

High Dose Prescription Medication Common Overdose



Hope by the Sea

It seems like every day there is something in the news about prescription narcotics and the inherent dangers associated with taking them. With over prescribing and doctor shopping on the rise, it is not surprising that there are 13,000 deaths a year related to unintentional overdoses involving opioids, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Pain management is perhaps the most difficult aspect of modern medicine for doctors to work with, considering that no one can feel the pain you feel, so it is impossible to deny someone medication if they are claiming to be in pain because most ailments are under the surface. In turn, the pain management field has opened their doors to any one claiming to be in pain, flooding the streets with high strength prescription narcotics.

A new study published Tuesday found that people on high or maximum doses of prescription opioid pain relievers have a much greater risk of accidental, lethal overdose. ABC News interviewed a woman who had been prescribed a high-dose cocktail of prescription pain killers, sedatives, mood regulators and muscle relaxants meant to help cope with chronic pain leaving her teetering on a fulcrum with the chance of overdose on either side for years. "I was liberally prescribed painkillers and anxiety meds and nearly died from the combination of pills. Several times I OD'ed inadvertently, once [while] in the hospital [and] my breathing stopped," said **Alesandra Rain**, 53. "You lose track of what you're taking because a lot of the time I was advised to 'take as needed.' My sister says she would stay up all night with me to make sure I kept breathing" when it appeared she had taken too much, Rain says.

We are facing an epidemic that seems to be growing and the death rates are ever increasing; with death rates from painkiller and sedative overdose deaths increasing by a whopping 124 percent, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. From 2004 to 2008, emergency room visits linked to prescription drug overdose more than doubled, and among those aged 45 to 54, these overdoses have become the second leading cause of accidental death, according to SAMHSA.

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