

Strategies to Address Opioid Misuse and Overdose: Linking Problems to Solutions

Research has identified a number of potentially promising strategies, some with demonstrated effectiveness, to prevent opioid misuse and overdose. Prevention science focuses on the factors that increase a person's (or a group of people's) risk of misusing a substance ("the problems"), and develops and implements strategies to address those factors ("the solutions"). This material matches some of the common risk factors for opioid misuse and overdose with prevention strategies.

MATCHING RISK FACTORS AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The table below lists common risk factors for opioid misuse and overdose, strategies that seek to address these risk factors, and a description of each strategy.

Risk Factors	Associated Strategy	Strategy Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of knowledge about the potential dangers of prescription opioid misuse Access to drugs prescribed to others (e.g., family members, friends) 	Patient education	Patient education involves providing patients with information on the overdose potential of prescription drugs and their effects; and importance of safeguarding prescriptions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to opioids Opioid prescriptions for individuals at high risk to develop misuse or dependence Obtaining multiple prescriptions Large dosage prescribed and/or high potency drugs "Doctor shopping" (visiting multiple health care providers to obtain four or more prescriptions) Chronic pain 	Prescriber education	Prescriber education involves teaching prescribers about the benefits and risks of prescribing opioids, including strategies to prevent misuse, while maintaining legitimate and appropriate access to opioids for patients.

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Risk Factors	Associated Strategy	Strategy Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to prescription drugs • “Doctor shopping” (visiting multiple health care providers to obtain four or more prescriptions) 	<p>Use of Prescription Drug Monitoring Program</p>	<p>Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs are electronic databases that track and house data on prescriptions and dispensations of controlled substances.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of prescription drugs • Lack of knowledge about the potential dangers of prescription opioid misuse 	<p>Take-back programs</p>	<p>Take-back programs are designed to encourage people to properly dispose of their unused or expired prescription medications, often by bringing them to drop boxes or take-back programs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Distress • Mental illness • History of substance use or misuse 	<p>Use of screening tools</p>	<p>Screening tools developed for prescribers to assess patients’ risks for misusing or developing opioid use disorders from prescription opioids.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to prescription drugs 	<p>Controlled substance lock-in programs</p>	<p>Controlled substance lock-in programs are programs implemented by private or public insurance companies (e.g., Medicaid) to prevent overutilization of prescription drugs by limiting their access to prescription drugs. For example, they may require patients to use a single prescriber or pharmacy to obtain their prescription medication.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge about the potential dangers of prescription opioid misuse 	<p>Social marketing campaigns</p>	<p>Social marketing campaigns use techniques adapted from commercial marketing to encourage favorable and voluntary behavior change in risky behaviors associated with</p>

Risk Factors	Associated Strategy	Strategy Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to drugs prescribed to others (e.g., family members, friends) 		the non-medical use of prescription drugs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of tolerance (due to time in a detoxification program or due to incarceration) • Polysubstance use • Previous overdose history 	Overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND)	Overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND) programs focus on providing training on recognizing and preventing opioid overdoses to individuals likely to be in contact with individuals at risk for an overdose. Program participants learn what the start of an overdose looks like and how to administer naloxone to prevent overdoses. Program participants are also provided prescriptions for naloxone.

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