PAIN MEDICINE AND ANXIETY MEDICINES BROCHURE

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FACTS AND MYTHS ABOUT LONG-TERM USE

Opioids, also known as narcotic analgesics, and other controlled substances have been extensively used in the United States. Although some consider the usage to be extreme proportions, those who use the medications believe they are safe and medically necessary.

Opioids are a type of analgesics which is medication used to control pain sensations. Prescription opioids include morphine, oxycodone, codeine, fentanyl, hydromorphone, methadone, oxymorphone, and tramadol.

Some of the other controlled substances are Valium, Xanax, Alprazolam, Soma, and Ambien.

As of now, there’s no evidence in chronic pain patients that these medications improve daily functions, nor do they help send patients return to work. Furthermore, their safety has been questioned. The emergency room visits, overdoses, and deaths related to controlled substances have been higher than motor vehicle injuries. Methadone is specifically considered as an extreme basic substance. Even though the amount of medication prescriptions given is extremely small, methadone is responsible for one third of the deaths related to opioids.

There are similar facilities with anxiety medicines including Valium, Xanax, Alprazolam, and Soma.

Uses of opioids mistakenly believe that they are effective and safe medications based on the fact that they are prescription drugs, and that they are taking them to control pain. The concept has also been promoted by the drug industries, and has been adaptable by the Board of Medical Licenses and many physicians in general. As a result, the concept has also led to adaptation by the general public.

The following graph shows that 10% of the deaths related to opioids due to the drugs even when they are prescribed legitimately.

CAN YOU BECOME DEPENDENT?

Opioids, benzodiazepines, and Soma are extremely addictive drugs, possibly worse than marijuana and cocaine. Now, more people are at risk for abuse with pain and anxiety medicines than marijuana and cocaine. Once you begin taking them, you lose control of your normal thought processes. These types of medications also have many, many side effects.

Remember, all these effects may be made worse if you combine opioids with other drugs, including alcohol. These risks are described differently by professionals and patients.

- Tolerance
- Physical dependence
- Psychological dependence
- Addiction
- Opioid induced hyperalgesia

WHO IS AT INCREASED RISK?

Overdose deaths, complications, and sometimes addiction are much higher in certain groups of patients. Three patients include those with:

- Sleep apnea syndrome
- Neurological compromise
- Musculoskeletal compromise

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF OPIOIDS?

Mainly people focus on acute or immediate side effects, however, there are many long-term, debilitating effects. Overall the main side effect derive from weakened immune system and hormonal suppression in both men and women leading to:

- Sexual dysfunction
- Reduced libido or sexual desire
- Sexual and erectile dysfunction
- Infertility
- Reduced hormonal interest
- Reduced spontaneous desire
- Reduced desire to have sex
- Reduced body hair (arms or pubic)
- Reduced body growth

Loss of Energy

- Fatigue or exhaustion
- Reduced motivation or initiation of activity
- Reduced confidence
- Increased tiredness
- Increased weight gain

Immunosuppression

- Weakened immune system
- Heart and valve infections
- Liver disease
- Risk of pulmonary and respiratory infections

Other hormonal problems

- Thinning of the bones with osteopenia or fracture
- Reduced loss of height
- Hot flashes
- Anemia
- Dry eyes

Central nervous system problems

- Confusion
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Reduced sleep quantity and quality
- Inability to concentrate
- Inability to think appropriately
- Increased sleep or delusions
- Breathing too slowly or stopping breathing which may lead to death
- Opioid induced hyperalgesia, which is when one experiences more pain with increasing medicine use

Other issues

- Dry mouth
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Vomiting

OTHER TERMS USED AND WHAT THEY MEAN

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WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS TERMS USED AND WHAT THEY MEAN?

Some of the terms used are tolerance, physical dependence, psychological dependence, and addiction.

- TOLERANCE
  - A major concern of chronic long-term opioid use is increased tolerance of the drugs. Opioid tolerance occurs when the body becomes familiar with having a drug substance in the system over a period of time. Once tolerance develops, the body relies a higher dose of medication in order to achieve the same pain relief. Tolerance is usually a sign that the dosage or frequency of usage may be too much and the drug use is progressing to a dependency.
  - Dependency
  - Physical and psychological dependency may occur with long-term opioid use. Once the tolerance develops, dependency may occur on its own without developing tolerance initially. In any event, once a dependency occurs, the body goes through withdrawal when it stops receiving its usual dosage of opioids. While withdrawal is extremely painful and distressing, in most cases it is not fatal. In these cases, increasing the dosage or continuing opioid use can easily lead to overdose and it can also produce off the long-term side effects, which sometimes can be life-threatening.

- ADDICTION
  - Addiction is more than physical or psychological dependency. Patients may become addicted to benzodiazepines or other types of psychotropics or other drug use. Addiction is more than physical or psychological dependency. Physicians may be prone to addiction based on genetics or other factors. Patients may be prone to addiction based on genetics or other factors. Patients may be prone to addiction based on genetics or other factors.