

Opioid Dependence

Surname

Professor

Course

Date

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The number of substance abuse disorders is increasing in the modern society affecting the quality of the national health rather negatively. However, the world is changing on a regular basis inventing new treatment options and facilities helping people to get rid of the dependence becoming healthier in a timely manner. This paper will focus on the nature of the opioid dependence, its causes and basic symptoms, as well as effective therapies and treatment options helping to combat this medical diagnosis leading a happy and productive life in the future.

People are characterized by the presence of opioid dependence when having addiction to opiates, the drugs helping to relieve pain, such as morphine, codeine, heroin, hydrocodone, etc. Some of these opiates are naturally produced by plants, such as codeine and morphine, while some are produced synthetically. Due to the fact that these drugs are powerful painkillers, the great number of people use them on a regular basis to relieve pain caused by various health problems and concerns. Such dependence is developed after the use of these drugs for some specific period of time when individuals are unable to stop using them on a daily basis.

Opioid dependence is rather a complicated health condition bringing not only physical but also psychological consequences affecting people's life, activity and general well-being rather negatively. Long-term treatment, medical assistance and care are required in this connection helping people to maintain better health and return to the normal life again. Drugs simply become a major part in people's life controlling their thoughts and guiding their behaviors and actions on a regular basis.

Birnbaum et al. (2011) stated that "the costs of prescription opioid abuse represent a substantial and growing economic burden for the society, and the increasing prevalence of abuse suggests an even greater societal burden in the future" (p. 657). Thus, the problem of opioid dependence should be properly analyzed and evaluated in the modern society reducing the rate of

affected individuals of different age and stabilizing the overall situation in the community. The role of the government is rather high in this connection checking the availability of such drugs in the community and limiting people's access to illegal drugs on a regular basis.

This kind of dependence is mostly caused by psychiatric disorders and depressions among people forcing them to find ways to forget about their current problems, pain and get involved into the state of happiness and euphoria. The majority of people use opioids to relieve pain and feeling better after some injuries or diseases easily stopping to use them when the pain goes away. However, there are also individuals using such drugs for fun or relieving some past memories or poverty, etc. Medical professionals should analyze each case thoroughly helping people to stop using drugs intentionally starting a new life without opioids.

People using opioids should be aware of the danger and negative consequences brought by such drugs. Psychological and sociological factors may force people to use drugs and become dependent, as some persons escape poverty and family problems while others escape depression and numerous psychiatric problems preventing them from the normal life and relationships in the community. Millions of people of different age are becoming addicted to various drugs annually worldwide.

In order to start treatment and help people to return to the normal life, people should be aware of the symptoms of opioid dependence. There are certain physical signs of drug abuse among individuals, such as tremors, change of appetite and communication patterns, inappropriate coordination, etc. There are also some behavioral signs of drug addiction, such as secretive behaviors, problems in the educational establishments and work, difficulty in communication, etc. Parents, family members and educators should address these changes in people's behavior, as earlier treatment brings the greater number of positive effects for

individuals.

Gugelmann & Perrone (2011) stated that the increase in opioid prescribing parallels resulted in “substantial increases in opioid addiction, fatal overdoses, and diversion of these drugs for recreational or non-medical use” (p. 2258). The increasing number of deaths from this medical conditions makes it one of the most serious health concerns and medical issues in the modern society requiring the continuous cooperation of various medical professionals and family members, as well as community members helping to develop specific programs and plans reducing the rate of addicted individuals, especially young persons aged 14-21 years old.

Treatment options are numerous at present, however, people should be aware of the fact that immediate drug withdrawal may also result in numerous symptoms, such as bone pain and headaches, fever, insomnia, diarrhea, tremors, etc. The continuous guidance, control and assistance of the medical professionals plays an important role in this connection inspiring much confidence, stability and success on the part of the patient. The intravenous injection of such drugs may bring serious diseases to people.

The most common problems arising in this field include HIV, hepatitis, and other infections which may lead to people’s death. Modern persons using drugs for fun should be aware of these consequences escaping them through the complete stopping of using drugs and receiving the qualified medical assistance in hospitals. Pharmacological treatment should be combined with psychological therapies helping people to feel better not only physically but also psychologically. The effective combination of such therapies will help people to feel better in a timely manner.

Kosten & George (2002) stated that “medications such as methadone, LAAM, buprenorphine, and naltrexone act on the same brain structures and processes as addictive

opioids, but with protective or normalizing effects” (p. 13). Psychosocial treatments should be combined with these medications gaining more positive and effective outcomes and response on the part of the individuals. Clinicians should understand people’s behavior and thoughts, as well as the causes of their dependence on drugs helping people properly and choosing the appropriate treatment plan.

Medication is an important component of treatment against opioid dependence helping people to return to the normal reality controlling their behavior, thoughts and actions in the community. The research is now ongoing finding other options to treat opioid dependence including vaccines and different medications. Treatment research will help to assist people in a timely manner not forcing them to get involved into long-term care and treatment plans. The world is changing on a regular basis, as well as the field of medicine resulting in more effective and successful treatment plans and medications escaping the negative consequences of opioid abuse helping people to feel better quickly.

Dependence on some drugs should be treated and overcome by the combination of the efforts of various professionals understanding the nature and causes of this dependence and its effects on the future well-being and health. Methadone-maintenance treatment is now considered one of the most common and widely used treatment options for opioid dependence. Ward, Hall & Mattick (1999) stated that “MMT improves health and reduces illicit heroin use, infectious-disease transmission, and overdose death” (p. 221). That is why medical professionals highly recommend this treatment option hoping to receive positive results on the part of different patients.

Oral MMT is not only the most effective and commonly used way of treating opioid dependent patients but also the treatment producing less side effects and additional health

problems among individuals of different age. The role of the public agencies and medical institutions is to promote safe and effective opioid treatments in the community, especially with the high morbidity rates from opioid dependence. Strain et al. (1999) stated that both “moderate and high-dose methadone treatment resulted in decreased illicit opioid use during methadone maintenance and detoxification” (p. 1000).

Opioid dependence and abuse is a serious problem and concern in the modern society affecting not only physical but also psychological health of individuals. The treatment should start in a timely manner escaping serious and negative consequences affecting people’s life and behavior rather negatively sometimes even leading to death. The continuous support of the family and community plays an important role in the treatment process inspiring much confidence and stability on the part of the individuals undergoing either pharmacological or psychosocial therapies returning to the normal life.

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