The Role of the Health Care Team in Solving the Opioid Epidemic

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Introductions

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Learning Objectives

- Recognize the scope of the opioid crisis in the U.S.
- Identify actionable resources for interprofessional team members
- Explore the important roles and responsibilities of health care professionals (HCPs) in combating opioid abuse such as:
  - Changing prescribing practices
  - Raising awareness of the risk of addiction
  - Identifying and treating opioid-dependent individuals

A Call to Action: Statistics

- Approximately **4.5 million** U.S. citizens are addicted to prescription opioids
- **140+** Americans die every day from a drug overdose (91 from opioids)
- Opioids are the **leading cause of accidental death** in the U.S.
- More than **6 out of 10** drug overdose deaths involve an opioid
- Overdose deaths involving opioids have **quadrupled** since 1999
- Workers who use prescription opioids for 3+ months almost never **return to work**
- From 2000 to 2015 more than **half a million** people died from drug overdoses
- **60%** of U.S. citizens have leftover narcotics in their home

References:
- [https://www.cdc.gov/](https://www.cdc.gov/)
### Urgent Considerations

- How can members of the interprofessional health care team provide the best treatment and what are their roles in the prevention and resolution of this epidemic?
- How can the interprofessional team work together on this issue?
- What will you do differently?

We welcome your questions. Please enter your question in the Q&A box throughout the conversation.

### Sample Case Study 1

“The Average Person”
### John Andrew

- 55-year-old obese male
- Presents at new primary care physician (PCP) with persistent lower back pain that is interfering with his ability to work
  - Back injury 2.5 years ago: fell hard on a gym floor
  - Persistent back pain since fall
  - Oxycodone provides the only relief, and only for a short period of time
- Running out of opioids prescribed by previous PCP (who retired a few months ago)
- Reports feeling hopeless about his condition, as he feels he is “losing ground and the pain is winning”

### John Andrew

- Second-grade elementary school teacher for 6 years
- Previously worked in corporate America for 18 years
- Gained 30 pounds since injury
- Disability on and off since that time
- Pain is becoming increasingly worse
  - Difficulty driving
  - Sleep is interrupted and sporadic
- Feels isolated and wife feels he is depressed
- No longer able to enjoy simple pleasures, social interactions or walking his dog
- Has erectile dysfunction and reduced sexual activity
Care Plan

- Medication-assisted treatment (MAT), along with lab/urinalysis
- Assess need for rehab services
- Substance use disorder (SUD) treatment assessment and engagement
- Coordinate with the interprofessional care team
- Pain management specialist referral and treatment plan
- Assess need for wraparound case management services
- Education for family members
- Referral to local recovery network resources

Dialogue and Considerations

- How can HCPs act on the care plan individually, and, as part of an interprofessional collaborative practice team?
- What can you look for to identify opioid use disorder?
- How can your discipline/role best interact with the patient? What lens and services do you bring to the case?
- How does your understanding of opioid addiction as a chronic relapsing illness influence your work with the care plan?
- What are the available resources?
Sample Case Study 2

Rural Areas – Lack of Access to Care

Allison

• 27-year-old divorced female with a 3 year old son
• Had a difficult caesarean delivery and severe infection in her surgical incision post-delivery
  ✓ Prescribed oxycodone for pain
  ✓ Has used opioids ever since
• As opioids became less available, turned to heroin
• Purchases both street opioids and heroin
• Has been successful in hiding her substance abuse until a random drug test at work
• Terrified of losing her job and her son
• Interested in getting better
• Frightened, but willing to engage in what assistance is available
Allison

• Devoted to her son and works hard to “control” her drug use so others do not know about it
• Tested positive for both opioids and heroin and has been referred to the employment counselor at work
• Ex-husband (has issues with opioids, heroin and alcohol) not aware of her drug and opiate use
• Father was a “functional alcoholic” for many years and passed away 9 months ago from cirrhosis
• Mother died from breast cancer when she was 15
• Brother struggles with alcohol-related issues
• Other brother is an accomplished athlete and is very rigid about healthy eating and lifestyle

Care Plan

• Local provider prescribed MAT along with lab work
• Assess need for rehab services
• Telehealth SUD treatment
• Referral to local recovery network resources
• Telehealth behavioral health support
• Wraparound case management
• Education for family member
• Support from employer for telehealth during working hours
Dialogue and Considerations

• How can HCPs act on the care plan individually, and, as part of an interprofessional collaborative practice team?
• What social determinants of health should be considered?
• What else should the HCPs ask and consider?
• How would you engage this patient’s support systems?
• What are the available resources?

Sample Case Study 3

“The Older Adult”
Gina

- 79-year-old grandmother lives in Georgia with one of her daughters
- Had a viral infection invading right ear, lost 60% of hearing and experienced chronic, unrelenting pain
- After treatment of almost one year with medications and antibiotics had surgery to address the problem
- Has been prescribed opioids to handle the pain throughout her course of infection
- Opioids initially effective in managing pain but over time lost effectiveness so took more
- Gina was overwhelmed and concerned: She had been following medical direction which she assumed was in her best interest

Gina

- High blood pressure related to obesity and familial history of high blood pressure/stroke
- Mother of five and grandmother of nine
- Used to do chores and child care in her daughter’s house but now needs help a majority of the time
  - Confusion associated with a halting gait and impulse decision making
  - Sleep increasingly disrupted
  - Depressed and withdrawn, reluctant to interact with family members or to pursue her normal activities
  - Continued to tell physician of her worsening symptoms, to which he added a short-acting opioid for more instantaneous pain relief
- Preoccupied continuously with her pain and waiting for her next dose of medication
Care Plan

- MAT treatment to detox from opioids
- Pain management strategy, using non-opioid alternatives
- Family education and support re: pain management
- Behavioral health treatment, utilizing cognitive behavioral treatment
- Health plan coverage considerations

Dialogue and Considerations

- How can HCPs act on the care plan individually, and, as part of an interprofessional collaborative practice team?
- What differences in roles and interventions are present with an older adult?
- What other team members should potentially be engaged?
- Are there prevention aspects to this case that need to be addressed?
- What are the available resources?
Panelist Perspectives and Q&A

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In Closing

• Have a conversation with one other person about what you learned within a week.
• Change our attitudes and then our work processes.
• Create your action plan and identify what you will do differently.
# Resources

## Health Care Provider and Patient Resources
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain (2016), with patient and provider resources: [https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/resources.html](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/resources.html)
- Additional resources for health care professionals: [http://www.hhs.gov/opioids/](http://www.hhs.gov/opioids/)

## Addiction, Opioid Use Disorder, and Overdose Resources
- Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) resources, SAMHSA: [https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment](https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment)
- CDC resources for opioid overdose for health care professionals: [https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prevention/help.html](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prevention/help.html)
- American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Educational Resources: [https://www.asam.org/education/resources](https://www.asam.org/education/resources)