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Rising Threats in the Nation’s Drug Epidemic

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Opinion

America's 150-Year Opioid Epidemic

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A bottle of laudanum, a highly addictive liquid preparation of opium widely used as a painkiller and sleep aid in the late 19th century. Country Doctor Museum, East Carolina University.
An American Tragedy

Age-adjusted rates of drug overdose death by state, US 2016

630,000 deaths from drug overdoses 1999-2016
Providing a pulse on the drug epidemic

30%  Of American adults receive Quest testing services each year

50%  Quest serves about half of the physicians and hospitals in the U.S.,
     about 470,000 physicians connect to Quest electronically

2,200  Quest operates 2,200+ patient service centers across the U.S.,
      many in Walmart and Safeway stores
Providing actionable insights with drug monitoring

Workplace Drug Testing

30 years of workplace drug testing results

Prescription/Clinical Drug Testing

6+ years helping clinicians monitor for drug misuse
Largest private database in the world with 44 billion de-identified lab test results*

*Quest analysis is based on aggregate de-identified data and compliant with HIPAA and other pertinent regulations.
Largest private database in the world with 44 billion de-identified lab test results*

Quest Diagnostics Health Trends report novel findings on heart disease, diabetes, allergies, influenza, chronic kidney disease based on Quest’s de-identified laboratory data*

Prescription Drug Monitoring Report – September 2013

*Quest analysis is based on aggregate de-identified data and compliant with HIPAA and other pertinent regulations.
The national rate of inconsistency—a measure of inappropriate drug use that may indicate the patient is misusing one or more drugs—was 52%.

**U.S.A.**

- Additional drugs found: 43%
- Different drugs found: 34%
- No drugs found: 23%
- Total Inconsistency: 52%

**Benzodiazepines** were the most common drug group associated with inconsistent test results, followed by Opiates and Oxycodone.
Appropriate opioid prescribing is critical

↓ Opioid prescriptions are on the decline (Source: CDC)
   In 2016, prescribing rate fell to lowest level in more than 10 years

↓ Opioid use is also lower, at least in the workforce (Source: Quest Diagnostics)
   In 2017, opioid positivity rate declined 17% compared to prior year
As prescription opioid use declines, new threats emerge

- Heroin + Fentanyl
- Benzodiazepines + Opioids
- Stimulants
- Gabapentin
Heroin + Fentanyl

Dangerous combination of illicit drugs

Heroin and fentanyl together is a potentially deadly combination because it will depress respiration.

19% Of positive heroin specimens tested by Quest in 2016 were also positive for non-prescribed fentanyl.
Benzodiazepines + Opioids

Dangerous combination of prescription drugs

Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines: Evaluation of Prescription Drug Monitoring by a United States Laboratory

Fred Leland McClure, PhD, MSci, F-ABFT, Justin K. Niles, MA, Harvey W. Kaufman, MD, and Jeffrey Gudin, MD
Benzodiazepines + Opioids

Analysis of Prescription Data

9.6% of individuals were prescribed both opioids and benzodiazepines

Quest Analysis of Prescription Data and Drug Testing Data

25.8% of individuals tested positive for combined use of opioids and benzodiazepines
Stimulants on the Rise

Cocaine positivity is up

7% increase in cocaine positivity nationally

11% increase in federally mandated safety-sensitive workers

Methamphetamine skyrockets in Midwestern and Southern U.S.

Rate increase 2 to 3 times in some areas
Drug epidemic ensnares 25-year-old pill for nerve pain

By MATTHEW PERRONE
May. 04, 2018

Novel insights into use of Gabapentin in Quest Diagnostics Health Trends™ report in September 2018
The drug epidemic spurs infectious disease

Quest and CDC collaborate on research of hepatitis and intravenous drug use
Four key points

#1: Evolution of the drug crisis

#2: Balanced policies

#3: Anyone is at Risk!

#4: Monitor impact on other diseases
Drug policies work!

16 deaths and 174 injuries due to on-the-job drug use (1987)
Drug policies work!

After years of decline, workforce drug positivity is at its highest level in a decade.

Drug Free Workplace Act

(Urine drug testing only for combined U.S. workforce.)
Track the drug trends in your state
www.QuestDrugMonitoring.com
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