Poor Management of Surgery Pain Contributed to the Opioid Crisis

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Poor management of post-surgery pain is one of the causes of the opioid crisis in the US. Recent studies revealed that this is among the major causes of the epidemic. The three papers making up the Lancet series described inappropriate post-surgery pain management as a key factor that caused or worsened the problem.

There is no doubt that there has been an increasing reliance on opioid medications over the past decade. These painkillers have been used to treat acute and chronic pain. And while opioids do help in those aspects, they are also associated with misuse, abuse, and overdose-related deaths.

The Lancet series comes from the researcher in the United States, Australia, and Scotland. They document the role that excessive prescriptions played in the opioid epidemic. In the USA, up to 75 percent of minor surgery patients have prescribed opioids at hospital discharge with no plan to monitor its usage. There are also no plans to wean patients off of painkillers, which might lead to addiction if left uncontrolled.

The study shows that the risk of misuse increases by 44 percent for every week and for a repeat prescription after discharge. Click the link to see Forth Worth's top rehab placement programs.

Professor Paul Glare of the University of Sydney, co-author of the first paper and Director of the Pain Management Research Institute said the series compiles global evidence showing that surgery has something to do with the crisis.

?In the time since the Lancet last covered the topic of chronic pain after surgery, the world has seen the emergence of the opioid epidemic. Our article highlights some of the new options for pain management after surgery as we redefine the role of opioids for chronic pain,? said Glare.

Looking at the worldwide statistics, use of prescription opioids more than doubled between 2001 and 2013, from 3 billion to 7.3 billion daily doses per year. Doctors in many countries give medication in excess of what is necessary for managing pain. This increases the risk of misuse or diversion.

This is made more concerning by the fact that the problem grows as the population ages and more surgeries are done. Chronic post-surgical pain can occur after any type of surgery. However, it is particularly common after lung, hernia, and breast surgery.

Each year, 320 million people have surgery all around the world. Chronic pain occurs in 10 percent of cases. It usually begins as acute postoperative pain that is difficult to control. And then it develops into something more persistent.

Because of this, reliance on strong opioids increased, with higher dosages being prescribed by physicians. As the epidemic has shown, this can lead to tolerance and physical dependence.

?Providing opioids for surgical patients presents a particularly challenging problem requiring clinicians to balance managing acute pain, and minimizing the risks of persistent opioid use after surgery,? said series lead Professor Paul Myles, Head of Monash University?s Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine.

?Over the past decade there has been an increasing reliance on strong opioids to treat acute and chronic pain, which has been associated with a rising epidemic of prescription opioid misuse, abuse, and overdose-related deaths,? he added.

The good news is that many physicians have begun to limit their opioid prescriptions, now aware of its extreme consequences. But to finally solve the opioid issue, more changes are needed: drug monitoring policies, accessible rehab facilities, specialized clinics, improved medical training, etc.

But now that some of the major causes have been identified, it is possible to start homing in on the right

solutions.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

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