America’s Addiction

The United States has seen a gargantuan rise in the number of overdose related deaths in recent years. The cause of this new-found drove of deaths is no illegal substance, it does not come from any drug cartel; rather it comes from one’s trustworthy personal physician. The 1990s saw a massive rise in the increase of opioid prescriptions given out to patients. A drug that was once reserved for patients undergoing the most extreme pain, was elevated to become the next step after aspirin. The addictive side effects were readily ignored, causing innocent civilians to be converted to drug addicts seemingly overnight. Pharmaceutical companies were quick to supply the demand of a growing number of opioid users.

West Virginia is one of the most heavily inflicted states in this new pandemic. 9 million hydrocodone pills were shipped into a Mingo County Pharmacy over a two-year period. A number that does not correlate with a county of a mere population of 33,000. The act of pharmacies becoming no more than glorified drug mules is perfectly legal. One cannot punish a pharmacy for stocking heavily “monitored” substances. To access this treasure trove of narcotics, only one simple prescription is needed. A West Virginian achieves his or her script from their family friendly pain clinic that is located nearby. It’s far easier for a physician to write a script, than it is to diagnose or listen to patient with a never-ending list of complaints. Physicians in the pain clinic business cannot afford to have morals; one simple refusal can lead to a loss in business. These charlatans seem to believe they are responding to market forces created by their careless predecessors.

The ease of access to opioids is trend that permeates in every medical community. 91% of people who survived an overdose were quickly able to get a refill of their prescription. These survivors find it impossible to resist a second chance opportunity. This is only fueled by the fact that physicians are often unaware or feign lack of knowledge of patient histories. After all, any addict that still possesses at least a modicum of cognizance, is obviously never going to reveal that they are addicts.

The physicians of the 1990s have created a drug empire for the pharmaceutical companies that can only be comparable to that of great entrepreneurs such as Pablo Escobar and El Chapo. Contemporary physicians must accept the basic logical fact that addictive substances must be given out with more caution. Otherwise their Hippocratic oath has become nothing more than a hypocritical oath. Contemporary physicians must learn to place humanity above the easy profits associated with privatized healthcare.

Works Cited

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