Addiction and Opioid Epidemic: Current Concepts and the Role of the Dentists

Dr. Omar Abubaker

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VCU Schools of Dentistry and Medicine
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Objectives:
• Have a fair understanding of the scope of the opioid epidemic and the role of the dentist in this issue
• Be cognizant of the alternative strategies for pain management in the dental practice
• Be aware of the prevalence of addiction among dental professionals
Conceptual Objectives: Conclusions

• Disrupt your perception of the face of addiction
• To re examine your “long held-believes” about addiction
• Question your habits and patterns of acute pain management
Outlines

• Face of Addiction
• Facts and Myths about Addiction
• Highlights of the New Virginia Prescribing laws
• Pain Management in Dentistry
Face of addiction

- The different Perspectives on Opioid Epidemic
- Impact on lives
- Warning!!
Disclaimer

• No financial Interest to declare
• I am not an expert on the subject matter but
• The subject matter is **PERSONAL!** to me....
The John Henry Watkins Foundation, Inc.
Supporting young adult recovery

The JHW Foundation is a non-profit foundation aimed at raising awareness about substance abuse and addiction in young people and supporting young adults in recovery.

The Foundation, named in honor of our son, John Henry Watkins, III, goal is to raise awareness and educate communities about the disease of addiction in young people and to support programs that promote opportunities for lasting recovery in young adults between the ages of 14 - 25.

We provide financial and technical assistance to collegiate recovery programs in Virginia, financial support to programs and organizations that provide quality care for substance abuse and addiction and support to individuals to assist with gaps in insurance coverage for treatment and sober living housing.
The Perspectives on Opioid Epidemic

Depending on Where You Stand, the Perspective is Vastly Different:
THE PERSPECTIVES OF OPIOID EPIDEMIC

From A Distance

From a Up-close and Personal
The Perspective Of Opioid Epidemic From A Distance
Drug Deaths in America Are Rising Faster Than Ever

By JOSH KATZ  JUNE 5, 2017

New data compiled from hundreds of health agencies reveals the extent of the drug overdose epidemic last year.

UPDATE The first governmental account of nationwide drug deaths shows roughly 64,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2016.

AKRON, Ohio — Drug overdose deaths in 2016 most likely exceeded 59,000, the largest annual jump ever recorded in the United States, according to preliminary data compiled by The New York Times.

The death count is the latest consequence of an escalating public health crisis: opioid addiction, now made more deadly by an influx of illicitly manufactured fentanyl and similar drugs. Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death among Americans under 50.

Although the data is preliminary, the Times’s best estimate is that deaths rose 19 percent over the 52,404 recorded in 2015. And all evidence suggests the problem has continued to worsen in 2017.
The Perspectives in Numbers

• Deaths of the Vietnam War 58,220
• U.S. soldiers died in Iraq: 4,486
• U.S. soldiers died in Afghanistan: 2,345
• People killed during the September 11 attacks: 2,996 (including 19 terrorists)
Drug deaths rising in all 50 states

Drug and opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 people (age-adjusted), 1999–2014

Rate

Sales ($ per 10,000)

1.9–7.5
7.5–11.5
11.5–15.5
15.5–21.5
21.5–36.3
Unavailable
Family Loses Third Son To The Heroin Epidemic

If this story is not proof that our country is in the midst of an epidemic, what more will it take?

11/06/2016 06:51 pm ET | Updated Nov 07, 2016
The Perspective From Up-and -Close
HEROIN
Killer of a generation
Parents/ Family Perspectives In “Words”

“When your kids' dying from brain cancer or leukemia, the whole community shows up, and they bring casseroles, they pray for you and they send you cards. When your kid's on heroin, you don't hear from anybody, until they die. Then everybody comes and they don't know what to say"
My Perspective: Reflective
Clinical Practice

Our Ethical Obligation

Dental Education

Our Educational Responsibility

Societal (Families)

Our Societal Role
The Impact of My Personal Experience

Profound, reactive, and complex but change is possible
PTSD - Grief

FIGHT or Flight

Stand your ground, defend your position, attack, dig in, persevere!

Give way, retreat, discard, remove yourself, give up, move on.
MY CHOICE:

FOR MY:
- MY PROFESSION
- MY COMMUNITY
- MY COUNTRY

Stand your ground, defend your position, attack, dig in, persevere!
The International Programme in Addiction Studies (IPAS) is a unique collaboration of three of the world's leading research universities in the field of Addiction Science: King's College London, the University of Adelaide, and Virginia Commonwealth University. This partnership offers three nested graduate program options available to students from around the globe via distance learning technologies. Students are introduced to the latest information on topics ranging from the biological basis of addiction to addiction treatment, prevention and policy through lectures produced exclusively for IPAS by an international Who's Who of experts in the field.

August 2015-May 2016
In recognition of the successful completion of the required course of study, the presidents of the below-named universities, by virtue of the authority vested by said universities, hereby confer upon

Abubaker Omar Abubaker

the degree of

Post-Baccalaureate Graduate Certificate in Addiction Studies

With all the rights, honors, distinctions and privileges thereto appertaining.

