Mom's last resort: Opiate antidote saves addicts' lives

By JoNel Aleccia

A powerful antidote that can reverse the potentially deadly effects of opiate drug overdoses -- including those from prescription painkillers -- has saved more than 10,000 lives in 15 years, but it's still little-known and too hard to get, a new report shows.

Naloxone, a drug sold as Narcan, is so effective that it can revive virtually all victims of the ODs within minutes using a simple shot or, more easily, a nasal spray. It was first distributed through needle exchange programs in the mid-1990s to prevent deaths of injection heroin users.

Increasingly, though, naloxone is showing up in the medicine cabinets, kitchen cupboards and even the handbags of middle-class moms as some mainstream families find themselves grappling with escalating opiate addiction in their teens and young adults.

"I kept it right on the counter by the microwave," said Linda Wohlen, a 65-year-old school secretary who lives near Brockton, Mass. She used a naloxone kit to revive her son Steven's heroin overdose. Linda Wohlen used naloxone, an opiate antidote, to revive Steven from a heroin overdose.
Steven, now 28, from a heroin overdose nearly two years ago. “I have it in my bedroom and I always have one in my pocketbook. It’s a terrible position for a parent to be in, but you are expecting them to use,” she said.

Wohlen and her husband, John, obtained the naloxone through Learn to Cope, a Massachusetts-based group for parents of teens and young adults addicted to opiates. It’s one of 188 local sites run by 48 programs in 15 states and the District of Columbia. Since 1996, they’ve trained more than 53,000 people to save an addict’s life, said Eliza Wheeler, author of a report published last month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“We don’t believe that death should be a consequence of using drugs. Death doesn’t teach a lesson,” said Wheeler, manager of an overdose prevention project for the Harm Reduction Coalition in Oakland, Calif.

Having naloxone on hand can be an act of last resort, a final safety net for parents who’ve tried everything from threats and demands to jail and drug treatment, only to have their addicted children overdose.

“To me, it’s about parents wanting their children to survive,” Wheeler added.

About one in five U.S. high school students has misused prescription drugs, including painkillers, a 2009 government health study found, and some states, like Missouri, are reporting a renewed rise in heroin deaths among young people.

But most parents -- like most people -- have never heard of naloxone and have no idea where or how to get it, experts say.

“The light goes off when you’re talking to the parent of a kid who’s dealing with opiate addiction,” said Mark Kinzly, a trainer with the New York-based Harm Reduction Coalition and a former addict. “When they hear that there’s something out there that they could have access to, they’re all for it. It’s just like the parent of a child who’s allergic to bee stings.”

Unlike an EpiPen for allergies, however, naloxone suffers from both the stigma of its association with illicit drug use and from the lack of sustained funding for outreach to drug users, experts said.

“There’s an intangible truth that people care less about drug-addicted folks than other folks,” said Maya Doe-Simkins, a Chicago public health consultant and researcher who has focused on naloxone.

Slowly, though, distribution of naloxone is growing, along with the nation’s prescription painkiller epidemic, which has seen overdose deaths triple since 1990, according to the CDC. The number of programs distributing naloxone has climbed steadily from about 15 nationwide in 2005 to 48 in 2010, Wheeler’s data showed.

Overall, some 37,004 people died after drug overdoses in 2009, the most recent year for which figures are available, according to the CDC. About three-quarters of the deaths were attributed to prescription painkillers.
Although there are no firm figures, those drugs are starting to show up along with injection heroin in reported naloxone rescues in the San Francisco area, Wheeler said.

“Since around 2010, we have seen an increase in people reporting to us that they’ve used their naloxone to revive people who had taken opioid pills, either in combination with other drugs or alone,” said Wheeler, noting that the pills have included fentanyl, morphine and hydromorphone, among other opiates.

‘It all begins with the pills.’

Whether the overdose is caused by pills or heroin hardly matters to Wheeler -- or to the many parents who say their kids may have started out using one kind of opiate but quickly escalated to another.

“It all begins with the pills,” said Joanne Peterson of Randolph, Mass., who founded Learn to Cope in 2004, after her then-teenage son started using prescription drugs, then heroin.

“I never, ever would have imagined my son doing heroin, ever. We lived in a nice neighborhood, we have a nice home, we water ski, we camp. We are not what anyone would picture,” Peterson added.

Now 28, her son is in long-term recovery, is married and has kids of his own.

In Linda Wohlen's case, her son Steven started using prescription pills at about age 19, when he still was a “wonderful kid with a heart of gold” who liked to crack jokes and ride bikes on the half-pipe in his family’s backyard, she said.

By 26, he’d become a heroin addict whose mother watched him walk out the front door one day, and, minutes later, found him blue and unresponsive on the front lawn.

“I knew right away what it was,” said Wohlen, who quickly rushed out with her naloxone kit. “It just takes seconds, half up one nostril, half up the other.”

The kit, which sells for about $10, contained a vial of naloxone nasal spray and an adapter that allows it to be easily administered. Other kits contain injectable versions approved by the Food and Drug Administration that require more skill to deliver.
Naloxone blocks the brain receptors that respond to opiates, instantly reversing the high and sending the addict into an abrupt and often painful withdrawal. It has no effect on intoxication from alcohol or other drugs.

Naloxone typically is available only through drug programs that offer training as well as distribution. Such programs are limited and they're almost non-existent in some states with high rates of opiate overdoses. The South Boston Hope & Recovery Coalition has a national search site that can locate programs in specific ZIP codes. To search, click here.

Prescribing laws are complicated and vary from state to state, said Scott Burris, a law professor at Temple University and director of the Center for Health Law, Policy and Practice.

“If you go to a pediatrician, the doc could prescribe the drug for the child and the parents could pick it up and have it on hand,” he said. “The place where it’s difficult is: You go to the adult doctor and say ‘My kid is using.’”

Some states, such as Washington, have passed so-called “Good Samaritan” laws that absolve users of naloxone from legal penalties that might arise from employing the drug to save someone's life.

Activists like Doe-Simkins would like to see wider availability of naloxone through doctors' offices, jails, drug treatment and detox programs, as well as through more parent outreach programs.

“Those models are the next wave,” she said.

But not everyone agrees that take-home naloxone is a good idea.

Critics long have argued that the availability of the drug gives addicts an excuse to use because they don't have to fear an overdose death. Some charge that parents who keep naloxone on hand are enabling their children’s addiction.

Bertha K. Madras, a former official with the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, has supported naloxone use by trained health professionals, but has expressed concerns about use by addicts and their families or friends, if naloxone rescue is not supervised by health care workers.

A professor at Harvard Medical School, Madras cites studies that have shaped her worries that rescued addicts might not be appropriately monitored for medical complications, and that there won't be enough emphasis on getting addicts into treatment. The lives of naloxone-rescued people remain in danger of future overdoses and possibly death, she said.

"My foremost principle is to save lives," she wrote in an email to msnbc.com. "My secondary principle is to save more than a life during a crisis, but to prevent a recurrence, or save a person from
a lifetime of addiction and its adverse outcomes, from depression, or from noncompliance with pain medications."

But Wheeler said such critics may be confusing rescue with recovery. "Naloxone is not drug treatment," she said. "It's an immediately life-saving act."

The worst conversations, she said, are those with the parents of addicts who died without the antidote, a reality Linda Wohlen can imagine all too well.

Steven is in prison now, serving time for drug-fueled theft. But at least he's clean, sober -- and alive, she said.

“If people think it’s enabling, too bad, they haven't walked a mile in my shoes," Wohlen said. "I was only focused on saving my son. I can’t help him kick this problem if he’s dead."

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As a chronic pain patient, I have been off and on opiates for years as I try to grapple with my desire to be pain free, and my desire to be opiate free.

The line between "nodding" off and death is paper thin and opiate addicts play with this every day. It is a very dangerous game indeed. Akin to cuddling with a King Cobra!

