



Opioid Crisis Causes Rise in Infective Endocarditis Rates

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Incidences of infective endocarditis are increasing in all regions of the US?and it has something to do with the opioid epidemic that is affecting the country. According to a study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, young, lower-income, white men are the most affected by this increase in IE cases.

Infective endocarditis infects the heart valves or endocardium. The endocardium is the lining of the interior surfaces of the chambers of the heart. It is usually caused by bacteria entering the bloodstream and infecting the heart, although on rare occasions it can also be caused by fungi or other microorganisms. In other cases, it is related to drug abuse.

Left untreated, it can damage the heart valves and lead to stroke, heart failure, or death. Symptoms vary from person to person, but it may include fever, chest pain, weakness, blood in urine, sweating, chills, sore throat, cough, fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, rashes, nausea, vomiting, and weight loss.

Because these symptoms resemble that of other illnesses, it can be hard to detect infective endocarditis. Those who are experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned above, should contact their doctor today. Click

the link to see Napa's top rehab placement programs.

According to the new study, the overall prevalence of drug abuse-related infective endocarditis (DA-IE) almost doubled between 2002 and 2016. In 2002, there were 48 people affected by drug abuse-related IE per 10,000 people. In 2016, there were 79 affected individuals per 10,000 people.

Compared with non-drug abusers who had infective endocarditis, patients with drug-abuse related IE were younger, more likely to be men, more likely to be on Medicaid, and more likely to be in the lowest quartile range of median household income. Additionally, the group was also more likely to present with hepatitis, liver disease, alcohol abuse, and other comorbidities, according to the researchers.

Geographically, we found that drug abuse infective endocarditis is increasing across all regions of the U.S., with the Midwest having the highest annual percentage increase, Serge C. Harb, MD, assistant professor of medicine at Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine, and colleagues wrote. We believe these findings are alarming from a public health standpoint and outline the need for an immediate tailored action plan.

In other findings, patients with DA-IE underwent either valve or cardiac surgery more often in addition to having a higher median length of stay and higher hospitalization costs. The study also found that the DA-IE group had lower inpatient mortality.

The care for patients with DA-IE is very complex and we agree with the American Association of Thoracic Surgery guidelines that it involves a specialized endocarditis team, including cardiology, cardiac surgery, infectious disease, neurologist, nephrologist, addiction specialists, case management and nursing, said the researchers. Unfortunately, treatment for opioid addiction after hospitalization is low. The two most common reasons for this are that patients were not ready to stop using illicit drugs or they did not have health care coverage to afford appropriate treatment. The care of patients with DA-IE after discharge should include follow-up with drug rehabilitation.

Further research is needed on a geographic level to identify clusters or hot zones of DA-IE outbreaks such as in rural areas where opioids are more likely to be abused. Lastly, we show the need for resource allocations and public health interventions to target the young, poor, Caucasian population, most at risk at a national level.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid or alcohol 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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