Health Beat

July 2018

Health news and facts compiled by the Meriden Public Library

Government Begins Study of Addiction

In April, the National Institutes of Health launched the HEAL (Helping to End Addiction Long-term) Initiative, a multiagency effort to speed scientific solutions to the national opioid public health crisis.

It will build on government research, including the pathways involved in pain and addiction, science to develop and test treatment and research to combine behavioral and medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder.

Successes from this research include a nasal spray for reversing opioid overdose, buprenorphine for treatment of opioid use disorder, and evidence for using nondrug techniques such as yoga, tai chi, acupuncture and meditation to help patients control and manage pain.

In the past year, the Institutes have worked with experts from public and private organizations to identify areas that would most benefit from working alone or in partnership with outside groups.

Abuse of Prescription Drugs Can Lead Down Deadly Path

If you take a medicine in a way that is different from what the doctor prescribed, it is called prescription drug abuse. It could be:

- Taking a medicine that was prescribed for someone else
- Taking a larger dose than you are supposed to
- Taking medicine in a different way than you are supposed to, such as crushing tablets and then snorting or injecting them
- Using the medicine for another purpose, such as getting high

Abusing some prescription drugs can lead to addiction. Signs and symptoms of prescription drug abuse depend on the specific drug.

Because of their mind-altering properties, the most commonly abused prescription drugs are:

- **Opioids**, such as oxycodeone (Oxycontin, Roxicodone) and those containing hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Norco), used to treat pain
- **Anti-anxiety medications and sedatives**, such as alprazolam (Xanax) and diazepam (Valium), and **hypnotics**, such as zolpidem (Ambien), used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders
- **Stimulants**, such as methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta, others), dextroamphetamine and amphetamines (Adderall XR) and dextro-amphetamine (Dexedrine), used to treat attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and certain sleep disorder

Every medicine has some risk of side effects. Doctors take this into account when prescribing medicines.

People who abuse these drugs may not understand the risks. The medicines may not be safe for them, especially at higher doses or when taken with other medicines.

NIH: National Institute on Drug Abuse
Addiction Study continued

(Continued from page 1)

The HEAL Initiative will bolster research to:

**Improve treatments for opioid misuse and addiction** -- More than 2 million Americans have opioid use disorder. Millions more misuse opioids, taking medications longer or in higher doses than prescribed. The Institutes will support research for prevention and treatment of opioid misuse and addiction.

**Enhance Pain Management** -- More than 25 million Americans suffer from chronic pain. The Institutes will support research to understand how this develops, making patients susceptible to opioid abuse. It will work with the drug industry to share data, create biomarkers for pain, and develop clinical trials for testing new pain therapies.

---

**New Books at the Meriden Public Library**

These health-related books can be found in the “New Books” area:

- **Addiction Solution: Treating Our Dependence on Opioids and Other Drugs**
  by Lloyd I. Sederer, 362.29 SE

  by Ellen Støkken Dahl and Nina Brochmann, 612.628 DA

- **Goodbye, Sweet Girl: A Story of Domestic Violence and Survival**
  by Kelly Sundberg, BIO Sundberg K

- **How To Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence**
  by Michael Pollan, 615.7883 PO

- **Hype: A Doctor's Guide To Medical Myths, Exaggerated Claims and Bad Advice -- How To Tell What's Real and What's Not**
  by Nina Shapiro, 610 SH

- **Accidental Brothers: The Story of Twins Exchanged at Birth and the Power of Nature and Nurture**
  by Nancy L. Segal and Yesika S. Montoya, 306.875 SE

---

*National Institutes of Health*