

Mayo Clinic Minute: Role for opioid use

Opioid overdoses have been linked to a decreased life span, according to recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The ongoing opioid crisis has been a complicated one for more than a decade. Death rates continue to rise, despite national medical guidelines for prescribing the pain medication.

Dr. Holly Geyer leads the opioid stewardship program at Mayo Clinic in Arizona. She says there is an important role for opioids in patient care, and the onus is on health care professionals to educate their patients.

Video	Audio
Holly Geyer, M.D. Addiction Medicine Mayo Clinic	(Nat ambulance lights/sound over graph) "The opioid crisis has stemmed out of dysregulation of the opioids themselves and along these illicit channels that have now worked their way through our country."
	Dr. Holly Geyer is an addiction medicine specialist at Mayo Clinic.
	"The reality is that, as we continue to deprescribe opioids, those struggling with the complications already had to find new sources, and they found it from the streets."
	Opioids, like pharmaceutical fentanyl and oxycodone, are typically prescribed short term and for acute pain.
	"Chronic use of opioids leads to more problems in the majority of people than it does benefits. And that's the point of using any drug — to have more benefits than problems."
	But it doesn't mean all opioids should be avoided all the time.
	"There is absolutely a role for opioids in our world."
	The goal, she says, is to make sure every patient who receives a prescription for opioids is provided education.
	"Every patient who walks into our office should be familiar with how to use opioids safely, when they're appropriate, how to store them, how to dispose of them, and what to look for along the course of their use. If that's not happening, we're creating statistics."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.