

Adverse Reactions to Prescription Drugs Lead- ing Cause of Death in US

“Adverse drug effects...are a primary reason why a leading cause of death is iatrogenic illness, i.e. illness resulting from medical treatment. According to conservative estimates published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, iatrogenic illness is the third-leading cause of death in this country. More than 120,000 people die from adverse effects of prescribed medications each year. [Starfield 2000] However, last year a new study, came up with even more dismal figures. [Null, et al, 2003] That study concludes that iatrogenic illness is actually the leading cause of death in the United States and that adverse reactions to prescription drugs are responsible for more than 300,000 deaths a year.”

The Biology of Belief by Bruce Lipton Ph.D. 2005, pp. 107-108.

Null, G., Ph.D., C. Dean, M.D. N. D., et al. (2003). *Death by Medicine*. New York, Nutrition Institute of America.

Starfield, B. (2000). “Is US Health Really the Best in the World?” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 284(4): 483-485.

A.L.L. We Need

By D. Scott Kelly

Recovery from an addiction / compulsive behavior requires three main ingredients. First, we need to **ABSTAIN** from self-defeating behaviors. As we expand our definition of health, we include more self-defeating behaviors to abstain from. The second main ingredient of recovery involves **LIFESTYLE CHANGE**. As we change our behaviors and habits to better reflect our new definition of

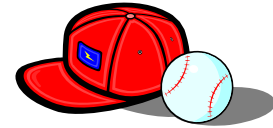
health, we find new faces and new places. The third ingredient of recovery involves **LEARNING**. Learning how to learn is a crucial skill in recovery. None of us lives long enough to learn only from our own mistakes. Learning from the experience, strength and hope of others are cornerstones of 12 step recovery. A - abstinence, L - lifestyle change, L - learning: these are the three main ingredients of recovery.

Knowledge is power. Knowledge about myself and how to live becomes self-empowering. Through our addictions we are faced with powerlessness and in our recovery, we learn how to align ourselves with higher ideals, work on cleaning up our attitudes and behaviors and then help others. Learning this template for change, we begin to apply these principles to other areas of our life and we become healthier than we could have imagined. Through learning, our whole attitude and outlook on life can change. Knowledge combined with healthier choices leads to an increase in our quality of life that was previously unimaginable.

Many of you have heard of the *placebo effect*. Some people get better when they *believe* (falsely) that they are getting medicine. Some call it the perception effect, while others refer to it as the “belief effect” because whether our belief is accurate or inaccurate, our attitudes and behavior are impacted just the same. An example of the placebo / belief effect comes from a 2002 study from the Baylor School of Medicine where they evaluated surgery for patients with severe, debilitating knee pain. The lead doctor in the study was quoted prior to the study as saying, “All good surgeons know there is no placebo effect in surgery.” But he was trying to figure out which part of the surgery was giving his patients relief. Patients in the study were divided into three groups. Damaged cartilage was shaved in the knee of one group. For another group, he flushed the knee joint, removing material thought to be causing the inflammatory effect. Both of these are considered standard treatments for arthritic knees. The third group got



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“fake” surgery. Patients were sedated, three standard incisions were made, the doctor talked and acted just as he would have during the real surgery and after 40 minutes, the doctor sewed up the incisions as if he had done the surgery. All three groups were prescribed the same postoperative care that included an exercise program. The results for the first two groups were as expected—significant improvement; however, the placebo group improved just as much as the first two groups! (*The Biology of Belief* by Lipton, 2005)

“Studies have shown the placebo effect to be powerful in treating other diseases, including asthma and Parkinson’s. In the treatment of depression, placebos are stars... eighty percent of the effect of antidepressants, as measured in clinical trials, could be attributed to the placebo effect...in more than half of the clinical trials for the six leading antidepressants, the drugs did not outperform placebo, sugar pills.” (Lipton, p.141)

“Almost every major illness that people acquire has been linked to chronic stress.” (Lipton, p.152)

Attending 12-step meetings gives us support to abstain, encouragement to change our lifestyle and opportunities to learn more from others. Attending meetings is an easy way to connect with other like-minded people. By reducing our stress, our health will improve. Doing what we believe to be “the next right thing” probably will be. Choose change - it is worth the initial discomfort and temporary struggle. New habits can be learned!

Reference: *The Biology of Belief* by Bruce Lipton, Ph.D. 2005 - www.brucelipton.com