We really need to stop this pointless "war on drugs" and spend the money we would get taxing these drugs and saved on the "war on drugs", to educate more people and help those who want to get into rehab facilities. It is absolutely amazing how many addicts want to get treatment and go back to being a contributing person in society, but simply cannot afford the $10,000.00 + it costs for a rehab facility. We as a society have got to stop marginalizing addicts and get them the help they need.

The human brain is just like any other organ in your body, it can get diseased. Addicts brains are diseased as they aren't functioning like everyone else's brain. This has been proven with functional MRIs. This is why some people can control themselves and others can't. They born an addict and it only takes one or two exposures to a mood altering substance to trigger their brain into hyper-drive.

Make all drugs legal. Make Naloxone available in the supermarket. It has no risks other than saving someone's life.
I pray that this woman gets the help for her child they clearly need.

Max^108
If pot was legal, none of this crap would be happening.
LEGALIZE AND TAX IT!

Alan-3446092
Access to Narcan for a life threatening event makes sense, however, this report does not identify a potential problem that may occur. Often additional doses of Narcan are required to maintain the ability to breath. The medication has an extremely short half life meaning that life threatening effects of the opiate may reoccur.
Narcan should be considered as a first aid technique to be used while getting the patient to definitive care or getting care to the patient.

sadmoronsvote2
Excellent point, Alan. It can be a life-saver but only lasts for a few minutes. Multiple doses are usually required, but the trade-off with each dose is that you get an increased risk of heart rhythm abnormalities. Tough position. If you give narcan, the very next action should be to call 911.

UnitedStates1776
you

UnitedStates1776
You want to reduce the drug usage in youth?
Then end the drug prohibition.
Just like with the alcohol prohibition, more people used alcohol under the alcohol prohibition than when there was no alcohol prohibition.

Kids are thrill seekers and will always seek out prohibited things.
When you make drugs legal you take away the thrill factor. And less kids end up with addictions.

Pedro Diez
To be clear, I am not in general agreement with Cuban politics. That aside, for your knowledge Cuba has a successful working "national prevention illegal drug use program" in place. For "thrills" kids stay away from drugs, play ball, find ways to fix old cars, build sea rafts and do not become drug addicts. Penalties in Cuba are far more severe than in the US for possession, use, distribution or trafficking with any illegal drugs. Legal drugs are used for real sick people, not for a made-up back aches or pimples in the butt.
If and when there is a trial regardless of the drug offense, the convicted offender can expect very long jail sentences, extreme harsh punishment and large fines. The same and more is done in a few other countries such as Malaysia. So your point is to legalize it? Why? Why? you and countless others are full of it. Help the helpless and punish the offenders.
Mr Diez, are you saying; once/ onetime is helpless, and that anymore than that, is offenders ?? yup, there is substance, and then substance abuse right...true, an addict or alcoholic has no thoughts of abuse & they certainly can be obtrusive, thus violating; respect of law & civilians/ family.its the abusers that make it hard for any Law to pass, because of said, right ??....yes, I'm all for saving life's, the drug s/b carried by ambulance people/ fire dept./ police dept.to get a handle of the Drug Situation..parents etc. give in too easily.....

Pedro, if you do not live in Cuba, ask yourself why. In a free country, the young adults over 18 years old do not have to answer to their parents for everything, and sometimes they make some bad choices. But if they do make bad choices, and become addicts, they can be stuck. But there is a point here: since we do live in a free country, we should apply our freedoms to the problem: get help and treatment for mental health problems when your children are still under your care.

By the way, doctors in the U.S. do not give opiates for “simple back aches.” Women cannot get pain killers for painful reproductive problems, which include back aches. If there are doctors in the U.S. that give out opiates freely, their licenses are revoked.

We need to get over the ridiculous stigmas that go with narcotic addictions, to many people in the USA today face such addictions and are scared to ask for help due to fear of being branded.

We are talking about a full 20% of the populace has had a run it with the nasty little monsters.

Further we need to accept the fact that many kids are going to experiment. When hard core opium based drugs like oxy are available everywhere and marijuana is criminalized kids will play with the harder stuff.

Nobody needs narcan to come down off of weed, time to wake up!

I think you all miss the point on legalizing or not legalizing. The article mentions heroin, but that's not what hundreds of thousands of people are addicted to. It's painkillers. They ARE legal.

If you know what drugs, legal or illegal, do to folks, I completely don't understand why you would even think about legalizing them. It is absolutely not the solution.

Please forgive this lengthy post.

My very loving and bright son had moved into his own place with a room mate at nineteen. For the first 6 months, he briefly visited home 2 or 3 times through the week and often spent 2 or 3 hours visiting on the week-end. He seemed perfectly happy and healthy. 6 mos. later, the visits suddenly stopped.

Repeated calls prompted brief occasional visits. Each time he had lost more and more weight and the recent dark circles around his eyes had grown heavier. He explained that he was working a lot of overtime. One particular time, he showed up wearing a heavy hooded parka on a hot summer day. Once inside our air-conditioned home, he wrapped his arms tightly around himself and tried to conceal his shivers. I said nothing, but knew something was seriously wrong.

Hours of Internet research convinced me that this kid from a good home (where drug use, much less drug abuse, was never a factor) was a full blown addict. With broken heart, my repeated calls prompted him to visit once again. I immediately ask him to take a ride with me. I drove to an isolated park where we would have uninterrupted privacy. I confronted my very manly and strong son with everything I had learned and pleaded for his confidence. My pleas were met with his head on my shoulder as he trembled with uncontrollable sobs. I will never forget the heat of his many tears as they rained down my chest beneath my shirt. That is the raw pain of an addict.

He moved back home. He was past 18 and had been living on his own. My insurance company could offer nothing. I depleted our savings and maxed out the credit cards to enroll him in the first treatment center I could find. I later
found out that their outpatient treatment program was fruitless to all but a handful of addicts. A relapse and lack of funds forced us to seek sponsored in-patient rehab that was out of town.

A 30 day stay, months of sobriety and return to health convinced us that all was well until the second relapse. A casual and interesting family discussion at the kitchen table was put on hold when he excused himself to visit the restroom. His normal few minutes at relieving himself turned into 10 minutes. My respect for his privacy turned into real concern after 20 minutes. I asked thru the door if he was alright. No response. I shouted thru the door for him to answer immediately if he was okay. No response. My 3rd attempt at breaking down the locked door finally worked. My son's crumpled body lie in the middle of the bathroom floor. A strange looking syringe was beside him. His skin was pale gray with a noticeable tinge of blue. My frantic search found no sign of a heartbeat or breathing.

My call to 911 was answered by a true Angel of God. She first assured me that help was only minutes away. She then ask me if I wanted my son to live or die. My cries of agony was my only reply. She demanded that I put my panic aside and follow her every instruction. A pillow or bunch of towels behind his neck. Dig in his mouth with my finger to clear his tongue from his throat. Pinch his nostrils shut, part his lips and breath a deep fresh breath into his mouth. Push on his chest at timed intervals to expel that breath and do it all over again. The 3rd attempt produced a gurgle from deep within him. The sound reminded me of tales of a death rattle in my younger years.

It proved to be the return to life just moments before the paramedics arrived. It was 2 weeks after his release that I explained his mysterious chest pains were most likely due to his over-zealous father's attempts at resuscitation.

He has been drug free for the last 8 years. He and his 2 yr. older brother work hard everyday to expand our modest family business.

Don’t you dare tell me that my harrowing experiences are preferable to spraying a drug into each of his hostrils to save his life. Don’t you dare tell me that saving his life was enabling his addiction until you’ve walked a mile in my shoes.

If you and your family have truly escaped the national epidemic of prescription drug addiction, get down on your knees and thank God. Before you do that, take a much closer look around your many loved ones. You may likely find that you are the enabler by denying the very horror that exists just beneath your proud noses.

