

Patient Perspective on Opioid Addiction

A discussion guide for you and your patient



2.5
MILLION

Estimated number of Americans who are addicted to opioids, based on the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.^{1,2}

The CDC characterizes prescription pain reliever addiction as a “growing deadly epidemic” responsible for over 40 deaths a day.³ According to the ONDCP it “represents an alarming public health crisis.”⁴ As you speak with your patients about their opioid addiction and treatment, discuss potential issues or concerns they may have. Your patients may feel uncomfortable discussing their addiction; however, providing honest and open communication is an important factor in treatment success.

In 2014, the National Alliance of Advocates for Buprenorphine Treatment (NAABT) solicited response to an online survey to assess the challenges of opioid addiction treatment; 606 people with opioid addiction responded. Survey results indicate that many patients face challenges and difficulties that negatively impact their addiction treatment. If you have a patient who is dependent on or addicted to opioids, www.naabt.org has additional information and treatment resources that your patients may find helpful.

47%

Percentage of those addicted to opioid pain relievers receiving treatment.¹

49%

Percentage of respondents who reported that they were not currently in counseling.

As you know, counseling is an important component of a treatment plan. Ask your patients if they attend regular counseling sessions, and if not, help them select an appropriate counselor and/or community group or support organization. Discuss these options with your patients so they do not ignore this important opportunity as part of their addiction treatment program. The NAABT provides a list of online support groups as well as other resources for your patients at www.naabt.org.

1 Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: summary of national findings. US Department of Health and Human Services website. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2012SummNatFindDetTables/NationalFindings/NSDUHresults2012.pdf>. Accessed May 13, 2014.

2 Volkow ND, Frieden TR, Hyde PS, Cha SS. Medication-assisted therapies—tackling the opioid-overdose epidemic. *N Engl J Med*. 2014;370(22):2063-2066.

Talk with your patients about the importance of taking buprenorphine as directed and discuss any fears or concerns they may have about the medication. According to survey respondents, one of the common reasons for patients not taking their medication as prescribed was to reduce side effects (22%).

56%

Percentage of respondents who indicated they took a lower dose than prescribed without consulting with their physician.

- Ask your patients if they are experiencing any side effects from their medication and discuss treatment options, including over-the-counter medications or change in diet. The most common responses from NAABT survey respondents were:
 - Constipation – 74%
 - Unpleasant taste – 71%
- For those who experienced constipation, 52% utilized over-the-counter medication and 29% adjusted their diet to obtain relief.

If necessary, consider discussing with your patients other formulations of buprenorphine. There are a number of formulations available including sublingual tablets and films and a buccal film.

21%

Percentage of respondents who considered taking buprenorphine a nuisance.

Ask your patients if they are experiencing or are having difficulty following the prescribed treatment plan for their medication. Of the 128 respondents who considered taking buprenorphine a nuisance, the most common nuisances reported were:

- Not being able to talk or swallow until the medication dissolves – 66%
- Keeping the medication under the tongue until it dissolves – 63%

Various formulations are available, so talk to your patients about which one would be most appropriate for them.

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Injury Prevention & Control. Policy Impact: Prescription Painkiller Overdoses. <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/rxbrief/>. July 2014; stats: <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioid-prescribing/index.html>.

4 Obama Administration releases action plan to address national prescription drug abuse epidemic; announces FDA action requiring drug makers to develop education program for prescribers about safe use of opioids [press release]. Washington, DC: White House, Office of the National Drug Control Policy; April 19, 2011. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/news-releases-remarks/obama-administration-releases-action-plan>. Accessed August 26, 2014.



The National Alliance of Advocates for Buprenorphine Treatment (NAABT) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to educate the public about the disease of opioid addiction and the buprenorphine treatment option, help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with patients with addiction disorders, and connect patients to healthcare providers.

For more information, as well as additional resources, please visit www.naabt.org.

The medical information in this guide is provided as an information resource only, and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. This information is not intended to be patient education, and should not be given to patients as a substitute for professional diagnosis or treatment by a licensed healthcare provider.

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