/almost-a-third-of-narcotic-painkillers-misused-study-shows-697934.html>

IN THE NEWS

Drug Addiction and the American Worker

One employee with a prescription drug addiction can have an adverse effect on everyone in the workplace, putting them at risk for serious injury. Imagine intoxicated employees who operate heavy equipment or drive for a living. They are putting others at risk every day due to altered judgment and impaired coordination. Even employees who take a regular dose may be too impaired to work in a safety-sensitive position.

National Safety Council Newsletter: www.nsc.org

Heroin Drug Deaths Highest Among Young White Midwest Males

Heroin-related deaths are now most common among young, white male adults in the Midwest, according to a new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Fifteen years ago, the death rate was highest among older black males in the West and Northeast. Compared with adults aged 18–24 and 45–64, those aged 25–44 had the highest rate for drug-poisoning deaths involving heroin.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db190.htm>

ASTOUNDING FACTS

Heroin was originally developed in the late 1800s by Bayer and was marketed as a cough syrup for children. Bayer paid for advertisements in various places around the world that promoted heroin as a fine treatment for children who were suffering from sore throats, colds, coughs, and so forth, with the images depicting kids reaching for the bottle of heroin or being spoon-fed by their parents.

<http://knowledgenuts.com/2014/01/08/heroin-used-to-be-sold-as-a-childrens-cough-syrup/>

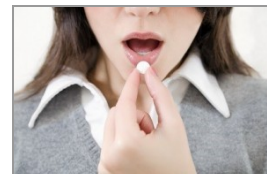


DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS -- OVERVIEW & OUTLOOK

Below is a collection of recent articles that give an overview of the current state and future outlook of prescription drug overdoses.

Why Death Rates Among White Women Are Soaring

Over the past 15 years, death rates among white women in the United States have mysteriously surged. New research pins blame on an insidious culprit: prescription painkillers. Demographers recently uncovered a startling trend: In 42.8 percent of U.S. counties, mortality rates for women rose between 1992 and 2006. Male rates, meanwhile, increased in a mere 3.4 percent of counties. Between 1999 and 2011, death rates climbed substantially among *only* white women, ages 15 to 54. A study from the Urban Institute attributed half the rise to “accidental poisoning,” or drug overdoses. Wide use and abuse of the addictive drugs is now known as “the opioid epidemic.” Deaths from painkiller overdoses among women have increased more than 400 percent since 1999, the CDC reports, compared with 265 percent among men. Nearly 48,000 women died of overdoses between 1999 and 2010.



Link to Article: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2015/03/05/the-mysterious-force-behind-rising-death-rates-for-white-women/?tid=sm_fb

More Older Adults Abusing Drugs and Dying From Overdoses

A growing number of older adults are abusing drugs and dying from overdoses, The Wall Street Journal reports. Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are turning to drugs as they face the challenges of aging, health officials say. In this age group, painkillers are the drug most often involved in overdoses. An analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) finds the rate of death from accidental drug overdoses among people ages 45 to 64 rose 11-fold between 1990 and 2010. In 2013, more than 12,000 Baby Boomers died of accidental drug overdoses—more than the number who died in car accidents or from influenza and pneumonia, the CDC said. Government researchers estimate more than 5.7 million people over age 50 will need substance abuse treatment by 2020.



Link to Article: <http://www.drugfree.org/join-together/older-adults-abusing-drugs-dying-overdoses/>

Drug Overdose Deaths May Peak in 2017

Drug overdose deaths attributed to prescription painkillers may peak in 2017, experts at Columbia University predict. By 2034 the overdose rate could fall back to rates last seen in the early 1980s, they say. The Columbia professors made the predictions based on a theory called Farr’s Law, which states that an epidemic usually follows a symmetrical curve that rises before subsiding. If the overdose epidemic does decrease as they predict, it will add to evidence that efforts such as enhanced prescription drug monitoring are working and should be continued.

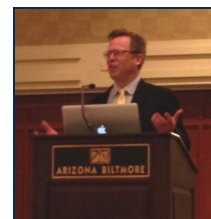


<http://blogs.wsj.com/pharmalot/2015/10/10/overdose-deaths-due-to-prescription-painkillers-may-peak-soon-study/>

Did You Know ??

Psychemedics is presenting a session on the Heroin epidemic at the DATIA Conference

Jim Dyke, Psychemedics’ Corporate VP of Sales and Marketing, will be giving a one hour presentation at the 2015 DATIA (Drug and Alcohol Testing Industry Association) Conference in Miami on June 4th. The topic “The Heroin Crisis: How Prescription Painkillers Paved the Way” is a follow-up to the presentation given at the 2014 conference about the prescription drug abuse epidemic. The session will discuss how opiate abuse has triggered the next drug crisis - heroin.



If you have not already, please consider making plans to attend this once a year conference designed to provide education and resources to those involved in drug and alcohol testing!

*Superior Detection
of Drug Abuse*

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Why Choose Psychemedics? ALL HAIR TESTING IS NOT THE SAME

Psychemedics Corporation is the world's largest provider of hair testing for drugs of abuse and has been successfully operating for over 25 years. Thousands of corporations, nationally and internationally, rely on the patented Psychemedics drug testing services. Psychemedics' clients include over 10% of the Fortune 500, many of the largest police departments both domestic and global, and Federal Reserve Banks. In addition, the Company serves schools and colleges around the world. Our team of experts stand ready to help through every step: policy development, communication, implementation and sustainability.

Since 1987, Psychemedics has offered the most effective hair testing technology, based on scientifically validated drug testing methods. All hair testing is not the same – our patented technology uses a unique process to release the drugs trapped in the hair without destroying the drugs and removes virtually 100% of the drugs from the hair. Our patent is fundamental to hair analysis drug testing because if you cannot get all the drugs out of the hair, you cannot accurately measure them; and if you cannot accurately measure the drugs, you cannot identify all of the drug users. This proprietary technology provides superior detection of drugs of abuse, and is what sets us apart.

Case Studies Available!

Making the case for change is often about understanding the benefits that others have gained by changing their programs. If you would like to learn more about the implementation process and program results of our customers, please contact us at info@psychemedics.com for copies of the case studies we have available.