#1.13 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 10:57 PM EDT

IWonder-932455

Being a parent, being a good parent? I raised mine and I am proud of both of them, couldn’t ask for better kids. Do I know how to raise children, not a clue? I did the best I could and the kids turned out great but was there a connection?

Parents all do their best! Sometimes their best is totally inhumane. Sometimes, kids with the worst parents turn out fine and sometimes vice versa. Lots of crazy people in the world and I may be one of them.

I am fairly certain that there is no best way. Each child is an individual. I believe that the most successful parent learns from the child and tailors the raising to him/her. My children were a boy and a girl and shared very few similarities, consequently, I molded a separate method for each of them. Did they turn out to be wonderful, in spite of me? Quite possibly.

One of their teachers, who thought they were super kids, told me that my methods would not work for any other kids! I could only ask her, "How do you know?"

#1.14 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 11:50 PM EDT

wj-777816

Pedro,

To be sure, you don’t have a clue. Pain, whether real or psychosomatic cannot be dealt with by the criminal justice system. If that worked it would have worked by now. Some time in your life you will need pain medications. Even then you will probably be so hard headed you cannot recognize reality.

The reality is; an addicted personality will always find a way to meet their needs, penalty be damned. Comparing the US to Cuba is beyond STUPID. Yet both Cuba and Malaysia still have drug problems no matter how severe the penalty. It would be far better if pain relief were readily available at an affordable price. That would put the criminals out of business. Oh, but major pharma would not hear of it because they could not charge their exorbitant prices. The doctors would not be able to charge for a office visit for every 10 pills dispensed.

. Time to wake up and smell the roses.

.
Glory342

To Commonsense101: Thank you for your story. To Pedro : Your an idiot and have no clue...there isn't enough prisons in the us and cuba to house all the ppl addicted to drugs....ppl like you are the reason we have no help for addiction...you think being addicted is a choice...Nobody chooses to be an addict...it's a choice to abuse drugs ...yes...but some ppl get addicted the first time and then it is NOT a choice anymore ...their brain is now completely rewired... Addiction Is a Disease....until we start spending money on helping addicts ..with in house re-hab and meds for withdraw..it's only going to get worse!!!

Pedro Diez

Glory342- You need to be able to write your thoughts and ideas without using derogatory terms. As a counter point, it all starts at home with proper teaching, guidance, support and then continues with a well balance society. Punishment is something to be enforced upon the criminals, pushers, distributors. Drugs been around for a long time. Legalizing is not an answer, never was and never will. And yes, I agree on help the helpless, more needs to be done.

wj-777816: Not only do I have a clue, I have lots of experience helping others fight addiction. Prescription drugs is a national epidemic. There is a place and need for legal drugs. The reality, these legals drugs are everywhere and out of control. I agree, drugs, legal or not will find their way to addicts. Regardless, why do we need so many drug stores? I can buy soap, toothpaste at any 7/11. The US is ranked #1 in drug use and abuse. So which roses should I smell? The ones at the funeral home or the ones in my garden.

IWonder-9324455- I am very glad for you and congratulate you on your achievements. I wish I could say the same about me.

Commonsense101- I have cried many times, day and night.

hotelemployee- Agree

I still say help the helpless, we have lost generations to drugs, jails and prisons...the truth is that society has failed. The drug war should zero-in on the criminals. I lived what happen to us during and after Nam. I was there and then here. As a nation we have continued to declined. Get real, legal drugs like Oxy, Ridilin, Adderal are everywhere, buy a safe--- lock them up!. Cheap powerful heroine is flowing in the streets faster than water. The question of addiction being a disease, moral decay, stupidity, or mental issues all need to be out in the open, I call it education! And again, harsh rules to control pushers, distributors, Internet legal suppliers, and so on like those used in others countries like Cuba should be studied and implemented here to fit society. There is no glory living in a drug nation losing its youth to addiction. Look for ways to turn the tide for the better not legalization.

Having no clue is not an excuse.

Commonsense101

Pedro Diez, my story was not a cry for sympathy, but a cry for understanding. This horrible epidemic is not fueled by poor parenting or bad kids. This epidemic is fueled by powerful big pharma that knowingly sells and distributes 1,000 times the amount of highly addictive narcotics to a community of limited chronic pain patients, This epidemic is fueled by greedy politicians in the pockets of powerful big pharma. This epidemic is further fueled by nasty politicians that champion private prison contractors.

The more addicts(and prosecution of addicts), the better to profit all of these profitable lost causes to humanity. I believe and understand your many cries through-out the day and night. I feel great sorrow for each and everyone of you that have experienced such excruciating pain.

I have searched long and hard for the greatest commonality among our addicts. My conclusion is the most heart-breaking of my research. They are often the brightest of our off-spring. They are often the most compassionate and inspiring members of our breed. Their very nature forces them to experience a mind altering drug that may expand their quest for knowledge that is promised to be safe. Their subsequent addiction was never a quest, but a curse laid on them by greedy money changers.

The great pain and deceptive acts of your addicts were never their deliberate doing, but the result of your own acts in electing government officials that willingly betrayed you and your most promising off-spring. The final responsibility, despite the teachings of drug many counselors, lies on your own doorstep.

Vitals - Mom's last resort: Opiate antidote saves addicts' lives

http://vitals.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/03/15/10675093-moms-last-reso...
"If people think it’s enabling, too bad, they haven’t walked a mile in my shoes," Wohlen said. "I was only focused on saving my son. I can’t help him kick this problem if he’s dead."

’nuff said. Her son better call her on Mother's Day.

absolutely you did the right thing....to revive him, but THEN what have you done? He’s the identified patient, but not necessarily the only person who needs to change.....

What about the victim of the "drug-fueled" theft? Or other victims of drug-fueled crime, violence, and DUs? Don’t they matter as much as her drug-addicted son? Oh, not to her. It’s all about making her life most comfortable. To heck with any of his victims. She’s as self-serving as her addicted son.

I believe there are two different issues here. Her son, who committed the "drug-fueled" theft is now in prison. He is making his restitution to society and presumably the family or families involved. That settles that matter and it is finished.
As for the injection to save a life of an OD, this is not self-serving so much as informative. My step daughter died from an overdose and I wish I had heard of this at that time. Unfortunately, we knew she was doing drugs but not what kinds and not how much. She died in her bed, over night. When we found her the next morning it was horrible.

You need to see there there are other sides to the story.

K-3819406

Anyone who thinks this is enabling is ridiculous. Enabling turns a blind eye to the use and attempts to comfort or validate the user. Having naloxone on hand says "I see that you are using, I know it could kill you, and I'm determined to prevent your death." It's not a drug treatment and it's not a solution. Epi-pens are not a treatment for allergies, they're a life-saving measure in case of an allergic reaction. The same principle applies here. It's not a treatment for drug addiction, it's meant to save a life in case of an emergency.

manysidestothestory

It's totally enabling. It's saying, "go ahead, keep using while living in my home, if you OD, I'll be right here to bring you back from death, I'll save you from dying (but not from yourself)"

And before you tell me I'm stupid, or I don't understand, or I've never dealt with addiction, please know that I lost my sister 16 years ago, and two friends in the last two years, all to heroin addiction.

Big John-5071382

So I guess you wouldn't have even wanted the chance to save them back then. You do know tough love. I guess you don't have any health or auto insurance either. Because that just will enable people to get sick or drive recklessly. Your logic is flawed. Its like insurance for in case @$!$# happens. There is a saying about keeping a condom in your wallet. It is better to have it in there and not have sex than to not have it in there when you need it. It is about being prepared.

manysidestothestory

We're not talking about insurance or condoms. We're talking about people who have stopped caring about themselves and the people that love them. I hate that my sister was lost to drugs, and I miss her, and my friends every day. I'm not saying this as a tough-love thing. I'm saying it, because dead or alive, drug addicts hurt the people that love them. They've already given up on themselves, sometimes the best thing to do is let them go.

