Addiction Narratives:

How the Stories We Choose to Tell
& Our Language
Shapes Debate and Policy
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NEGRO COCAINE “FIENDS” ARE A NEW SOUTHERN MENACE

by Edward Huntington Williams, D. D.

For some years there have been rumors about the increase in drug addiction in the Southern states, but until recently no one knew the extent to which the addiction had spread. It was evident, however, that the problem was becoming serious, especially among the lower class blacks.

Murder and Insanity Increasing Among Lower Class Blacks Because They Have Taken to “Sniffing” Since Deprived of Whisky by Prohibition.

In the South the drug addiction problem is of recent origin, but it is growing rapidly. The first reports of addiction to narcotics came from the rural areas, but in recent years the problem has spread to urban centers as well.

The addiction to narcotics is most prevalent among the lower class blacks, who are often deprived of jobs and other means of support. The availability of drugs is also greater in these areas due to the high concentration of drug dealers.

The problem is not confined to the South, but is spreading to other regions as well. The government has taken steps to combat the problem, but it is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive solution.

Edward Huntington Williams is a well-known sociologist and educator who has written extensively on the problem of addiction and its social implications.
# Language of Addiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid</th>
<th>Use Instead</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addict, junkie, druggie, etc.</td>
<td>Person with Addiction or Person with Substance Use Disorder (SUD). Exception: when people use this language about themselves deliberately.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>Drug Misuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug Dependence</td>
<td>Addiction or substance use disorder. Unless you actually mean dependence!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addicted Baby, Opioid Baby, Crack Baby</td>
<td>Drug exposed baby, baby with neonatal abstinence syndrome (opioids only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean / Dirty</td>
<td>In recovery, abstinent, drug-free. For urine: positive drug test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medication-Assisted Treatment</td>
<td>Medication treatment for addiction, medication. We don’t have “Prozac-Assisted” treatment for depression!</td>
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# Addiction v. Dependence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addiction</th>
<th>Dependence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Compulsive drug use despite negative consequences.</td>
<td>Needing a substance to function without symptoms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Always problematic, by definition.</td>
<td>Can be problematic if substance is unavailable or if risks outweigh benefits.</td>
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<td>Typically characterized by relapse.</td>
<td>Relapse unlikely after withdrawal completed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requires explicit learning in order to spur drug seeking.</td>
<td>Can occur unconsciously. People can undergo withdrawal without being aware that the drug would relieve symptoms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Only affects people capable of seeking and obtaining drugs repeatedly.</td>
<td>Can affect anyone, including babies and medical patients who are not aware of the potential for dependence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characterized by craving and desire for the substance, regardless of circumstances.</td>
<td>Desire for substance is only associated with symptom relief, if patient is aware of association at all.</td>
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Opioid (Flawed) Narrative

• Big Pharma and greedy or gullible doctors by themselves “turned” patients into “addicts.”
• Most of those who became addicted are white, middle class pain patients.
• Opioids don’t work for chronic pain.
Opioid crisis leaves 8-year-old fatherless 06:44

(CNN) — It all started with pain killers after a dentist appointment. Now, Drake, a 32-year-old from Columbus, Ohio has struggled with opioid abuse for more than a decade.

"I was just in disbelief," Drake's mother Carlene says, adding that she never thought her son would be a heroin addict. CNN has chosen not to use last names to protect the family's privacy.

Drake's addiction makes life harder for his 8-year-old daughter, Ava. Her mother is out of the picture, too, with a long arrest record herself -- so eventually Carlene took legal custody of her granddaughter. "I knew she needed a stable environment, and that going into a foster care system (it) would be difficult to be able to see her parents, you know, as I've allowed her to see them."

As many children do when trying to cope with a parent’s addiction, Ava tried to appeal directly to her dad for answers. "So, first I asked, 'why do you take the drugs?'' she said. "And he says 'well I take them when I'm mad about something.' And I'm like, 'what are you mad about?' And he just doesn't tell me."
Figure 4. Source of prescription pain relievers for the most recent nonmedical use among past year users aged 12 or older, by type of user: annual averages, 2013 and 2014

1 Difference between recent initiates and occasional users is statistically significant at the .05 level.

2 Difference between recent initiates and frequent users is statistically significant at the .05 level.

3 Difference between occasional users and frequent users is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs), 2013 and 2014.
tion. Rates of carefully diagnosed addiction have averaged less than 8% in published studies, whereas rates of misuse, abuse, and addiction-related aberrant behaviors have ranged from 15 to 26%.\textsuperscript{101-103} A small (estimated at 4%) but growing percentage of persons who are addicted to prescription opioids transition to heroin,\textsuperscript{1} mainly because heroin is typically cheaper and in some instances easier to obtain than opioids.
Opioids for long-term treatment of noncancer pain

Published: 20 January 2010

Authors: Noble M, Treadwell JR, Tregaar SJ, Coates VH, Wiffen PJ, Akafozo C, Schoelles KM, Chou R

Primary Review Group: Pain, Palliative and Supportive Care Group

The findings of this systematic review suggest that proper management of a type of strong painkiller (opioids) in well-selected patients with no history of substance addiction or abuse can lead to long-term pain relief for some patients with a very small (though not zero) risk of developing addiction, abuse, or other serious side effects. However, the evidence supporting these conclusions is weak, and longer-term studies are needed to identify the patients who are most likely to benefit from treatment.

Authors’ conclusions:

Many patients discontinue long-term opioid therapy (especially oral opioids) due to adverse events or insufficient pain relief; however, weak evidence suggests that patients who are able to continue opioids long-term experience clinically significant pain relief. Whether quality of life or functioning improves is inconclusive. Many minor adverse events (like nausea and headache) occurred, but serious adverse events, including iatrogenic opioid addiction, were rare.

Read the full abstract...
Changing The Narrative is a network of reporters, researchers, academics, and advocates concerned about the way media represents drug use and addiction. Our mission is to help journalists report accurate, humane and scientifically reliable stories about this complex and often misunderstood terrain. We offer expert sources—including people with lived experience of the issues — and up-to-date, fact-checked, and evidence-based information on news and controversies.

The Tired Narratives of Drug Policy

"Prescription Fentanyl is Driving Overdoses"
Distinguishing between Illicit and Pharmaceutical Fentanyl

"Hooked on Opioids"
The Difference Between Addiction and Dependence

"It's Trading One Addiction for Another"
Myths about Medication for Addiction Treatment

"Filling Parks & Playgrounds with Syringe Litter"
Misconceptions about Syringe Service Programs
ChangingTheNarrative.News

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