

FROM THE EXPERTS

Pain Killers and Heroin Addiction

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Heroin use in the United States has increased 63% since 2002 and claimed the lives of 938 Ohioans in 2013 alone. Sadly, it is an epidemic that is hitting closer and closer to home. Being informed about a major cause of this devastating addiction may protect you and your family from falling victim to this dangerous drug.

A recent article in Time Magazine reported that three out of every four heroin addicts start using heroin after being prescribed pain killers (like oxycodone or hydrocodone) by their doctor.

The number of prescription pain killers dispensed has quadrupled in the U.S. since 1999, which has led to two million Americans aged 12 and older to abuse or become dependent on the drugs. Prescription pain killers and heroin target the same receptors in the brain, which gives you the feeling of euphoria. Although this is effective in treating pain, it is highly addictive over time even if taken as prescribed. Prescription pain killers can lead to the use of heroin because when patients can no longer get a prescription from their doctor, they look for something that will give them the same high and heroin replicates that. Heroin is much cheaper and more potent than pain killers.

Unfortunately, the heroin epidemic will continue as long as our doctors are prescribing these highly addictive drugs for chronic use. As if we didn't have enough children on drugs already, the FDA recently approved the use of Oxycontin (a very potent heroin-like pain killer) in children as young as 11 years old. This is absurd and in my opinion negligent of the FDA. The chronic use of prescription pain killers has gotten so bad that a drug called Movantik was created to treat "opiate induced constipation" or OPI. This drug treats a side effect of pain killers. A drug treating the side effects of another drug... now that's health.

So, what can you do? Find the CAUSE of your pain and fix it! If you or someone you know is taking pain medication often, call your chiropractic physician and tell them what is going on – they can help. Continuing to take pain killers for your chronic aches and pains is like taking the batteries out of your home smoke detector when it's sounding the alarm. It will only be a matter of time before your house burns down.

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