Community Rehab Examines Pupils on Opioids

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Knoxville, TN ? ReVIDA® Recovery is a rehab center in the community that recently published an article examining how the eye?s pupils react on opioids. With locations throughout Tennessee and Virginia, they offer flexible care for local communities.

?The pupils are responsible for letting light into the eye to be focused by the lens. The muscles within the iris ? the colored part of the eye ? are responsible for changing its shape. Typically in darkness, the pupil is larger to allow as much light as possible to filter through. They get smaller in brighter areas to protect the eye from damage. This is why when you are in a dark room and a light suddenly turns on, you shield your eyes as the pupil transitions for the change.

Opioids cause miosis, a condition in which the pupillary sphincter muscle is activated. This causes the pupils to constrict and not respond to light properly. Opioids also have a large impact on the central nervous system, which contains the peripheral nervous system. The peripheral nervous system has two divisions, one is voluntary and the other is involuntary. Within the involuntary system, the parasympathetic nervous system can slow down different body functions. Opioids activate the parasympathetic nervous system and cause the iris muscle to contract, constricting the pupil,? the article reads.

Opioids affect the whole body with the pupillary response being just the beginning. As the central nervous system slows from opioid use, it can stop all at once. Oxygen does not enter the body when breathing stops. The result is hypoxia where tissues and organs are not getting oxygen. Another side effect of opioids is hypercarbia. This is a build-up of carbon dioxide within the bloodstream. Lack of oxygen combined with excess carbon dioxide increases the risk of experiencing a fatal overdose.

Other effects on the eyes from opioids are from infections. Endogenous endophthalmitis is a serious eye infection that threatens vision. The infection is caused by fungi or bacteria entering the bloodstream and spreading to the eyes. This is common with unsterile needle use. Endogenous endophthalmitis causes pain, swelling, and vision problems. It is treated with antibiotic and antifungal medications injected directly into the eyes along with steroids for swelling. If left untreated, the infection can cause abscesses within the eyes. Even with treatment, the damage from abscesses can still cause partial or full blindness.

?As we discussed above, opioid use through intravenous methods is particularly harmful to the eyes. Certain parts of the eye can mend or be replaced, such as the lens from conditions like cataracts. However, the retina is the most important part of the eye and is responsible for sending images to the brain for processing. Once the retina becomes scarred or damaged from infections, there is no way to replace it. Retinal conditions result in blindness and can take place in one or both eyes,? the article continues.

Sometimes during opioid withdrawal, a condition known as esotropia can occur. Characterized by a misalignment of the eyes where one will turn inward toward the nose, the nerves within the eye are not functioning properly which triggers the condition. It is typically not permanent and stems from the eyes adjusting to a lack of opioids. Medical professionals may mistake the condition for a neurological disorder, which is why it is important to be upfront about substance use.

ReVIDA® Recovery has been providing quality medication-assisted treatment and outpatient therapy to those in need for years. Their program utilizes Suboxone because they have seen how life-changing it has been for those living with an opioid use disorder. The team at ReVIDA® Recovery helps beyond just therapy and works with patients to find jobs and housing. They are always there for continued support.

To learn more about ReVIDA® Recovery, call 423-631-0432 or visit their website.

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ReVIDA® Recovery Knoxville

ReVIDA® Recovery promotes safe and healthy communities by empowering individuals to reclaim their lives from opioid use disorder.

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