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Opioids: Narcotic Painkillers Are A Danger To Us All

A recent *New York Times* Health article recently appeared entitled “***Tightening the Lid on Pain Prescriptions***”. Here’s a paragraph which ought to grab just about everyone’s attention:

“High-strength painkillers known as opioids represent the most widely prescribed class of medications in the United States. And over the last decade, the number of prescriptions for the strongest opioids has increased nearly fourfold, with only limited evidence of their long-term effectiveness or risks,

federal data shows.”

Did we get that? A fourfold increase in the strongest opioids over the last decade. What does that mean for the next ten years?

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More importantly, what does that mean for all of us who live with, work with, interact with people who have been taking this class of

medication for years? Whether they know it or not, many are addicted to these powerful pharmaceutical medications. And the consequences of their long term use has not been adequately monitored or studied.

For one thing they represent such a lucrative revenue stream for Big Pharma that research money is kept from ever funding the necessary studies. These vital studies would be quite revealing in that the many unintended consequences, toxic side effects and collateral damage, that often occur with the overuse of prescription drugs, would come to light.

No way! Not gonna happen. Especially not in the current healthcare environment, when so many have become so dependent on these low grade narcotics to simply get through their day.

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So we see that the pressure is coming from both the top down

and the bottom up. In a society that conditions people to treat symptoms rather than address the root causes such an unfortunate state of affairs was bound to evolve. At this point all we can do is educate our loved one, friends and business acquaintances about the unknown effects of such powerful drugs.

Who would disagree with the fact that there is an extraordinary amount of bizarre, unpredictable, and violent behavior out there? Often times it is exhibited by individuals who have no prior history, and who are only known to be normal Jacks and Jills. Then, one day they explode, or they quit, or leave town or they do something which is completely out of character that ends up being particularly destructive.

We are trying to make a correlation between the current phenomenon known as *End-time Madness* and the ever-increasing usage of these powerful psychoactive drugs. Anyone, anywhere can be on them these days. Therefore, it is at least good to understand that there is a very high degree of likelihood that the longer folks rely on them to get through their lives, the greater the chances of having a bad experience with them, however that plays out.

Just how addictive are opioids? How do they compare with other addictive drugs?

Here's another paragraph from the same *NYT* article that will shed some light on this aspect:

"Data suggest that hundreds of thousands of patients nationwide may be on potentially dangerous dosages. And while no one questions that the medicines help countless patients and that most doctors prescribe them responsibly, there is a growing resistance to their creeping overuse. Experts say that doctors often simply keep patients on them for years and that patients can develop a dependence on them that mirrors addict

This addictive quality is what we have seen in health coaching many healthcare profes

hospital sector. Rarely did we come across people who had very easy access to these painkiller prescriptions, who was able to wean the opioids. For those who broke the habit, it was often due to an extremely unsettling event or circumstance which brought the situation to light. Others would often find themselves in a progressively worsening predicament.

How dangerous are these opioids? We're talking both serious side effects and mortality rates here!

From the same NYT article we can read the following reports:

“Studies link narcotic painkillers to a variety of dangers, like sleep apnea, sharply reduced hormone production and, in the elderly, increased falls and hip fractures. The most extreme cases include fatal overdoses.”

“The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has urged doctors to use opioids more judiciously, pointing to the easy availability of the drugs on the street and a mounting toll of overdose deaths; in 2008, the most recent year with available data, 14,800 people died in episodes involving prescription painkillers.”

At the end of the day, we can all agree that this class of medication is **D A N G E R O U S!**

But believe it or not, The Health Coach is least concerned about the many alarming stats and figures, CDC data and info, or anecdotal evidence and scientific research quoted above. Our biggest concern is what we don't know about these types of powerful, addictive prescription drugs.

If they were to be studied closely we might find out much more; however, even such a scientific approach would not satisfy our needs. Because the true effects of these drugs can only be properly understood in the context of everyday life ... with everyday pressures (time, social, financial, etc.) ... with

everyday stresses (traffic, arguments, work related, marital discord and other relationship tensions, etc.) among many other co-factors.

Truly, all must be present in order to see how they will all mix together in the crucible of life. Only then can we observe how these opioid painkillers might be affecting the human being in subtle ways, and whether they might trigger extraordinary behavior or life-altering events.

May you enjoy great health!

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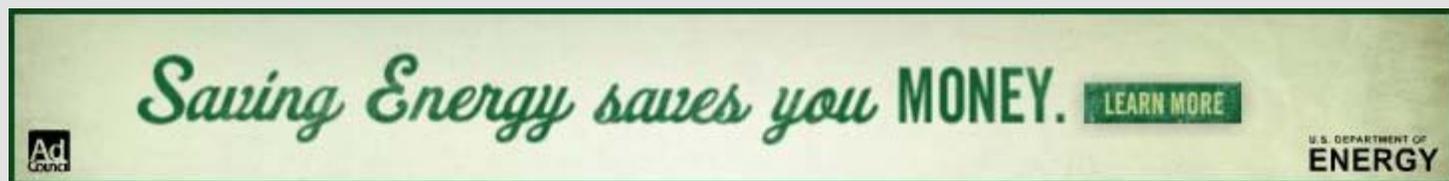
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