

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Re: OxyContin  
HALIFAX MAIL STAR: February 12, 2004

As president of the North American Chronic Pain Association of Canada,(NACPAC) I am disturbed about the negative press that oxycontin has received of late. It seems that only negative accounts of the drug are reported, while the positive usage is never reported.

Oxycontin is a long acting opiate which is used to treat people with chronic pain. That is pain that lasts for six months or longer. People, who suffer from chronic pain, have had their lives severely altered, losing the ability to work in their chosen professions, take part in community activities, resulting in loss of friends, and quality of life. Oxycontin can reduce the pain considerably, (it does not take it away) so that these people are able to regain some of the lost quality of life. These people use oxycontin regularly, and do not receive a high, or mood altering effect. The reduction in pain allows them to resume some normalcy and makes them feel more acceptable to their family and friends.

People who abuse this drug, seem to use it to alter their mood, and will do anything to attain the drug. This is vastly different from people with chronic pain.

Statistics show that of all the five hundred million people for whom opiates are prescribed, only ten thousand people become addicted. That is a very small number. The bad press given the few who do become addicted, and their illegal activities, does great harm to the segment of the population who require these drugs to reduce their pain to a bearable level. It is most regrettable that the negative attention is the only attention paid to this drug.

The use of opiates for people who have chronic pain, is a very successful and safe treatment when used as prescribed. Please be fair, and give both sides of the picture when talking about opiates, specifically oxycontin.

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