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# The Accidental Addict, A Rx For Disaster

By Sue Merklin

It was an **accident!** No one told them that mixing RX drugs and sometimes adding alcohol could be lethal. After all, the doctor wrote the script. This story is common. The media tells us about athletes and celebrities and their addictions, but the truth is that the people around us that we know and love face the same danger.



The new face of substance dependency is your boss, your friend, your wife, your parents and possibly **you**. It is no longer only the recreational drug user and alcoholic.

The increased demand for **pain management** has helped fuel this epidemic. Accident victims as well as weekend athletes and home do it yourselfers want relief now and do not understand the consequences of long-term medication use. Opioid prescribing for chronic nonmalignant pain has experienced a paradigm shift. Clinicians are prescribing less. They are monitoring their patients to ensure they are not drug shopping. They are also offering other alternatives. By adding a variety of holistic remedies, such as acupuncture, chiropractic and physical therapy, the pain can be managed and the patient healthier.

For those who are depressed, stressed, anxious or sleepless, a simple tablet or combination of these pills used to be the immediate answer. But what happens when they lose their effectiveness? Are doses increased or alcohol added to

the equation? Mental health professionals can sort out and help resolve the issues and work with a medical professional to keep patients safe and content.

Our senior community is also at risk. In some cases they are taking medication prescribed by different specialists for age-related conditions and depression pills. Happy hour is also a part of daily activities. In most cases, the caregivers are not trained to detect danger and the senior's children do not live close by. An appropriate clinician should be monitoring their meds and mental health as well and informing their caregivers and families.

In all cases, knowledge of the drugs prescribed and open communication with all clinicians is important. Consider all of the options. If someone in your life is experiencing these situations, seek help quickly. Sometimes a minor adjustment can save a life, maybe even yours!

*Addiction Reach Home manages the in-home practices and acts as a resource for addicts and their loved ones, clergy, legal and medical professionals, corporations and local inpatient facilities. For more information or to schedule a complimentary appointment, call (561) 427-1900 or visit [www.addictionreach.com](http://www.addictionreach.com) to meet our recovery team.*