

# Human errors may explain a false epide prescription pain medication overdose deaths

## Abstract

This study reviews the validity of a public perception promoted by Centers Control that prescription pain medications have contributed to an epidem deaths and illicit use of heroin. No scientific evidence has been found to su causative link between prescription pain medications and an epidemic of deaths and illicit use of heroin. The study results suggest highly complex m medical and psychosocial influences to be predominant in the increasing overdose deaths.



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## Introduction

A prevalent public perception promoted by Centers for Disease been suggesting that prescription pain medications have led to of overdose deaths and also have contributed to the increased illicit drugs including heroin.<sup>1</sup> The negative public perception of prescription pain medications adversely impacted people with chronic pain who may benefit f prescription pain medications.

The aim of this review is to determine whether the alleged asso between the increasing number of overdose deaths, worsening addiction and the prescription pain medication is scientifically.

## Results

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published numerous alert warning of a deadly epidemic of deaths from prescription painkiller overdoses. On November 4, 2015 DEA acting administrator Chuck Rosenberg warned duct public: guns safer than prescription drugs. He declared that in 2013 more than in the Unites States died from a drug overdose and more than half of those wer prescription painkillers and heroin.

CDC prescription drug overdose data in October 2015 reported total annual ova jumped to 44,000 deaths with prescription drugs deaths of 23,000 and 16,000 d prescription opioid<sup>1</sup>.

### CDC prescription drug overdose data also reported the following<sup>2</sup>

Every day in the United States 44 people died as a result of prescription op Nearly 2,000,000 Americans either used for or dependent on opioid painkiller Drug misuse caused about 2.5 million emergency department visits in 2011.

## Analysis

CDC data showed that between 2000 and 2013 the number of deaths from suic from 33,00 to 41,000 annual deaths corresponding to a jump from 10.4 to 12.6 thousand population. There was an increase in heroin overdose deaths from 0. per hundred thousand population in the same period.<sup>3</sup> They showed a decline pain medication overdose deaths from 2011 to 2013<sup>3</sup> (Figures 1-6).

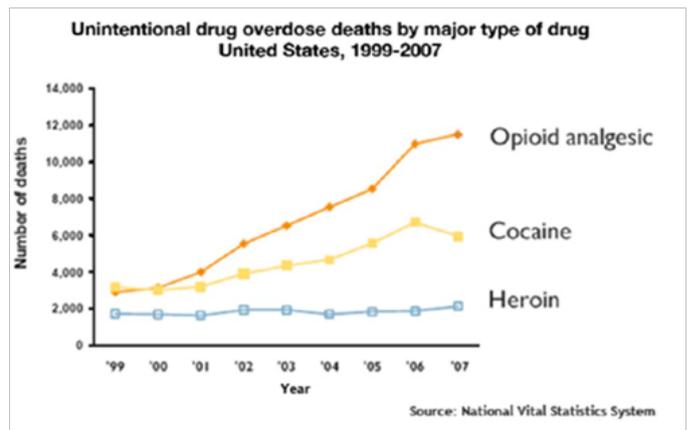


Figure 1 CDC Promotion of the Epidemic.

A groundbreaking study by Drs Webster & Dasgupta<sup>3</sup> observed that common errors made the overall death statistics of overdose deaths scientifically question significance was possibly the exaggerated numbers of prescription pain medic because often the overdose diagnosis did not include laboratory data and bas and unconfirmed reports.



Figure 2 CDC Promotion of the Epidemic.

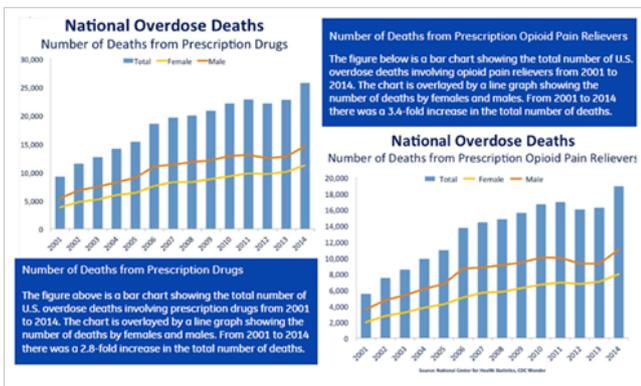


Figure 3 CDC Promotion of the Epidemic.

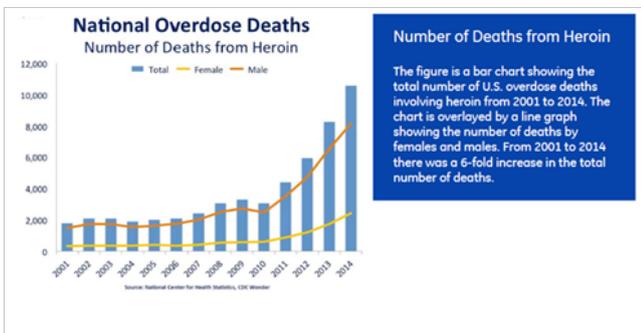


Figure 4 CDC Promotion of the Epidemic.

Year	2011	2013
# Deaths per 100k population	7.3	7.2

Figure 5 Overdose Deaths From Prescription P Medications Have Declined From 2011 to 2013.

A careful review of CDC disseminated data in support of a causative link between pain medications and an epidemic of deaths from prescription pain medication of heroin revealed no scientifically valid study to support the central claim.

### Discussion

It seems that the current prevalent impression that prescription pain medication causing much harm by contributing to an epidemic of overdose deaths, illicit and any scientific evidence. Some of the erroneous public perception can be explained by the following:

1. Association is not causation
2. Total drug overdose deaths (44,000 or 14 people per hundred thousand pop suicides and antidepressants and grossly distort final results.
3. Prescription pain medications are wrongly singled out as the predominant cause of total drug overdose deaths without supporting evidence. From number of deaths from prescription pain medications have declined from 7. hundred thousand population.
4. The high number of suicides (40,000 or 12.5 people per hundred thousand p similar to the high number of overdose deaths. This suggests that the number of deaths reflects complications of many complex mental disorders independent prescription pain medications.
5. CDC statistics wrongfully claim many fold increases in overdose deaths by a scientifically valid comparison of number of deaths per hundred thousand p only citing the overall numbers of deaths. This is a serious statistical misrep.
6. According to the Institute Of Medicine Report that there are some 110 million Americans with chronic pain.<sup>4</sup> This large number may reflect multiple social medical realities industrial and traffic accidents, wars and longer longevity with cancer and other disorders--and has greatly increased the number of people who may benefit from prescription pain medications.<sup>5</sup>
7. The risk of medication overuse and addiction are serious concerns. They should be addressed without impeding adequate treatment for people with pain.<sup>6,7</sup>
8. Clinicians must also be aware of the potential adverse events including fatalities with disruption of treatment with opiates in different subgroups. of significance -established risk of premature death upon discontinuation of opiates independent withdrawal responses. Dissemination of erroneous information about prescription medications have gained even more significance because of the vast literature serious complications of untreated chronic pain that may include brain atrophy neurodegeneration.<sup>8,9</sup>



Figure 6 False Alarm – False Advertising.

### Conclusion

Despite the current prevalent public perception that prescription opiates have caused an epidemic of overdose deaths and illicit use of drugs there is no scientific evidence to support it.

### Acknowledgments

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## Conflicts of interest

Author declares there are no conflicts of interest.

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