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Opioid as an Economic Crisis

Opioid use and overdose deaths in the United States have increased dramatically over the last couple of decades. Major drug companies introduced over 75 billion doses of opioids into the US market between 2006 and 2012. At the same time, nearly 100,000 people died of opioid overdose in the United States, among others, according to The Washington Post. This is an epidemic because it has a business model behind it. (Deaton128)

There are various factors that contribute to the current prevalence of opioid analgesics. One important factor for pharmaceutical companies is that, in 1995, Purdue Pharma began aggressively promoting and marketing Oxycontin as a less addictive and safer analgesic. This has led many physicians to prescribe the drug, and an increasing number of people have become addicted.

The companies continued to charge pharmaceuticals and aggressive marketing despite the opioid crisis. They were competing for market shares, but at the same time they were working together (switching) to influence drug practices and authorities and politicians in the industry to promote opioid use. According to the prosecution, some of the marketing was done through intermediaries.

The companies provided funding to independent pain organizations to lobby doctors and politicians for opioids. For example, the American Pain Society has been cited as a defendant in several opioid litigation cases. The association had to go bankrupt in the summer (you switch to another service)due to legal costs. Another pain association, the American Academy of Pain Management, was forced to close down already in the winter and is reported to have received tremendous support (moving to another service) from opioid manufacturers (Deaton129)

Furthermore, Cleveland District Judge Thad Balkman, in his ruling, described Johnson & Johnson as "indulging in false and misleading marketing" of its own products and opioids in general, CNN reports. According to Balkaman, opioids have destroyed Oklaholm. The state blamed the pharmaceutical company for the deaths of more than 6,000 people and claimed over $ 17 billion in damages, but no evidence of such a large amount of damage was found (Ciccarone 184)

This was the first civil lawsuit against a pharmaceutical company in the opioid crisis. According to the ruling, Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiary Janssen will have to fund the treatment of opioid addicts and their families. There are still more than 2,000 lawsuits pending in the United States against pharmaceutical companies and distributors. Most of this is due to be processed in Ohio this fall.

Through the history of the opioid epidemic, several names are drawn, one of them is Sackler. In the 1950s, the Sacklers brothers acquired Purdue Frederic (today Purdue Pharma), a highly successful pharmaceutical company, but the jackpot for it was the release of innovative painkillers. The most popular was OxyContin, which the company aggressively advertised among doctors and patients as a powerful and mild remedy that relieves pain for 12 hours, but most importantly, is almost unable to cause withdrawal syndrome and lead to dependence.

The effects of opioid damage on the US economy are significant. EconomicOpen in new window to external site costs, such as reduced productivity and healthcare costs, totaled $ 504 billion in 2015, equivalent to 2.8% of GDP in 2015, according to a report from the U.S. President's Economic Advisory Committee (CEA) . . This is more than 6 times higher than the previous survey calculated for 2013. It is likely that the opioid dependence is also high on Medicaid, a public health insurance program for low-income earners (Ciccarone183).

The impact on production activities is also significant. According to an NSC survey , as of 2017, more than 70 percent of US employees felt that opioids were disrupting their work. By industry, there are many prescriptions on site that involve physical work such as coal mining, construction, and agriculture, and damage is also concentrated. The construction industry at the time, 2017, about 15 percent of the workers in agriculture both are in the dependent state, it has been found that even there are dependent person in the family to the 21% with respect to agriculture). There are many episodes in a mine, such as all employees being fired without passing drug tests. (Dasgupta, Nabarun, Leo Beletsky, and Ciccarone186)

Later, in 2019, a study by a group of scientists from Boston University confirmed the obvious fact - the more pharmaceutical companies spend money on advertising opioids among doctors, the more doctors prescribe them. Moreover, mortality from overdose also correlates with marketing spending. (Brown , Raeford., and Paul 1432)

The USA consumes more than 80% of worldwide opioid manufacture, though less than 5% of the world's inhabitants lives in this country. Over the past 20 years, one federal agency after another has surrendered in front of allegations by drug manufacturers about an insurmountable pain epidemic in the United States. Officials did not seem to be asking why no other country seems to be suffering from such an epidemic or opioid rescue their patients at every opportunity. Thanks to the unprecedented lobby of pharmaceutical companies, Congress changed the rules for prescribing painkillers, and doctors were given the opportunity to prescribe as many tablets as they wanted. Moreover, doctors sometimes faced ethical advice because they did not prescribe enough painkillers.

Opioids can be addictive even when taken as prescribed, and the risk increases with prolonged use. According to the CDC, about a quarter of patients prescribed for more than two months have become addicted. The social, economic, and political context also exists behind the spread of the opioid problem in recent years. And at the same time, this problem affects the future of American society, economy, politics, and so on.

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