

Understanding Substance Use Disorders, Drug Diversion, and Pain Management

CDA Oasis Resource

What is...?

Acute pain

- Comes on quickly, moderate to severe in intensity, and generally lasts a short period of time (days and up to 3 months).
- Beneficial warning sign of potential harm to the body from injury or medical conditions.

Addiction

- Primary chronic disease of brain, reward, motivation, memory, judgment, and related circuitry.
- Dysfunctional circuits lead to typical biological, psychological, social, and spiritual manifestations that frequently result in destructive and life-threatening behaviors.
- Inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems in behavior and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response.
- Often involves cycles of relapse and remission, is progressive and can result in disability or premature death.



What is...?

Chronic pain

- Intractable pain existing for 3 months or more and not resolving in response to treatment.
- May be continuous or reoccurring, persisting for months or even a lifetime.

Drug Diversion

- The intentional transfer of a substance, or possession of a substance, or alteration of legitimate medication orders from the individual for whom it was prescribed to another person for illicit use.

Drug misuse

- Taking a prescribed or OTC medication for non-prescribed purposes, in excessive doses, shorter intervals than prescribed or recommended, or for reasons other than the original intent of the prescription.



What is...?

Opiates and Opioids

- Natural substances derived from the poppy plant.
- Opioids have similar functions with opiates, but are either synthetic or partially synthetic derivatives of opiates.

Prescriber-patient mismatch

- Inconsistency in treatment goals or expectations of treatment between the prescriber and the patient.

Substance abuse

- A maladaptive pattern of chemical use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.
- substance abuse culture: individuals whose sole intent is to alter their mood, psychological sense of well-being, physical sense of well-being, or their personal connection with the world around them.



What is...?

Substance dependence

- Persistent use of alcohol, other drugs, or chemicals despite problems related to use of the substance.
- A maladaptive pattern of chemical use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.
 - *Tolerance*: need for significantly increased substance amounts and significantly diminished substance effect.
 - *Withdrawal*: substance withdrawal symptoms and substance is taken to relieve withdrawal symptoms.
 - *Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts* to control substance use.
 - *Time* is spent in seeking to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects.
 - *Substance use* is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem.



Medication Misuse

- Self-medicating with prescription drugs for other than the original intent is a significant factor in the development of substance use disorders (SUD).
- Excessive opioid prescribing by dental practitioners is another factor.
- The dentist should prescribe the most effective pharmacological agent, with minimal side or adverse effects, with the lowest dose possible for the minimal amount of time to achieve a reasonable effect such as analgesia, anxiolysis, or sedation.



Alcoholism

- Most common SUD in society today.
- Dental practitioners may have the greatest opportunity to recognize potential alcohol SUD behaviors, as they see patients regularly.
- Signs and Symptoms:
 - Alcohol odor on breath or clothes during normal day hours.
 - Slurred speech.
 - Over-sedation before office procedures start.
 - Clumsiness, imbalance while walking.
 - Unexplainable loud and argumentative behavior.
 - Reduced effects of anesthetics during procedures.
- At a minimum, dentist should recommend or refer patient to a local substance treatment center, substance abuse counselor, or primary care physician for evaluation.



Drug Diversion

- Continuum: from simple self-prescribing and using someone's leftover prescription medications, to criminal activity to acquire more medications to sell or abuse.
- It is important to understand that an individual demonstrating specific drug diversion behavior frequently may not have an SUD. Various drug diversion behaviors are commonly motivated by other factors, such as financial incentives.
- Dentists are frequently victims of fraudulent schemes and prescription forgeries.



Cultures of SUD, Drug Misuse, & Drug Diversion

The sharing culture

- Giving, lending, or borrowing of prescription medication to anyone other than for whom it was intended.
- Patient perceives the prescription medications are safe simply because they were prescribed by a healthcare professional and a pharmacist dispensed them.
- There is little recognition that sharing prescriptions is illegal.

The Income-driven Culture

- Motivated by financial gain and items or services that may be traded.
- Characteristics include individuals who may never abuse any of the drugs they sell nor have they been diagnosed with legitimate medical or dental problems.



Cultures of SUD, Drug Misuse, & Drug Diversion

The substance abuse culture

- Individuals whose sole intent is to alter their mood, psychological sense of well-being, physical sense of wellbeing, or their personal connection with the world around them.
- *Experimenters*: trying substances to evaluate whether or not they “like” or “dislike” the way a substance makes them feel.
- *Mood modifiers*: to enhance social, academic, or work performances. Prolonged abuse or misuse of substances by mood modifiers frequently leads to the disease of addiction.



Cultures of SUD, Drug Misuse, & Drug Diversion

The addiction culture

- Individuals who meet the diagnostic criteria for this disorder.
- Addiction behaviors: substance seeking, compulsion to use, loss of control, craving, and continued use in spite of known negative consequences.

Combinations of cultures

- Individuals situated in more than one culture.
- The complexity of these cultures makes identification, prevention, treatment, and prosecution difficult.



Questions/Feedback?

CDA OASIS

oasisdiscussions@cda-adc.ca

1-855-716-2747