Everyone is looking at this from a parents point of view, but what about addicts that are parents themselves, and hurt their kids everyday through their selfish actions?

I don't wish death on anyone. And, I'm not really sure how I feel about this drug, but it's not a black and white situation, there are MANY shades of grey.
Being an addict does not mean you stop caring about yourself or the people who love you! You think your sister stopping loving you when she became sick? NO! Addiction is a disease. People lose their way when they are ill but it does not take away who they are. You think addicts wake up in the morning and say to themselves "yeah I think I'm going to stop loving my kids today and go get high"... No, they don't. I know there are many shades of grey but this is black and white - right and wrong.

"Well, since he CHOOSES to be an addict, and he stopped caring about life, ehhh let's not have this drug that could save his life one day." Say that sentence back to yourself and put someone's name in place of the word "he".

One near death experience (or one more) could be all one person may need to get the help that they need and deserve.

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Stephanie Dawn VIA FACEBOOK

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Idmar

Many sides to the story.

It is completely inaccurate to say that addicts "have stopped caring about themselves and the people that love them." Thats a terrible stereotype of addicts. People don't understand how powerful an addiction is and it's not easy to just stop because you're hurting the people you love, because it was, then there would be a lot less addicts and deaths. Because they're an addict doesn't mean "they've given up on themselves" and it's not okay that because a relative is an addict to give up on them. I agree that using can be a selfish action, but addiction is not just a simple problem.

I agree with big john, it's better to be safe than sorry. Living with an addict is a difficult thing to do, believe me, I know.

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hart

Enabling? I keep a fire extinguisher in my kitchen, but nobody thinks I am enabling my wife to set the house on fire.

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Christian-3196489

Enabling? I keep a fire extinguisher in my kitchen, but nobody thinks I am enabling my wife to set the house on fire.

THAT WAS FRICKEN AWESOME!!!!!! THANK YOU!!!

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RTypo

Not all fires are caused by humans either.. Apples and oranges. But I agree with the sentiment for the most part.

Knowing there is an antidote nearby could embolden the user. That's not such a ridiculous notion.

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Elizabeth-1372999

An antidote won't save a person all the time; I assume that people go out on errands to shop, or work, and are not home all the time just to look after somebody. The antidote is just in case a person happens to be home. The user should know that somebody won't always be there; they should be told that. And the family can do enough "tough love" to ensure that the addict at least go to local treatment programs. As the article says, some states have very poor treatment, and not just for this drug. Mental health treatment is very poor in some parts of the country, and not all people with mental health problems are using any drugs at all, but they are being punished by the lack of care.

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i saw it
Addiction is NOT a disease, addiction is ADDICTION!

Men, meh.

Addicts had a choice at some point to stop when they knew the drug was too powerful. They get diagnosed as diseased and get all kinds of social welfare programs instead of getting better, because they do not have too. Somebody is there to pat them on the back and tell them that it's OK because they have a disease. It's wrong. It's an addiction and they can stop but they have to want to. It's easier to live in LALA land with their cronies than to live a useful life. Yes, I have seen several people live like this. They use their addiction "disease" as a weapon. It's wrong and it's pathetic.

Men, meh.

And that did not read quite as I meant it... I mean people that use the description of addiction as a disease to fund a lifestyle of irresponsibility and want attention for it.

Commonsense101

Men, meh. You are so wrong on so many levels that I refuse to accept your views. If your views of dealing with an addict as a lifestyle of irresponsibility are valid, your experiences of dealing with an addict are invalid. The addict never chooses that lifestyle of irresponsibility and forever regrets his acts of deception or acts of aggression to feed his habit.

Much like the Donner group that were forced to consume the flesh of their dead for survival, the addict feels the same need to sacrifice the devotion of his loved ones to feed his habit. Much like the Donner group, the addict feels great remorse for his actions. Your condemnation of such groups, without walking in their footsteps, seems condescending.

You would do well to place yourself in the footsteps of an addict that hates his every deed as an addict as a member of the Donner party that hates his every deed for survival. Both practiced extraordinary means for survival and both traveled the very hard road of forgiving themselves to return as useful members of society. Tell me that most of you would stand tall under such adversity and I will tell you that most of you are pretenders and liars that ruthlessly support pretenders and liars to support your own sense of infallibility. How dare the weak of heart condemn those that walk in the valley of death to later become leaders of men.

UDunnoBro

Here's a crazy idea: get off the drugs. Pretty hard to OD on something when you aren't using it.
**saddened-1829725**

Well, duh, that's a given. But that attitude does nothing to address the on-going issues of those who have made that terrible decision (or series of terrible decisions) and are physical addicts, dependent on the drug in a way that non-addicts (such as myself) can never fully comprehend. It's no different from smoking, really, just a different drug. How many people do you know who seem to be incapable of breaking a tobacco addiction? I know many. Why would anyone ever start smoking, knowing all of the health ramifications that we now know? And once they do start, why don't they stop? Simple: body chemistry and addiction. For many people, it is not just a simple question of will power. I will never truly understand why anyone would ever even start smoking or taking any other drug that could lead to addiction, but that doesn't mean I have to completely lack compassion for those who have (no matter how nuts and frustrating I think it is). Compassion, by the way, does not mean acceptance or approval -- quite the contrary, in fact. The world would be a better place with more compassion in it.

* #4.1 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 10:18 AM EDT

**digitalnoise**

UDunno - If you'd never been through withdrawal yourself, or personally known someone and held their hand as they went through DT, you need to shut your trap.

Withdrawal and detox are some of the hardest things the human body can go through - and plenty of people do not survive. When you're going through withdrawal/detox and you're going insane from the pain and other symptoms and just desperately want relief, the easiest thing to do is go back to using - relief is instant. But you've relapsed. Quitting is not as instant as I'm sure you think it is. Quitting smoking pales in comparison to drugs like opiates, heroin, cocaine, etc.

* #4.2 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 11:15 AM EDT

**mmr_bzn**

digitalnoise -- Actually, dozens of studies and professionals have demonstrated that nicotine is more addictive than crack, meth, heroin and other opiates. Just Google it. Sure, smokers trying to kick the habit don't go through the same types of immediate physical withdrawals (seizures, pain, etc.) as those detoxing from other substances (especially alcohol and opiates), but nicotine addiction is no joke. That sad, you're right on about everything else in your comment!!

UDunno -- You sound as if you're lucky enough to have never experienced addiction, either by being addicted to a substance yourself or walking the path of addiction with a loved one or family member. Sorry, but you just don't get it. “Just getting off” drugs can kill a person, especially if they're addicted to opiates or alcohol. I suggest you do a little reading on “physical addiction”, as well as “psychological addiction”. It's not simple and your attitude is exactly the wrong way to address the problem.

* #4.3 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 11:43 AM EDT

**sandtrich**

UDunnoBro

Here's a crazy idea: get off the drugs. Pretty hard to OD on something when you aren't using it.

Why don't you inform MD's about your astonishing break through? They pimp more drugs than street dealers.

* #4.4 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 1:42 PM EDT

**Bob Martinez**

UDunnoBroYeah........ you know it all

* #4.5 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 1:46 PM EDT

**noah-4078447**

Narcan has been around for a long time. I've been using it to reverse narcotics given during surgery for over 10 years. It's generally safe to administer to anyone but there are some problems. First, for the nasal spray to work the victim must be breathing. Depressed or absent ventilation is what kills in an opiate overdose. I'm injection would...
take considerably longer for it to take effect. IV injections are beyond the skill of the average person. Second, Narcan doesn't exactly reverse the opiate. It only blocks it. The problem is that Narcan's half-life is less than the half-life of most opiate medications (I have no idea what the illegal stuff does.) When the Narcan wears off first. The opiate just kicks back in and the patient is right back in the same condition. If Narcan is to administered outside a healthcare facility people need to be made aware that the person being rescued still needs to get in to a hospital.

mePhDwee

digitalnoise-Opiate withdrawals are not deadly. Learn before you try to pass yourself off as an expert. They hurt, they suck, but they do not kill.

