



Prescription Painkillers: The Epidemic

More than 100 million Americans suffer from chronic pain, and opioids are increasingly used to treat that pain. Here are the consequences and some facts about what the Centers for Disease Control calls an epidemic:

Each day, **46 people die** from an overdose of prescription painkillers in the US.

Prescription painkiller overdoses have **more than quadrupled** in the past 20 years, **killing 16,917 people in 2011 alone**; in 31% of these deaths, benzodiazepine sedatives were also cited as contributing causes.

People in the U.S. consume opioid pain relievers at a greater rate **than any other nation** – twice as much per capita as the second ranking nation, Canada

Health care providers wrote **259 million prescriptions for painkillers** in 2012, enough for every American adult to have a bottle of pills.

In 2011, **1 in 22 people in the United States age 12 or older** reported using prescription painkillers for nonmedical reasons in the past year.

The number of **people seeking treatment** for prescription opioid addiction rose 269 percent, from 52,758 admissions in 2003 to 194,583 admissions in 2011, and dropped 13 percent to 169,868 admissions in 2012.

Four out of five people who **recently started using heroin** had previously used prescription pain relievers nonmedically, although the vast majority of people using prescription pain relievers nonmedically do not progress to heroin use.

In 2010, Florida was home to 98 of the 100 U. S. physicians who dispensed the highest quantities of oxycodone **directly from their offices**.

Florida saw more than a 50% decrease in oxycodone overdose deaths from 2010 to 2012 **after enacting measures to regulate pain clinics** and stop the dispensing of prescription painkillers from doctors' offices.

Florida death rates for prescription drugs overall decreased 23.2% from 2010 to 2012.

(sources on reverse)

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Vital Signs: Variation Among States in Prescribing of Opioid Pain Relievers and Benzodiazepines," July 2014, http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6326a2.htm?s_cid=mm6326a2_w

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Opioid Painkiller Prescribing - Where You Live Makes a Difference," July 2014, <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioid-prescribing/index.html>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) 2002 – 2012, National Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services, <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2K14/TEDS2012NA/TEDS2012NTbl1.1a.htm>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, State Estimates of Nonmedical Use of Prescription Pain Relievers, <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k12/NSDUH115/sr115-nonmedical-use-pain-relievers.htm>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Associations of Nonmedical Pain Reliever Use and Initiation of Heroin Use in the United States, <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k13/DataReview/DR006/nonmedical-pain-reliever-use-2013.htm>