

# THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC & SMOKING

## Quick Facts

**1) SMOKING IS A RISK FACTOR FOR NONMEDICAL USE OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS**

**2) DAILY & INTERMITTENT SMOKERS ARE **3X** MORE LIKELY TO REPORT PAST-YEAR NONMEDICAL PRESCRIPTION OPIOID USE**

**3) THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SMOKING & PAIN**

# 85%

**4) OF PATIENTS IN TREATMENT FOR OPIOID ADDICTION SMOKE**

(HIGHER THAN ALCOHOL USE DISORDER)

**5) NICOTINE MAY ENHANCE THE REWARDING PROPERTIES OF OPIOID MEDICATIONS TO THE NEURAL SYSTEM**

**6) PAIN CAN INCREASE SMOKING AND THE MAINTENANCE OF TOBACCO ADDICTION CREATING A POSITIVE FEEDBACK LOOP**

**7) ACTION STEP:  
ALWAYS TAKE INTO ACCOUNT TOBACCO USE WHEN ASSESSING THE ABUSE POTENTIAL OF PRESCRIBING OPIOIDS**

# The Opioid Epidemic and Smoking

Thursday, February 22, 2018

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## Prescription Opioid Misuse & Smoking

*It is a vital time for public health to address smoking as a risk factor for opioid misuse.*

The opioid epidemic has been a growing public health crisis for years, and given the recent rise of overdose deaths, there's no time like the present for health care providers to address associated risk factors, such as smoking.

Currently, research and literature on the association between **smoking / nicotine dependence and prescription opioid misuse among the general population** are limited, but the available facts are alarming.

Furthermore, empirical evidence has shown that there is a significant association between smoking and pain, and smokers tend to have a higher intensity of pain compared to non-smokers, putting them at higher risk of opioid misuse/dependency.

**A key takeaway for providers:** Addressing tobacco use with patients being treated for pain may be useful in reducing pain, as well as reducing the need for pain medication.

## References

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