Mark - lapsed Catholic and full-time Irish

@mePHDWee: Your beside manner sucks. digitalnoise never claimed to be an expert and NEVER said Opiate withdrawal kills however there are many other types of withdrawl that can. Go back to your hole and troll some other site.

LoriLea66

So are you talking about the “drugs” doctors prescribe? Because three quarters of the OD are from PAIN pills...your comment shows that you have never had a disease that cause you pain and turned to a doctor only to be prescribed a very addictive pill that IS not easy to stop taking.

Elizabeth-1372999

About nicotine: Everybody remember the movie about the tobacco industry? More nicotine is added to cigarettes to make sure they are more addictive. Now that the imported cigarettes are not available, only the super-addictive ones are around. I don’t smoke, but I’m aware of this because I know people who do. If the American cigarettes were not made to be addictive, the problem would be much smaller.

And that’s my worry about totally legalizing all drugs (other than marijuana): big business will find ways to make them more addictive so that they can make more of a profit.

But there needs to be some non-addictive and non-toxic pain killers that actually work. I’m saying non-toxic because of the bad effect of Tylenol on the liver. There are many chronic pain conditions from auto-immune diseases to cancer that need real pain treatment, or the pain can block healing from the condition.
If you have to keep Naloxone in your house, you’re a failed parent. If your kid is that into drugs, they’ve a) wasted their chance at having a good life and b) probably ruined the lives of the people around them. If you take so many drugs you’re in danger of dying, then you deserve what’s coming to you. It’s called a consequence.

Wow. You are a piece of work. So there is no possibility, ever, of redemption? No reason for a parent to even hope? Why bother even trying to avert the inevitable? Should parents just stick the needle in themselves and be done with it? Yes, death is a possible consequence of this behavior and, yes, it is entirely the addicts own fault if that does happen, but why does that mean no one should even try to avert it? There are many other consequences to drug use, by the way – loss of jobs, friends, stability, sanity, etc, etc. You do not have to cheer on an addict’s death to prove to anyone that there are “consequences” to drug use. Drug use sucks. It is a terrible, terrible thing brought about by some really bad decisions in life. Yes, addicts have f@ked up. I will not defend addiction in any way. However, I cannot find the coldness in myself that you clearly display, and decide that all addicts deserve death as a result. I cannot and do not want to throw out all hope and leave human beings on the trash heap to teach them and others a lesson. It doesn’t work, anyway, by the way. People have been dying of drug overdoses for as long as there have been drugs, but people still do it. Clearly, allowing people to die to demonstrate the “consequences” of these choices does no good for anyone.

jake -- there are hundreds of reasons why a person would start using drugs and many times, parenting has absolutely nothing to do with it. Just like Udunno above, you obviously have no experience with addiction. Perhaps you should refrain from condemning people in a situation you clearly know nothing about until you walk in those shoes.

Suggest you never have kids......

Jake- My best friend died of a heroin overdose in the 80's. Wonderful parents but she met an old rich guy who gave her all kinds of expensive things. In her eyes (the eyes of a kid) her parents were behind the times. Soon he had her hooked on heroin and it didn't take long to end up dead. This guy was a devil he dangled trips and clothing with an end game to own her body and soul. One thing that hurt everyone the most is that when he had her knocked out on drugs he tattooed her body "owned by XXX". I was her best friend and couldn't stop her or help her, She just slid down the slope into hell. Such an amazing kind person who lost her life.

Terri - I think I speak for all soul-having people when I say that I cannot begin to tell you how sorry I am for you and your friend. The stigma attached to drug addiction today is wildly unfair, and, in my opinion, comes from a failure to see drug addiction for what it truly is: a disease. Granted, it is a disease that most people contract because they made a terrible mistake, but it is a disease none the less. Nearly all addictions result from a rewiring of the reward pathways in the brain as an indirect result of taking the drug. What makes opiates so terrible is that they directly alter these pathways. Opiate withdrawl is one of the most terrible experiences a person can go through. Opiates are one of the two compounds that regulate pain in the brain. More opiates=less pain. Pain receptors in the body are constantly sending signals to the brain, but they are blocked by natural opiates. In withdrawl (or naloxone treatment), those natural opiates go away, and you are left with intense, body wide pain. Very few people want to go through that, and anyone who does deserves an enormous amount of respect.
Are you kidding me, that you actually had the balls to say that. My son was 20 and in a "Christian Rehab" and died of an overdose. I pray that you never feel that pain.

#5.6 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:28 PM EDT

**Granny-116938**

"Gee grandma, why did daddy have to die?"

"Well sweetheart, I would have been a failed parent if I'd given him a shot of Narcan. So I needed to let him die to teach him a lesson. Chocolate chip cookie?"

ejake -- you're a dumba$$

#5.7 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:28 PM EDT

**sholdvdm**

Best response ever.

#5.8 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 3:50 PM EDT

**jake247**

To all the crybabies posting above, if your kids or "friends" or whatever have suffered from taking drugs, NONE of it would have happened if they had had decent parenting. And yes, I have two teenagers at home. They understand that there are exactly ZERO acceptable reasons for using drugs, not hundreds #5.2, and they also understand what the consequences are from us as parents and what the natural consequences are. That's called parenting. And #5.6, did you really expect Christian rehab to work? What were they going to do? PRAY it away? You played a role in his death with your poor choice. I absolutely stand by my original post. Not only do I feel sorry for the kids of people who would like to excuse drug use away, please keep your messed-up kids away from mine.

#5.9 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 8:20 PM EDT

**Elizabeth-1372999**

jake, you absolutely stand for death.

#5.10 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 8:40 PM EDT

**Terri-622477**

Jake,

The way you respond to others is so disrespectful, I bet your an absolute tyrant at home.

It's a long fall off the pedestal.

#5.11 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 8:52 PM EDT

**Doreen-2851176**

Consequences are designed to impart lessons to people so they can learn from mistakes. Oddly enough the dead do not learn. Narcan is a chance to face consequenses alive, and thus learn from them. A better phrase for your scenario would be capital punishment.

An important thing to keep in mind though-If Narcan is used to counteract opiates, its effects do not last as long as the effects of the opiates. In other words, the addict is overdosed, Narcan is given, works hallelujah, WEARS OFF and then the overdose is still present in the system. for how long? depends on what was taken, how much and the condition of the addict. SO-if you give it, get to treatment or in a few minutes you will be right back where you started only without the narcan anymore.

#5.12 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 10:51 PM EDT

**Men,meh.**

Jake you are an Azzhole. I do not care if I get banned from here, what you said to Cheri was sick and twisted, and you must have a very warped mind. People make their own decisions, addicts make their own decisions and many recover and are stronger for it. They at least can choose to change themselves but you will forever and always be a
raging a**hole. There is no cure for that. You have my condolences and so do your poor kids for having a "father" like you. I hope you never have to know what it feels like to have your child die. Jake, YOU SUCK!

D Dirty dog

Jake the one eyed snake, so someone with rotten parents deserves to die of a drug overdose? Idiot. By that logic your kids are in trouble.

jake2247

Proud parent (not buddy) of two successful, well-rounded teens WHO DON'T TAKE DRUGS. My kids will live.... BECAUSE I'M DOING MY JOB AS A PARENT.

Commonsense101

jake2247, if your kids are two successful, well-rounded teens, it is probably despite your poor parenting. Just as strong outside influences sometimes result in teens picking up bad practices, other strong outside influences encourage good principles in kids that have a pompous clown ruling his tiny kingdom at home. Wait until they are mature and independent enough to give you an honest assessment before you place those laurels on your head.

