America's Opiate Epidemic

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Since the last decade of the twentieth century, the opiate epidemic has emerged as one of the greatest health concerns in the United States of America. Over the course of the last decade only, the opiate prescription has tripled and the physicians are playing an important role in making the general population addicted to this drug. The opiate epidemic of the United States of America is not just limited to the addiction of the general public on the drug, but it is becoming the leading cause of deaths. One of the latest research about the epidemic entitled as “Bleak New Estimates in Drug Epidemic” highlights the issue in a great deal. The author has mentioned in his article that

“Drug overdoses killed about 72,000 Americans last year, a record number that reflects a rise of around 10 percent, according to new preliminary estimates from the Centers for Disease Control. The death toll is higher than the peak yearly death totals from H.I.V., car crashes or gun deaths (Sanger-Katz, 2018).”

This is a major point of concern for the authorities of the United States of America that they are unable to control the situation, which is going out of hand to the extent that death rate due to it has far increased than the deaths caused due to diseases. One of the major contributions to the death rate of the opiate epidemic is done by the mixing of “black tar heroin” with synthetic or prescribed opiates. This substitution or mixing is not being done by the pharmaceutical companies but by the street peddlers, which is worsening the situation. Street peddlers and pharmaceutical companies can equally be considered the culprits of opiate distribution in America, thus leading to the epidemic (Quinones, 2015). However, the pharmaceutical companies, along with physicians have played a more drastic role in severing the situation. It was Purdue Pharma which introduced Oxycontin as a non-addictive pain-coping opioid to the physicians, which was actually a false advertisement. The physicians and pharmaceutical companies are earning their profits by overprescribing and selling the drugs which are taking the lives of the general public. Over the course of years, the general public has got addicted, as well as immune to the opiates because the physicians prescribe them for the pain of minimal injuries as well. The concerned authorities are not taking action against the dependence of the physicians and the general public over the drug which is increasing the death rate with every passing day. Overprescribing of opiates and aggressive marketing of synthetic drugs has captured America’s lives.

New drug epidemic researches are highlighting the fact that the opiate crisis is killing white America. The major target or victim of the epidemic is the middle and upper class of the society, who can spend enough on purchasing the opiates. One of the primary drugs among them is Fentanyl, which is being used after mixing it with black tar heroin. A great number of the general public is using it as the source of killing their pain, while another majority is using for the sake of their addiction only. The mixing of Fentanyl with black tar heroin is introduced by the street peddlers who just wanted to increase their profits, oblivious to the danger caused to the health of the general public. In the present time, Fentanyl has become the most prescribed opiate drug which is stronger than morphine. On the other hand, the prescription rate of morphine has decreased over the years which highlights the fact that physicians and other involved parties are making a deliberate effort of killing the general public by making them dependent and addictive towards strong drug, instead of helping them to relieve their pain or addiction by the use of a less strong drug. The street peddlers are worsening the situation by mixing Fentanyl into heroin in order to provide an exciting experience to the drug abusers, who often die due to the overdose of the drug. They are not aware of the fact that heroin has some other drug mixed in it which makes it far stronger and reactive, having the potential of causing their deaths (Macy, 2018).

Research conducted by Sanger-Katz highlighted that fentanyl and similar drugs have become an important part of the black market dealings. In previous times, only heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine and some benzodiazepines drugs were available and dealt in the black markets. However, recently the street peddlers have become more profit-oriented and shifted their focus towards the production and dealing of Fentanyl. One of the main reasons for this shift in business is that Fentanyl can easily be manufactured in the laboratories, which is not the case with heroin which comes from the floppy plants. Fentanyl manufactured in labs is also easy to transport due to its concentrated form, thus lessening the worries of the dealers. In addition to it, the missing of heroin and Fentanyl provides a different kind of exciting and overwhelming experience to the drugs users, leaving a strong impact on their system and making them dependent on it. Due to this exciting experience, the drug users are now getting more dependent on synthetic drugs and abusing them than their prior addiction to heroin or other prescribed opioids. The repercussions of the problem are also increasing with every passing day as the younger generations are becoming the victims of over-prescription and overdosing of the drug. Moreover, the mixing of drugs with heroin is worsening the case. The opiate crisis is leading the American future towards a generation of addicts who will not be able t function properly without their doses. Moreover, the situation will greatly impact the statistics of the population, rendering more in hospitals than in the workforce. So, it is the high time for the authorities to take the action and save the country from disaster (Hollingsworth, Ruhm, & Simon, 2017).

The hope of the recovery of America lies with the anti-narcotic drug centers or treatment centers helping opioid addiction. The primary focus of the government and the concerned authorities should be on banning the over-prescription of the opiate drugs. In some cases, it is not possible to ban the prescription altogether, so the physicians can lower the dosage of the drug. The government also needs to pass laws regarding the manufacturing and distribution of Fentanyl. The situation will help in the favor of the general public and would ensure that the physicians, pharmaceutical companies and street peddler do not make money at the expense of the life of general public (Becker, & James, 2016).

Opiate addiction is the major issue of the United States of America in the twenty-first century, which is getting out of and due to the increasing death rate with every passing day. The situation has become alarming because there are more deaths due to over-prescription and overdosing of synthetic opiates as compared to deaths due to road accidents, which is considered the leading cause of death across the globe. Seventy-two thousand Americans lost their lives due to the epidemic in 2017 only and the death rate is still increasing (Sanger-Katz, 2018). Overprescribing of opiates and aggressive marketing of the opiate drugs captured America's lives as the general public was manipulated into the use of such drugs by the physicians and pharmaceutical companies, who only thought about their profit and not the well-being of the general public. The solution of the issue is banning the prescription of synthetic drugs and the functionality of the treatment centers for helping the users get rid of their addictions.

Reference

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