

Press Release
May 20, 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:
Dr. Sharon Harris 516- 676-2008
safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Why Do Opioid Overdose Deaths Happen in Spurts?

In some very specific cases underlying causes for multiple overdose deaths in a short period of time comes from high potency opioids such as the painkiller fentanyl. The introduction of fentanyl in a community, leaves an overwhelming number of overdose deaths in a short period of time. An addict often gets use to the feelings from the drug, so it takes more and more of the drug to produce the same levels of pain relief.

According to a CNN report focusing on Ohio, one of the top five states with the largest opioid overdose deaths, in 2018 Cuyahoga County saw seven people die in about 24 hours from overdoses. This incident made headlines and rising concerns. This was just one of many Counties that have had many individuals die in a short period time from overdoses. Already this year, more than 60% of the autopsies conducted at the Montgomery County Coroner's office in Ohio involved drug overdose deaths -- and the office is running out of room for the bodies. Many of these overdoses were related to the abuse of opioids, a class of drugs that includes powerful prescription painkillers and heroin.

Why do so many opioid overdose deaths across the country appear to occur at once? Experts warn that the answer is more complicated than it may seem. Nicholas King, an associate professor at McGill University in Montreal who has studied the factors behind increased opioid-related deaths in the United States and Canada feels we shouldn't assume that such deaths are necessarily linked, cautioned. "We know from historical experience with so-called 'cancer clusters' that in many cases the clustering is either the result of confirmation bias, or is simply the result of random chance".

Obversely, Dr. David Fiellin, a professor at Yale University of medicine who conducts research on opioid treatment strategies maintains what happens in individuals who have opioid use disorder is, their level of physical tolerance develops to the point where they are rarely continuing to use opioids for the high or euphoria. They are oftentimes using the opioids to help with the withdrawal. Survivors of opioid overdoses are at more of a risk to repeat events and have a fatal overdose. In some very specific cases, we can identify an underlying cause for multiple opioid overdoses in a short period of time: for example, after the appearance of an illegal drug with unusually high potency. When a very high-potency opioid, such as the painkiller fentanyl, enters a community, that introduction alone could spawn an overwhelming number of overdose deaths in a short time span. It is the extent to which these high-potency opioids are being distributed within the illicit drug markets and people who are using opioids might congregate in certain communities in an attempt to purchase higher-potency versions when they are available.

To read more about this news report please visit <https://www.newschannel5.com/news/national/why-opiod-overdose-deaths-seem-to-happen-in-spurts>.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is joining in the fight against this epidemic by conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.