Margo-2235341

Time will tell Jake, if your two well rounded boys choose to see you once they grow up and live outside your realm of control. While I fully believe in consequences, mistakes will always happen and those are the mistakes we learn from.

That means we learn from breaking dishes, to not taking the dog outside at the right time, to learning how to park in between two cars (without hitting either car), and not falling to peer pressure. BUT, if our children do any of these things, we, as good parents, work to resolve the situation with our children, in love - no matter how the resolution happens. That also means we use all available methods; rehabilitation, prison, narcan, psychiatrists, different schools, firmer discipline (though always in love and with them knowing it), and the use of friends and family.

I question whether or not your well rounded boys understand that you will love them no matter what their short comings are. Mine do because they have certainly broken dishes (while putting them away - it's called an accident), they helped clean up the "puppy puddles" in the house before they understood fully about the dog's timing at the door, and even my daughter who wound up hitting one car twice (going in and backing out) while learning how to park between cars. We, as good and loving parents, love our children through all of this while teaching them at the same time.

Tell me Jake, did your parents treat you with the same distancing you treat others? It is sad to hear your message and I wonder how your boy's mother feels. I wonder whether or not they will visit her when you are gone, or are you already not living with the boys and their mother? It sounds as though your life is a tad too hard for anyone else to live up to your expectations. Even God forgives.
Where there is life, there is hope. Addiction to drugs is a terrible illness, alcohol being one of the most dangerous. This is a very good article. It should mention however that, like an epi-pen, it is an emergency treatment to help until you get to the hospital. The problem is that the narcotics, especially pills, can last longer than the Narcan does! You need to closely monitor breathing + oxygenation to prevent relapse.

Addiction is not a illness. You can't get infected with it. You can't catch it. It is not viral, bacterial etc etc etc. You do it to yourself. Addiction is self abuse. Like cutting yourself or weighing 600lbs. No one has ever had a good outcome on heroin. Some have survived but that is not a good outcome. It is surviving with the scars you inflicted on yourself and others. If you think you solved the problem with this you haven't. Solving it is when the addictive behavior stops.

Sorry Devil's Son, but science says you're wrong. It is a disease. There is hereditary evidence. Please, educate yourself.

Devil's son, by that definition, cancer is not an illness, it is all your own cells attacking you. Or how about MS, or other auto-immune diseases... all caused by the body attacking itself. How about genetic metabolism problems, or cystic fibrosis, or while we're at it, Down's syndrome?

What you mean is that some mental illness is sometimes a matter of bad choices that become enslaving. But the treatment must turn the addict around. Punish them first and it probably won't help.

The entire reason why some people become addicts in the first place is that there needs to be better mental health treatment in the U.S.

Oh the "addiction is an illness/disease" nonsense. These people need to go through withdraw and get this out of their systems, there's no such thing as this for people with breast cancer, or Alzheimer's.

Give me a break, people with breast cancer and things such as this have illnesses/diseases.

Drug addiction is just that...an addiction.

Perhaps the way to resolve this is by understanding that yes, at one time the person involved (let's say addict) DID make the choice to use. After that first use though, depending on the person and depending on the drug, the ability to stop dissipates quickly. Some have more addictive personalities (I believe a 600 lb person was mentioned and that is a "food" addiction), and others grow up in houses where drugs and alcohol use were common. At that rate, is it a surprise that another generation becomes "users" of the drugs and alcohol they see used frequently when growing up?

Perhaps it is better to agree to disagree on terminology and merely get the individual help. Same as we do for people with breast cancer, people with auto-immune disease, people with Alzheimer's, and MS or Cystic Fibrosis. An addict who desires help needs it, these are people still loved by their family - they just need help. Unfortunately there is a thought that "they" (the addict) deserves it and this is incorrect. More frequently, there is abuse (mental,
physical, sexual) involved or they have grown up witnessing the same use of the drugs.

Yes, it is a different problem than MS - vastly different but it doesn't mean it isn't a problem still.

Chris-629698

Maybe someone with a history of using can answer this for me...

WHY does anyone start doing heroin in the first place? I mean, you know that it's either going to kill you or you're going to have to quit eventually... those are the only two places that particular road leads. So how do you even start?

somebefuddledperson

Chris-629698...

It leads many other places than death or quitting. True, death is the end of the journey, but from start to finish it leads to criminal behavior, smothering your 3-month-old baby because the devil told you to do it while the drug had you in a psychotic rage, killing your wife/boyfriend cause she used the lat of it, stealing from your parents, beating up your parents, multiple stints in prison and then death. A lucky few quit. I taught in a state prison system, so I speak from first hand testimonials. The other guy was right. Forced stays in rehab do not work. The addict has to want to quit.

That aside, if I had a son or daughter that was an addict, and I could carry that antidote around, I'd do it in a heartbeat.

stewgotts

Chris- Why does anyone take a first sip of beer or that first drag of a cig? They are all the same thing. No one chooses to become addicted and in fact there are many people that only use socially. It can be a way to "fit in" or an escape from reality. It can also just simply be the fact that it feels f*cking amazing.

mePhDwee

Natural progression of things. I have never touched heroin but as a result of an injury suffered in the Marines I am no stranger to pain meds. At first the pain goes away but your brain chemistry changes and you are never able to get that relief as well as the high that comes from opiates, it is your brain realizing that as ass in in charge so it tries to protect itself.

At this point you can go one of two ways either you realize what is going on and stop or you can keep chasing the high and move on to harder and more drugs. Before you know it it is no longer about getting "high" it is about not getting sick. It's sad but preventable.

mmr_bzn

Everyone starts using for their own reasons, but some opiate addicts start with legitimately prescribed medications. Have you ever been prescribed Vicodin (aka: hydrocodone) or any other pain killer after a serious injury or surgery? If so, you know that those pills can make you kind of "loopy". There are a lot of people out there who like that feeling and start taking more and more of the drugs to feel "high" rather than to treat pain. It takes a matter of weeks to become physically addicted and then the cycle starts. A person has to take more and more to get the same feeling and sometimes will shift from prescription pills to another opiate like heroin. Heroin may be easier to get or cheaper, but it's also an opiate, so it gives the same high. Some people start with smoking heroin-laced pot or try heroin after having done other drugs to see what all the "hype" is about. For a few people, once is enough and they never touch it again. For most, once is enough to want to use again and again.

Others start using drugs after or because of a painful life experience (losing a loved one, abuse, assault, etc.) because after trying it once, they like how it takes them away and they don't have to "feel" anything anymore. This means not feeling the pain of their current situation. Usually it starts as drinking more or smoking pot and it quickly slides downhill. Because drugs alter the chemical functions of your brain, physical addiction begins the first time someone snorts cocaine, or smokes meth or heroin, etc. Addicts know that using could lead to death. The vast
majority of them don't care. The high is more important to them than anything. That's part of the disease of addiction.

Bottom line: if you ask 100 different addicts why they started using, you'll get 95 different stories. Everyone has their own path down that road and addiction is a complicated condition. No one wakes up one day and says "I want to be a heroin junkie" or "I want to be an addict".

People start since they see others doing it, and it makes them look 'sophisticated' and 'wordly'.

I was a tobacco addict. Smoked a pipe. Went thru a pound of tobacco per month.

One day, Saturday morning, I said: This is it. I threw away everything, pipes, matches, ashtrays and tobacco.

I was cross as a bear for two weeks, but, knock on wood, that was over 10 years ago.

Well I understand addiction a little bit... I'm a smoker. Honestly, I only started because I was pretty much bored. It was just something to do in down time between classes at college and when I was out drinking with friends.

