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Prescription Drug Abuse

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Image from Microsoft PowerPoint 2016

Prescription Drug Abuse

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Image from Microsoft PowerPoint 2016



Overview of Prescription Drug Abuse

What is Prescription Drug Abuse?

- The use of a prescription medication in a way that is not intended by the prescribing doctor (Prescription Drugs)
 - Taking medication that belongs to someone else
 - Taking a medication in a way other than prescribed
 - Taking a medication to get high
 - View QR code below to watch video on prescription drug abuse

Prescription Drug Abuse vs Drug Misuse

- Abuse: Knowingly using the drug in a way that it is not intended
 - Typically do not have a prescription
 - Use it to experience the feelings associated with the drug
- Misuse: Using a drug for purposes other than what it was prescribed for
 - Taking a dose at the wrong time
 - Stopping a medication too soon



Overview of Prescription Drug Abuse

Why is it Important?

It is very dangerous to take medication in a way that it was/is not intended

- “Approximately 41 people in the United States die every day of an overdose involving prescription painkillers” (Winstanley et al., 2012, p. 533).
- According to the CDC, prescription drug abuse has reached epidemic proportions**
 - The number of deaths from overdose have risen for all ages, both men and women, and whites and blacks (Meinert, 2016).
 - “In 2009, an estimated 7 million people nationally used prescription drugs for non-medical purposes and 55% of persons who used relievers nonmedically received the drugs from friends or relatives” (Winstanley et al., 2012, p. 533).

Overview of Prescription Drug Abuse

How does it Impact Health?

“Drug abuse may affect a person’s relationships, employment status, educational opportunities, status in society and general health and wellness” (Felicilda-Reynaldo, 2014, pg.391).

- Health problems: adverse reactions
 - Can cause memory problems, changes in mood, and coma or death
- Addictions: become physically dependent on the drug and develop an uncontrollable craving for it
 - Must increase the amount of the drug taken to get the same effect
- Accidents: poor judgements, impaired thinking
 - Prescription drugs have side effects that may interfere with driving
- Poor academic performance
- Legal trouble: abusing medication is illegal
 - Also more likely to commit a crime if someone is abusing drugs

The Impact of Prescription Drug Abuse

How Prevalent is Prescription Drug Abuse?

- The prevalence of prescription drug abuse is increasing, especially in nonmedical use of medications, making it an epidemic in the United States.
 - In the past 30 days, 27 million people 12 and older have used a prescription medication
 - 4.3 million of these people “reported current nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers” (Hedden, 2015, pg. 1)

Costs of Prescription Drug Abuse

- Personal**
 - Health: People who abuse prescription medications often have many side effects from the drugs
 - Severe damage to the bowels, liver and kidneys can be expected from long-term use of prescription drug abuse
 - Liver and kidneys are often overworked
 - Overdosing on the medication can also be lethal
 - Financial: People who abuse prescription medications can get the prescriptions legally or illegally
 - Legally the prescriptions of OxyContin cost a patient \$1.25 for a 10mg tablet; Illegally a 10 mg tablet can cost up to \$10
 - Legally an 80 mg tablet of OxyContin costs \$6.00 but illegally costs between \$65 and \$80
 - Spiritual:
 - Believers who abuse medication are harming the temple that is their body and are not practicing responsible stewardship
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19
 - Christians have the hope of Christ that gives us a reason to end sins like drug abuse but unbelievers do not have this hope and therefore no reason to stop abusing drugs
 - Hebrew 6:9
- Community**
 - Health: Resources that could be used to help other individuals are being consumed by those abusing medication
 - When people come to their pharmacy after surgery, there is sometimes a shortage of a medication so the patient either goes without the pain reliever or goes elsewhere
 - Financial: Insurance companies ensure people who abuse and those who do not abuse
 - Insurance companies lose up to 72.5 billion dollars annually from non-medical use of opioid painkillers and insurance fraud
 - Spiritual: Spiritually sick members lead to a crippled local church that cannot optimally minister to the community
 - If members of the church are abusing medications with no desire to change they cannot impact their community for Christ
 - 1 Corinthians 12:26
 - View QR code to the right to see more risks to total health



Health Indicators and Determinants

Health indicators are characteristics of a community that determine the health of the community

- Factors that are directly impacted:
 - Life expectancy: people who abuse prescription drugs are more likely to die at a younger age
 - Unemployment rate: abusers are less likely to hold down a steady job
- Factors that are indirectly impacted:
 - Injury rates: abusers cause more accidents on the road
 - Access to care: resources become limited so quality of care goes down
 - Family stability: abusers are more likely to be in separated households

Health determinants are factors that influence health status

- Social factors:
 - Children exposed to drug use are more likely to use drugs themselves
- Individual behaviors:
 - Stress and anxiety may be triggers for harmful coping mechanisms like drug use
- Biology and Genetics:
 - An individual may have a condition that necessitates the use of opioids but they become dependent and begin to abuse them

How does this impact Pharmacy?

Affects policies and regulations

- In a retail pharmacy, commonly abused drugs have to be counted several times while drugs not commonly abused only need to be counted once

Prescription drugs have a bad reputation

- Medication is used to help a person achieve a healthy lifestyle without being harmful
 - When people abuse an item intended for good, the stigma surrounding that item becomes undesirable and negative

Prescribers have to be more aware of the medications and who is routinely receiving them

- Prescribers need to know the commonly abused drugs
 - Examples are Norco, Adderall, OxyContin
- Prescribers also have to be mindful of patients who are often prescribed these medications
 - These patients often require more counseling to stop an abuse trend

Constant research is being done to create medications that are not as addictive but have the same effects

- The lethal dose of an additive can be very close to the amount of additive in a prescription
 - Research is being done to spread the gap or find other remedies
- Substitutes are also being created to provide alternative medication for highly addictive drugs

Recommendations

Take medication responsibly

- When prescriptions are taken responsibly they treat symptoms, cure illnesses and save lives
 - Side effects are still possible but the major risks that come with abusing the drug are eliminated

Use web-based surveillance to monitor drug use trends

- The problem: out of date information is getting to practitioners so they prescribe medication that is continuing a pattern of abuse
 - The goal would be to give practitioners up-to-date information so they can better help their patients

Promote the use of medications with a lower abuse rate

- Many medications have “non-abusable substitutes” that have the same effects
 - Many doctors are not aware of these substitutes or that the drugs they are prescribing are being abused
 - Adderall is a commonly abused drug– atomoxetine is its substitute

Inform the public of common abuse signs and provide ways to report them

- Common signs include inappropriate behavior, nausea and vomiting, drowsiness, impaired judgment, and restlessness (see QR code below)
 - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) “is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders” (SAMHSA, 2016).



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