



Senior Sense

Drug and Alcohol Treatment for Seniors

What's the fastest growing demographic in terms of alcohol and drug addiction? Surprisingly, senior citizens represent one of the most troubling problems facing addiction treatment professionals today.

The combination of loneliness and access to prescription medications has created a worrisome situation among older men and women who are seeing their failing health put at even greater risk by addiction to drugs and alcohol.

What are the Most Common Addictions for Seniors?

Although seniors may become addicted to any number of drugs, there are a number of substances that make up the lion's share of these cases, including:

- Vicodin
- OxyContin
- Alcohol
- Marijuana

What complicates all of these addictions is that older individuals tend to be in a more frail state of health. Large amounts of drugs or alcohol will only serve to worsen an individual's health and put them at risk for more serious health

KNOWLEDGE FOR SENIOR ADULTS

issues, including heart failure, liver failure and stroke.

There are a number of reasons behind the growing rate of senior citizens living with addiction. Chief among them is that older people are living longer thanks to a number of advances in modern medicine.

These advances mean that seniors have ready access to a number of different prescription medications. Given the right (poor) emotional state, this can lead many to abuse their prescribed medications, which in turn may lead to addiction.

The Importance of Drug and Alcohol Treatment for Seniors

Sadly, we tend to neglect our senior citizens when we should be celebrating them instead.

As a result, many live alone in isolation, even though they have younger family members in the area.

As everyone knows, loneliness and isolation often lead to substance abuse and addiction, as the individual will attempt to mask their emotional pain with the temporary euphoria provided by these substances.

Senior drug and alcohol treatment is important, because it takes these

Continued on Page 2

KNOWLEDGE FOR

SENIOR ADULTS

Continued from Page 1

individuals out of their isolated environment and relocates them to a place where everyone cares about their health and well being.

During addiction treatment, seniors receive care from professionals who help them regain their dignity and form strong bonds with other seniors in the program.

As such, the treatment experience for seniors is not just important because it promotes sober living, but also because it helps create a sense of community and caring for these important individuals who desperately need it.

Source: <http://www.thegooddrugsguide.com>



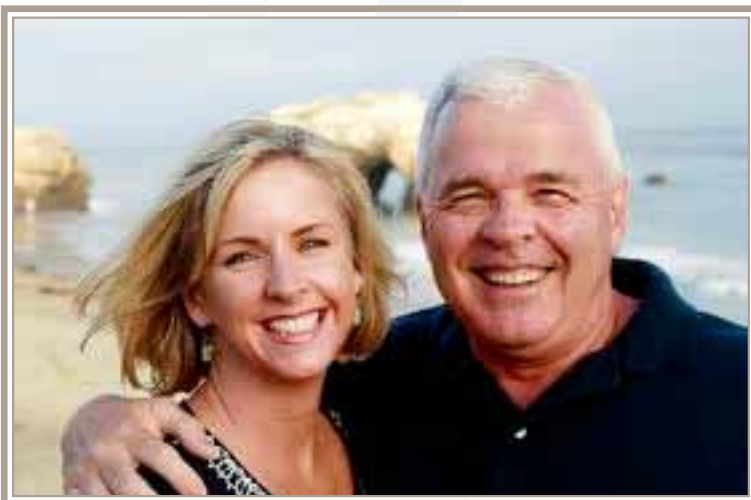
Alcoholism, Drug Addiction Among Seniors Expected To Triple By 2020

The aging boomer population — which is now facing financial strain, job loss, declining health, and grieving the death of a parent — has some addiction experts concerned.

As Baby Boomers enter a transitional stage in their lives, those new stressors make them more prone to depression and anxiety. This depression and anxiety are fueling both substance abuse and other behavioral addictions, such as hoarding and compulsive gambling, experts say.

According to government reports, an estimated three million American seniors suffer from alcoholism or drug dependency. That number is estimated to triple by 2020 as baby boomers continue to age.

While alcoholism is the most predominant addiction among seniors, a recent *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* says the rate of illicit drug use has increased more than 3 percent over the past eight years.



New Survey Shows Seniors Struggle Under the Weight of Multiple Medication Use

One in four seniors take between 10 and 19 pills each day

America's seniors are being overwhelmed by the number of prescription drugs they take on a daily basis.

According to a new national survey of more than 1,000 people ages 65 and older who use medications, more than half (51 percent) take at least five different prescription drugs regularly, and one in four take between 10 and 19 pills each day.

The challenge of managing multiple medications is clear - nearly three in five (57 percent) of those polled admit that they forget to take their medications. Furthermore, the more drugs they use, the more likely they are not to remember to take them. Among those using five or more medications, 63 percent say they forget doses.

It's usually the patients who are in worse health who are taking large numbers of prescription drugs. For these people, especially, taking their medications properly and regularly is critical. The problem is that the more medications prescribed, the harder it is for older people to manage them well and know essential information that can help prevent medication-related harm.

The survey, conducted by Kelton Research on behalf of Medco Health

Solutions, Inc. also reveals what seniors don't know about how their medications could potentially harm them, and the more medications they take, the less they seem to know. More than one third (34 percent) of seniors using five or more prescription drugs do not feel knowledgeable enough about the drugs they're prescribed or their potential side effects, and 35 percent are not sure they can name all the medications they use.

Costly Concerns

Multiple medication use is also taking its toll on the financial health of America's seniors. The ability to afford their drugs is the top concern among 40 percent of seniors taking five or more prescription medications daily, followed by their worry over drug side effects (23 percent) and interactions (17 percent).



KNOWLEDGE FOR

SENIOR ADULTS

Tips for winter

At NCADD, we like to remind older adults and their families to be ready for cold weather by doing things that protect their homes and their health. Here are some practical tips:

- Seniors should make sure they set their thermostats above 65 degrees. Older persons are more susceptible to fall ill during the cold winter months. People who lower the thermostat to reduce heating bills risk developing hypothermia, a potentially fatal condition in which the body temperature drops dangerously low.
- It's important to have the furnace checked to be sure that it is in good shape and heating ducts are properly ventilated. Proper ventilation is also a concern when using alternative heat from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater. If you use heating oil, be sure that you have enough in your tank.
- Finally, seniors need to remember that the flu season runs through April, so a flu shot is strongly recommended for people ages 50 years and older, who are considered to be at risk for influenza.

For assistance in Middlesex County, you can contact the County's Department on Aging at (732) 745-3295.

Board of Trustees

Steven G. Liga
MSW, LSW, LCADC, CPS, CCS
CEO & Executive Director

<i>President</i>	<i>Vice President</i>
Steven S. Polinsky	Bill DeJianne
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
Rakesh Ganta	Agim Coma

Immediate Past President
Katherine Fallon

Members
Rev. Edwin Chinery
Mark J. Conklin
Jeff Jannarone
Aurea Pereria
George Rusuloj
Shelly Joseph Thoms

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) of Middlesex County, Inc. is a not for profit public health agency whose mission is to improve the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities through the elimination or reduction of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug-related problems. Services focus on prevention, education, advocacy, and support for personal recovery, and are based on rigorous evaluation and documented positive outcomes.

NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc.
152 Tices Lane
East Brunswick, NJ 08816
732-254-3344
www.ncadd-middlesex.org