In testimony whereof we have caused the signatures of the duly authorized university officials to be hereunto affixed on this 24th day of December, in the year 2016.

[Signatures]

[Names and Titles]

[Institution Logos]

King's College London

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
Principles of Ethics

Patient Autonomy

Veracity

Dental Ethics

Non-maleficence

Justice

Beneficence

“Primum non nocere”
First, do no harm!
- Hippocrates

DO NO HARM
Each year in America, ~10,000 oral and maxillofacial surgeons perform ~10 million third molar extractions at an estimated cost of $3 billion.

https://www.vox.com/2015/1/13/7539983/wisdom-teeth-necessary
100 Million Prescription Opioids go Unused Each Year Following Third-molar Extraction

What do you think when you hear 100 million pills each year...?
Dentists and Oral Surgeons Prescribe 12% of All Opioids in the US

~1.5 Billion Doses Annually Prescribed by Dentists and Oral Surgeons

85% of oral surgeons almost always prescribe an opioid

30% of patients worried about becoming addicted

Ask your oral surgeon to stop prescribing oxycodone for teen wisdom teeth removal

And parents please stop asking for it.

Seven percent of patients prescribed narcotic or opioid analgesics will become addicted.* Some statistics put it as high as 10%. Still others will abuse it or sell it. Do you want that to be your kid?

If you’ve never had an opiate, percocet, oxycodone or vicodin, you shouldn’t risk it either.

One pill can trigger an addiction

Opiate Addiction is up

3,203 %
from 2002-2014

Ask oral surgeons to stop prescribing oxycodone & other opiates for wisdom teeth removal
~90% of adults would opt for a non-opioid medication to avoid adverse effects, risk of addiction, or exposure to opioids.

~80% of adults would opt for non-opioid pain management, even at an additional cost.

My daughter went to ________ to have her teeth removed. I received all of the prescriptions at the appointment prior to the surgery. One of the prescriptions was for 40 prescription pain killers. When I took my daughter for the surgery I questioned the nurse about the amount of pain killers prescribed. I told her that I thought it was surprising because of the national health crisis of heroin addiction and overdose. I pointed out that the majority of heroin addicts, start with prescription pain killers. The nurse was very nasty and said that they believe in keeping their patients comfortable and that I was not obligated to fill the prescription.

The reaction of the nurse has bothered me since that day. I wish in hind sight that I had talked to ________ directly but surely I must know how many pain pills ______ prescribes for wisdom teeth removal surgery. It is my hope in writing to you that you could talk with ______ and educate ______ on the very real dangers of overprescribing prescription pain pills.
Where do Go From Here?

Fulfil Our Educational, professional and Societal Responsibilities: Act Boldly
Why?

"This is the first epidemic that really began not with drug dealers on the street and mafias or drug gangs, but with doctors. That's why it's nationwide."
"The prescription overdose epidemic is doctor-driven. It can be reversed in part by doctor's actions. **Prescription opioid overdose deaths can be prevented by improving prescribing practices.** We can protect people from becoming addicted to opioids and clinicians are key to helping to reverse the epidemic."

---

**Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH**  
Director of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Interim Report of the White House Opioid Commission: A Warning

• “With approximately 142 Americans dying every day, every three weeks America is enduring a death toll equal to September 11th.”

• “Every American should be awaken to this simple fact: if this scourge has not found you or your family yet, without bold action by everyone, it soon will.”
A Plea: As a Parent, Educator, Clinician and a Citizen

• After September 11th, our President and our nation banded together to use every tool at our disposal to prevent any further American deaths.
• We must act boldly to stop this epidemic: We need to take bold steps
• We have societal responsibility so NO MORE PARENTS/Families would endure the tragedy:
• Do not stand by. I did.....
White House Opioid Commission Recommendations

• Mandate prescriber education initiatives with the assistance of medical and dental schools across the country to enhance prevention efforts.
Our Efforts at VCU School of Dentistry: Didactic

- Lectures and case discussion in oral surgery courses:
  - Management of medically compromised patient
  - In Postoperative pain management
  - OMFS Resident conferences
  - Guest lectures: VCU School of Nursing

- Part of Clinical and Behavioral Science Integration

- Continuing Education
  - VA local dental societies
  - Online for Physicians and and other health are providers
  - Online for dentists?
Our Efforts at VCU Clinics: Clinical

- Gradual decrease of number of opioid prescriptions
- Decrease the number of opioid per prescription
- Use of alternate pharmacotherapy
- Patient education as part of postoperative pain management
- Discussions around prescription writing
# One Year Change in Prescribing patterns

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Results: Analgesic Prescriptions at VCU OMFS Clinic and Practice

2015

- Hydrocodone: 74%
- Other Opioids: 5%
- NSAID: 21%

2016

- Hydrocodone: 62%
- Other Opioids: 34%
- NSAID: 4%
A Hope:
The Science and Environment Are Fertile

- Evidence-based changes to current opioid-based pain management
- Educational convergence of dentistry, medicine and pharmacy for a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of the epidemic: addiction, and mental illness