But I don't agree that addictions are all the same. Quitting nicotine is a b-tch (I know; I've quit twice), but nowhere near as bad as opioid withdrawal. From what I hear, I have a feeling quitting smoking is somewhat like PMS (the little tiniest thing pisses you off, you'd sacrifice your firstborn for what you're craving)... but heroin withdrawal sounds more like the stomach flu/cramps/rattlesnake bite all rolled in to one.

Why subject yourself to that?

Imagine you are a 13 year old bi-polar child who also has several chronic physical diseases, including Type 1 diabetes starting at age 5. You are just sick and tired of being sick and tired. Emotionally, you don't have the maturity of a 10 year old. Your mood swings are increasing in intensity and you are hearing voices. You struggle in school and feel like there's nothing you can do right. You screw up everything with your faulty thinking, agitated state and inability to follow directions. It's difficult for your family, teachers, etc to find something they can praise you for. Eventually you want to kill yourself because life truly sucks for you. Not because you didn't get that special pair of sneakers. Because your life is hell most days. You have a friend who steals narcotics from his parent's Rx stash. You take one (why not, you take pills all the time) and it's the first time you can ever remember feeling relaxed, stable, calm. You've never known that feeling, being mentally AND physically serene. You steal some money from family and buy some. After a few times you are hooked. If not physically, then mentally. So the life of a drug addict can start.

Granny said it best. All of the untreated mental illness out there, combined with lack of understanding and lack of referrals, cause these addictions. Any teacher who thinks a kid is "just" hyperactive has no idea that there may be any number of mental illness problems that cause it: depression about family members or even difficulties with school work, other more difficult mental illnesses, or even true hyperactivity.

Warning: many teachers and psychologists will prescribe the drugs for hyperactivity without truly testing a child to see if they have some other mental illness first, so the drugs that are already in the system might not work.

http://vitals.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/03/15/10675093-moms-last-reso...
"bi-polar" child is not receiving the proper therapy or drugs for them, they will still be upset enough to try something else. Their treatment should fit them. What child is taken to a neurologist and has an EEG (electrodes, as in sleep clinics) placed on the head to see what part of the brain is truly hyperactive? Psychologists will say that children treated with hyperactivity drugs do not become users of other illegal drugs, but that is because many addicts will try to cover up their use.

As mnr_bzn said, the addict lives in the "now," because very often "consequences" have been thrown in their face for so many years that they are already trying to run from their memories. Think about it: what memories should a child have that they would want to run from? They should have happy childhoods, not high-pressure marathons with no breaks.

#7.9 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 8:57 PM EDT

Chris, I have wondered this same thing many times. I do not understand the behaviors of an addict because I am not one. While I did use some drugs at earlier stages in my life, quitting was never difficult. At this point it's been over 25 years since I did coke or anything else (including alcohol). I do believe that mnr_brn and granny had the right path, especially mnr_brn. The consequences are completely inconsequential when searching for the next fix.

I do remember asking my my marriage to a drunk. He was sober while buying the alcohol. He was sober while heading to the fridge (for the first beer). I would say, "Don't you know you are breaking my heart?" for his alcohol consumption drove our marriage apart (along with other problems). I realize now that he could not combat the problem of his alcoholism. He began drinking at 17 and when I was married to him, he had been drinking for 20 years. The alcohol was literally his life force and he is still an alcoholic. He is termed a "functional" alcoholic. He can hold down a job, live a seemingly normal life and gets drunk every night when he comes home from work. He cannot stop, does not want to stop and will die from this disease. It has taken me years to understand it is a disease as I do not suffer from the same problem and therefore I was only able to see it as a "choice" he made - an addiction he chose to become part of.

At this point, I know he has a serious disease and I know that is some way I will always love him for the years we had together. That does not mean that I see him or spend any time with him though. Nor does it mean that I allow him into my life in any way. Because of his alcoholism, he is inconsiderate and abusive and never again will be the man I married. It is the loss of who he once was that I miss; it is who he is now that I am grateful to be away from.

My feelings for him are not unlike those of the parents above. I love him, know I cannot rescue him and for years I was his Narcan. At this point, we are divorced and I am no longer obligated to be his rescuer (I did that job for 15 years). Providing our children fall into alcoholism (or drug abuse), I would purchase this Narcan kit in a quick second. Is it love? Is it co-dependence? Is it parenting? I guess I would say once you are a parent it just is not easy to divorce the love you feel for your child.

Good luck in finding your answer Chris. I'm still not convinced I know why anyone starts though I know seeing his parents drink every night made my ex very comfortable with alcohol in the house (something I do not have in my house).

#7.10 - Sun Mar 18, 2012 8:09 PM EDT

Margo-2235341

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Good luck in finding your answer Chris. I'm still not convinced I know why anyone starts though I know seeing his parents drink every night made my ex very comfortable with alcohol in the house (something I do not have in my house).
Folks let me tell you something that came right out of the mouth of a addiction recovery and prevention specialist:

"Forced Rehab does not work. Until the addict is willing to overcome and stop using, they will serve their 30 days or jail time, and as soon as they are out, they'll be using again" 

That's why court-ordered rehab is a joke. That's why telling parents of addicts to force their children to not use will not work. If parents went on the offensive, their kids will either leave and partial protection of home and continue using or as soon as they are out of rehab, will get right back to using.

I think this is a good idea. It can save their children's lives, and if I was in their shoes, I would try to do the same thing. If I was a cancer patient like my relatives have been, I would want medical cannabis.

How America sees and deals with addicts is fluctuating as much as the kinds of drugs that are used.

i saw it

So they're supposed to constantly keep using this method? That makes no sense and there has to be a better solution. I can't understand why anybody would want to put this crap into their bodies anyway when the only outcome will be certain DEATH. Besides, this is a grown man.

LeftLeaningLisa

One could argue that drugs like this continue to feed the heroin epidemic. If the user had just died from the OD, they wouldn't be around to OD again, and again, and again, and again.

donklos

Wishing someone death is more to the left of left.

Margo-2235341

You are right Left Leaning Lisa, that if he had died from his OD he would be dead. So? Is that how you feel about all addicts? Pretty severe punishment, how about smokers? They are killing themselves, only slower. What about litterbugs? They are killing our earth, should they die too?

Don't we all have the potential to be better? This is a mother's child we're talking about. Yes, he is 26 but you have to understand that when someone begins doing drugs/alcohol, that is where their mind stops growing. Effectively, their son Sam is 19 (the age when he started doing drugs). This mom is trying to protect her child and sustain his life. I believe this is what parents are called to do when they bring a life into the world. Does that duty stop simply because we dislike our child's behavior? No and why would you think it would?

My step daughter died of an OD. If I had Narcan available, maybe we wouldn't have woken up the next morning to her dead body. I hope you never have to endure that Lisa.

Naloxone is a wonderful thing. It is a potent antagonist for narcotics and the response in amazing. That said it also has a fairly short half life and as such one injection will not totally remove an OD patient from danger as the half life of narcotics be it heroin, hydrocodone, oxycodone or morphine is much longer. Thus there is a component of false security when keeping it in the medicine cabinet. In my 30 years as a paramedic I have seen people die after well meaning parents gave Naloxone and the kid went back to bed. It is critical to get the person to an emergency room for long term definitive care. Naloxone can only buy time

Skookum Jim

Rick-854092

I agree. Once narcan is administered it is advised the pt. be monitored for at least 3 hours.
This drug kept in the hands of the public is a false sense of security. Many people are mixing drugs these days, so until you get a urine drug screen down to see what the pt. is actually taking narcan alone may not be a fix.

Best bet is to call 911 and have them transported to the nearest Er. for evaluation

#10.1 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:33 PM EDT

Patti-3062179

Narcan saved my life! I had surgery and reacted badly to the anesthesia and the pain medication. My respirations had almost completely ceased! I was given a "push" of Narcan and then was on a Narcan drip for about 16 hours until the effects of the anesthesia wore off. So it is not just for drug addicts etc.

