



Session 7: Opioids and Club Drugs



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
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The Importance of Total Abstinence

- Abstinence from all substances that affect the brain—even alcohol—greatly increases the chances of a successful recovery.

What Are Opioids?

- Opioids are natural or synthetic substances that act on the brain's opiate receptors.
- Opioids dull pain and relieve anxiety that comes from thinking about pain.
- People abuse opioids because they provide a feeling of euphoria (a “rush”).

Physical Effects of Opioids

Taking opioids causes

- Constricted pupils
- Flushing of the skin
- Heavy feeling in the limbs

The rush is followed by a confused, drowsy feeling that lasts several hours.

Breathing and heart rate slow during this period.

Opioids and Tolerance

- Higher and higher doses are required to achieve the opioid's effects. This is called "tolerance."
- Eventually, the drug is taken mainly to prevent withdrawal, not to get high.

Dependence Versus Addiction

- People who use opioids as prescribed to relieve pain rarely become addicted.
- Long-term use can result in tolerance and dependence.
- Addiction is characterized by craving for the drug and using it even when it causes harm.

Withdrawal From Opioids

- Withdrawal occurs when someone who is dependent or addicted stops taking opioids suddenly.
- Withdrawal symptoms: severe muscle and bone pain, trouble sleeping, diarrhea, vomiting, and cold flashes.

Abuse of Prescription Opioids

The main prescription opioids people abuse are

- Codeine
- Oxycodone (OxyContin[®], Percodan[®], Percocet[®])
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin[®])
- Meperidine (Demerol[®])
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid[®])

Oxycodone

Use Patterns

- The number of people abusing oxycodone has increased every year since the drug was introduced in 1995.
- In 2004, 5 percent of high school seniors said they used oxycodone at least once.

Oxycodone

Facts

- Oxycodone is timed-release medicine for cancer and back pain.
- People forge prescriptions and rob pharmacies to obtain oxycodone illegally.
- People abuse oxycodone by crushing the tablet and swallowing or snorting it or dissolving it in water and injecting it.
- Street names include oxy, OC, kickers, killers, blue, and hillbilly heroin.

Oxycodone

Dangers

- When people crush tablets before taking them, the danger of overdose is increased.
- Like all opioids, oxycodone is highly addictive when it is abused.

Heroin

Use Patterns

- 1 million Americans may be addicted to heroin.
- Among people younger than 26, heroin is linked to more deaths than any other substance except alcohol.
- Purer forms of heroin that can be smoked or snorted have led to increased use, especially among young people.
- Smoking or snorting heroin can lead to addiction, just as injecting heroin does.

Heroin

Facts

- Heroin is a white to dark brown powder.
- It often is mixed with other substances (sugar, starch) or poison (strychnine).

Heroin

Dangers

- The need to purchase and use heroin causes people to ignore other aspects of their lives, like family and loved ones, finances, and legal concerns.
- This neglect can lead to weight loss, sickness, money problems, criminal activity, and housing and family problems.
- Overdose is a persistent danger with heroin.

Heroin

Disease Risks

- Injection drug use is linked to one-third of HIV cases and more than one-half of hepatitis C cases.

What Are Club Drugs?

- Club drugs include a variety of drugs used at bars and dance parties, especially by high school and college students.
- Many people wrongly believe club drugs are safe.

GHB

Use Patterns

- Most people who use GHB are between 18 and 30 years old.
- Between 1994 and 2002, there was a 9,000-percent increase in emergency room reports of GHB use.
- 2 percent of high school seniors have tried GHB.

GHB

Facts

- GHB is made in illegal labs. The ingredients are cheap and easy to find.
- GHB is a light powder that usually is dissolved in liquid and sold from a bottle.

GHB

Physical Effects

- At high doses GHB can cause comalike sleep.
- If GHB is mixed with alcohol, overdose and death can result.
- Since 1990, 16,000 people have overdosed on GHB; 70 have died.

Rohypnol

Use Patterns

- Rohypnol is popular with youth because it is cheap.

Rohypnol

Facts

- Rohypnol is often sold in its original packaging, so people think it is legal.
- Rohypnol is 10 times stronger than Valium.

Rohypnol

Physical Effects

- Later effects include decreased blood pressure, slurred speech, impaired judgment, and trouble walking.
- Rohypnol can cause headaches, nightmares, tremors, muscle pain, and blackouts.

Ketamine

Use Patterns

- Ketamine use has been steadily decreasing.

Ketamine

Facts

- Ketamine is a white powder, which can be added to drinks, snorted, or smoked.
- Ketamine has no smell or taste, so it is hard to detect.

Ketamine

Physical Effects

- High doses can lead to a feeling in which a person's senses shut down—the K-hole.
- At high doses ketamine can cause heart attack, stroke, coma, and death.

Club Drugs and Date Rape

- GHB, Rohypnol, and ketamine have been linked to date rape.
- People who take these drugs may be unable to resist sexual acts.

LSD

Use Patterns

- 1 out of every 10 people ages 12 and older has tried LSD.

LSD

Facts

- LSD is sold as tablets or dissolved onto blotter paper.
- It has a slightly bitter taste.

LSD

Physical Effects

- High doses produce hallucinations, known as a trip; bad trips can cause confusion, panic, and terror.
- The effects last 12 hours, often followed by depression and extreme tiredness.
- People who use LSD regularly can have flashbacks, even without taking the drug.
- LSD is linked to serious mental illness, such as depression and schizophrenia.

MDMA (“Ecstasy”)

Use Patterns

- Ecstasy use began in clubs but has spread to other social settings.

Ecstasy

Facts

- Ecstasy was used in psychotherapy, but proved to have no therapeutic value.
- Today, it is a banned substance.

Ecstasy

Physical Effects

- Ecstasy causes increased heart rate and blood pressure, nausea, loss of appetite, jaw tightness, and teeth clenching.
- Ecstasy kills nerve cells in the brain.
- Studies show that the damage can last at least 7 years.