Long-Term Opiate Cessation: The Nurse’s Role as Patient Advocate
Sheryl L. Lambert AA, LPN, BSN Student
Faculty Advisor: Ericka Sanner-Stiehr, PhD, RN

PURPOSE
The purpose of this literature review is to describe the role of Registered Nurses (RNs) in promoting long-term cessation in opioid-dependent patients. The nurse-patient relationship provides opportunities to intervene for improved patient outcomes.

BACKGROUND
- Accidental overdose is the leading cause of death among adults ages 25-64
- 28,647 deaths (61%) of all drug overdoses were related to opioid overdoses
- 1.9 million Americans reported substance abuse disorder involving prescription pain relievers in 2014
- 586,000 reported substance abuse disorder involving heroin
- 80% of new heroin users started out misusing prescription painkillers
- Opioid pain reliever prescribing has quadrupled since 1999
- 259 million prescriptions were written for opioids in 2012, more than enough to give a bottle to every American adult.

METHODS
- Databases searched: PubMed, CINAHL, Medscape; Internet search
- Keywords: addiction; opioid; nurs*; barriers; self-efficacy
- Inclusion criteria: focus on treatment adherence, patient outcomes, and opioid-specific addictions
- A total of 15 articles were identified.

RESULTS
Predictors of Treatment Adherence
- Early identification of behaviors and patient perceptions can assist the RN in identification for the patient’s desire for long-term cessation adherence.
- Motivational interviewing can increase abstinence self-efficacy.
- Abstinence self-efficacy has shown as one of the strongest predictors to at least 1 year abstinence.
- Individualized interventions increase treatment adherence.

Education for Nurses
- Perceptions of opioid-dependent patients can be negative, leading to dissonant care.
- Continuing education for RNs should include assessments and interventions specific to this population.
- Use of screening tools such as Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale or Lead’s Dependence Questionnaire in Emergency Departments and primary care clinics.

Addressing Barriers
- Fear of withdrawal can deter patients from seeking treatment.
- Withdrawal can be managed with medication at specialized clinics.
- Outreach and referrals to social services increase treatment adherence and long-term cessation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING PRACTICE
RNs are in a unique position to positively impact patient outcomes. Based on this literature review, the following recommendations for training are suggested:
- **RN Education:**
  - Self-reflection to identify biases
  - Training in interview techniques
  - Current treatments & programs
- **Patient Education:**
  - Adherence to treatment
  - Referrals to resources
  - Prescription opioid home management.
- Collaboration with prescribing physicians.
- Interprofessional, individualized plans of care.

Current Policy Reforms
- **2016** "CONGRESS APPROVES NEW OPIOID ADDICTION BILL" for increased services

REFERENCES
For complete list of references email: slt8bf@mail.umsl.edu