#1 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 1:41 PM EDT

inapsin

Patti

Something is missing in your story. What you described doesn't make sense.

#11.1 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 4:12 PM EDT

Granny-1169938

I understand what you're saying. I almost died after being given codeine. I am allergic to those types of painkillers but didn't know it until then. To my knowledge I didn't receive Narcan, but I can imagine why it would come in handy in cases like yours. Ignore the twits who can't read.

#11.2 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 6:39 PM EDT

CE01962

“We don’t believe that death should be a consequence of using drugs. Death doesn’t teach a lesson,” said Wheeler, manager of an overdose prevention project for the Harm Reduction Coalition in Oakland, Calif.

Death may not teach a lesson to the deceased but it sure can act as a deterrent (lesson) to the living.

#12 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 1:52 PM EDT

beanathome

Really? And how many people have died of drug abuse--and what deterrent effect has that had on the present generation? Any proof? (Hint--you won’t find any--but go look, as you might learn something.)

#12.1 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:08 PM EDT
Beanathome: if society (movies, TV shows, music) would stop glorifying drug use and making it seem cool, like everyone is doing it; and showed the reality of the death and destruction more, then it would have an impact. Drug related deaths are glossed over, hidden from everyone to save the poor family left behind from the shame. Drug death deterrent is effective on those who know about the true story: the family and friends. If they were more widespread, so would the deterrent effect.

Really? Then why are overdose deaths increasing? Even those of us who don't drink, smoke or take opiates know people who have overdosed. Yet all the publicity about deaths cannot break an addict's habit. I imagine that quite a few addicts wish they WOULD die and be out their misery.

I would guess Rush has a cabinet full also.

Why save them? It would be better for our country as a whole if we just let them die of the OD. They are a drain on the economy, a drain on health care and a drain on emotions. In the short term after a death they will be sad, sure, but in the long term, most will be happier.

So oatis, what if your granny was prescribed say oxycodone for post surgical pain management, and she like most elderly has decreased metabolic function and accidentally overdoses? Let her die? What about the person who takes more than written because they aren't getting adequate pain relief, or because they think the prescribed medication isn't working? Those folks have no intent on getting stoned, just want pain relief. Let them die? Your parents had to be brother and sister for such an inbred post

Are you that dense, Skeekum? Obviously he meant recreational users.
Then why don't we just let everyone who ever had an illness die, as they are also a burden to themselves, others, economy, etc.? Completely ignorant to say...And no "most people" aren't happier when they're loved one dies.

---

**Jennifer Lance**

Oatis: Your name fits your inbred backwoods way of thinking. It's obvious you have never had a close family member or friend with a serious illness. Let's just let all the people with cancer die too for they are also a drain on insurance and emotions. You're a complete moron I am surprised you even had the brain function to operate a computer.

---

**manysidestothestory**

My sister died nearly 16 years ago from heart complications caused by her heroin addiction. I also lost two friends in the last two years to heroin OD's. Nothing is more heartbreaking than losing a loved one to addiction. However, I don't know how I feel about making this drug available to addicts and/or their family members. To make using easier and/or safer is not in any way helpful to an addict. I know the pain of this loss, and I've lived with it for a long time, but I also know that the chances that my sister would've stopped using and been able to function positively in daily life are slim at best. People that willingly put their lives in danger, whether it's with drugs, or thrill-seeking, having a dangerous job, or even gang-banging, are well aware that they probably won't have a long life. It's a choice for them; it's only a problem for their loved ones because we see how easily they could make better choices. So yeah, I'm on the fence on this one.

---

**Traci Billups**

Drug companies don't want their to be a cure for anything let alone addiction. It puts money in their pockets!

---

**xTERMIN8RXXx**

Hey, white people, three things for you to do: "stop making religion a joke", "good parenting", "spanking". If you do these things for your kids, and do it early on, you will have well-behaved kids who aren't hypocrites and who will end up productive members of society.

Thanks to y'all, today's society sucks AND blows.

---

**manysidestothestory**

Really buddy? White people are to blame for all of society's woes? Grow up.
Waylon-3266076

Now THATS funny!!

#17.2 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 3:52 PM EDT

lost in oklahoma

to a real user, when they are fueling up for their opiate induced haze, they aren't thinking about death or the consequences of an overdose either. i think what this mom is doing is what most typical moms would do - protect their child. users want to be high, not dead. and you cannot make a user quit unless they are willing to quit...you can't help them if they don't want to help themselves. and maybe someday they will, but not if they're dead. just sayin'.....

#18 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:20 PM EDT

DAN MAHER portland oregon

Legalize all drugs. Those too dumb to avoid them will all pass away, leaving society better off. It doesn't make sense for everybody to pay for the mistakes of the few.

#19 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:20 PM EDT

manan26

All this talk about the prescribing of the antidote but why are 19 year olds so frequently prescribed with pain killers for stuff like a stubbed toe

#20 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:30 PM EDT

Sichuan

Speaking of enabling, the most "enabled" drug of choice, the drug that causes more misery, violence and death than all other drugs combined, is ALCOHOL. Alcohol is a drug, regardless of whether or not those who consume it wish to call it so.

The war on drugs is a joke and only furthers the violence and death connected to the black markets associated with drugs. As long as our politicians, religious zealots and the majority of our population have their legal drug of choice, alcohol, nothing will be done to address the unnecessary misery and massive infusions of funds associated with the "War on Drugs". If we truly want to have a war on drugs we should also include alcohol.

#21 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 2:41 PM EDT

Rick-854092

Alcohol, is the most addictive drug out there. You can buy it at the drug store, gas station, and grocery store. Truth is alcohol is the only drug that can kill you if you stop cold turkey. The others may make you feel like you are dying but won't kill you if you stop using them.

#21.1 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 3:07 PM EDT

ranknfile

Sichaun Great Post and sooo True

#21.2 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 3:43 PM EDT

Jon-782221

The level of alcohol addictiveness is debatable. However, most would agree that heroine, meth, oxycodone, crack and even tobacco show far greater risks for addiction.

Alcohol withdrawal is a very real and dangerous problem, but one must have become physically dependent and have excessively abused it to reach the point where quitting cold turkey is life-threatening.

When used responsibly and in moderation, alcohol is actually one of the safer substances out there. Those with a family history of developing alcoholism would be wise to stay away, however. :)

#21.3 - Thu Mar 15, 2012 4:06 PM EDT
there are two types of addiction: physiological and psychological. both are pretty powerful.

Why are so many of our kids spinning out of control these days? Is it a function of the poor economy? I wish I could understand it but I don't.

Oh and prohibition doesn't work either. It's a choice thing not a law thing. Make laws and they will just be broken. No sense in that. I just wish I understood why so many choose willfully choose the wrong path these days.

"your" kids have been using meth for YEARS! This has not just started to happen.

Its time to start treating drug addiction medically, instead of criminally. Drug use is a victimless activity, therefore it does not meet the criteria for being a crime. And making drugs illegal is not and will not prevent drug use. Drug use is rampant, and has not been slowed at all by making it illegal. In fact it is spreading drugs more widely, by allowing it to be sold to children. Drug dealers sell to everyone, and go out of their way to market this stuff to kids.

All making drugs illegal has done, is allow criminals to make fortunes.

You just know that drug dealers are eventually going to start using Narcan in the drugs they sell, perhaps in a time-release form. You pay megabucks to Danny Dealer for your next fix, you shoot it up, you feel great for a few minutes, then the Narcan kicks in and your high goes away. Then instead of one buy a day, Danny Dealer gets 3 or 4 from each customer.

That's just nuts.
Jo Nel Aleccia is an award-winning national health reporter at msnbc.com. She has spent more than 25 years covering health, Superbug – Wired Science

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