

## ETHICS AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF DENTISTRY : SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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## LEGAL MEDICINE ISSUES PERTAINING TO IMPAIRED (SUBSTANCE ABUSE) HEALTH CARE AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

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**DENTIST'S WHO USE, MISUSE, ABUSE OR ARE DEPENDENT ON MOOD ALTERING SUBSTANCES ARE VICTIMS WHO NEED HELP**

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### HEADLINES

- ▶ "I was a good dentist, even after downing a bottle of vodka" (*Castle Craig Addiction Hospital*)
- ▶ "CIS Summarily Suspends Pinckney Dentist's License for Substance Abuse" (*Michigan Newswire – CIS Bureau of Health Services November 1999*)
- ▶ "CIS Summarily Suspends Dearborn Dentist's License for Substance Abuse" (*Michigan Newswire – CIS Bureau of Health Services April 2003*)
- ▶ "Manhattan Dentist is Arrested on Drug and Pornography Charges" (*New York Times, November 2015*)
- ▶ "New York Suspends Dental Assistant Who Stole Painkillers at Work" (*Syracuse Post Standard, 2015*)
- ▶ "Kids Use Less than Half of Prescribed Opioids" (*DrBicuspid, November 2015*)

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### TYPICAL RESPONSE on VACATION OUT OF STATE

Dr. Dentist was really peeved! He was arguing with the druggist because his favorite cure-all could not be bought without a prescription.

"Look, Dr. You can't have this without a prescription because it's a habit-forming drug."

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**"IT IS NOT!" yelled Dr. Dentist!**

**"I ought to know..."**

**"I've been taking it regularly for seventeen years!"**

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### INTERESTING STATISTICS

- ▶ ABOUT 3.5 MILLION PEOPLE ARE THOUGHT TO BE DEPENDENT ON ILLICIT DRUGS
- ▶ ABOUT 8.2 MILLION ARE DEPENDENT ON ALCOHOL
- ▶ ABOUT 3.4 MILLION ARE DEPENDENT ON TOBACCO
- ▶ ABOUT 16% OF THE DENTAL PROFESSION ARE THOUGHT TO BE DEPENDENT ON EITHER ILLICIT DRUGS, ALCOHOL OR TOBACCO

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## SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE

- ▶ INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO STOP USING SUBSTANCE DESPITE SELF-KNOWLEDGE THAT THE PROBLEMS ARE CAUSED BY CONTINUED SUBSTANCE USE

\* LACK of CAPACITY to CONTROL USE

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## DEPENDENCY/ADDICTION

- ▶ FOSTERED BY:
  - ▶ STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENT
  - ▶ LONG HOURS
  - ▶ EXCESSIVE PROFESSIONAL DEMANDS BY PATIENTS AND STAFF
  - ▶ EASY AVAILABILITY OF MOOD ALTERING SUBSTANCES

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## SIMPLY STATED

- ▶ USE =
  - ▶ NORMAL DRINKING, SOCIAL DRINKING
  - ▶ MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED
- ▶ ABUSE =
  - ▶ GETTING DRUNK OR HIGH
  - ▶ DRIVING UNDER THE "INFLUENCE"
  - ▶ TAKING MEDICATIONS AFTER NEEDED
- ▶ DEPENDENCY =
  - ▶ ADDICTION/ALCOHOLISM/DRUGS

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## DRUGS VERSUS ALCOHOL BUT ALCOHOL IS A DRUG

- ▶ 80 – 85% OF DENTISTS ADDICTED PREFER DRUGS OVER ALCOHOL
- ▶ OTHER COMMON DRUGS INVOLVED:
  - ▶ NITROUS OXIDE (HARDEST TO SHAKE)
  - ▶ VICODIN
  - ▶ OXYCONTIN
  - ▶ LIBRIUM
  - ▶ MORPHINE

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## GOALS OF THE DENTAL PROFESSION

- ▶ IDENTIFY IMPAIRED DENTISTS AND:
  - ▶ PROVIDE THEM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE THEIR CONDITION PROPERLY DIAGNOSED
  - ▶ PROVIDE THEM WITH TREATMENT WHICH IS CONFIDENTIAL AND EFFECTIVE
  - ▶ PROVIDE THEM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECOVER AND RETURN TO SOCIETAL ACTIVITIES

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## DENTIST SUBSTANCE ABUSERS ARE FOUND TO BE

- ▶ 1/3 LESS PRODUCTIVE
- ▶ MORE LIKELY TO QUIT EARLY
- ▶ MORE LIKELY TO BE LATE

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## RED FLAGS

- ▶ TREMORS OR JITTERS
- ▶ ALCOHOL LIKE ODOR ON BREATH
- ▶ FREQUENT MOOD SWINGS
- ▶ ISOLATION AND WITHDRAWAL FROM FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES
- ▶ INCREASED ORDERING OF PATIENT SAMPLE MEDS AND NITROUS OXIDE
- ▶ LOSS OF ATTENTION TO PATIENT CARE AND STAFF MANAGEMENT
- ▶ DISHELVELED APPEARANCE
- ▶ HANDWRITING CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE DAY
- ▶ MEMORY DIFFICULTIES

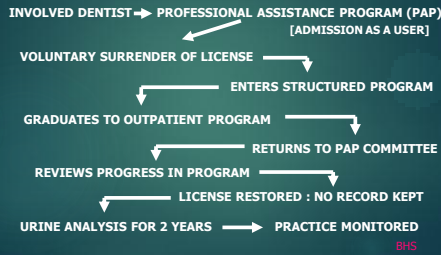
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## HELP and REMEDIES

- ▶ INTENSIVE TREATMENT PROGRAMS WITH STRUCTURED AFTERCARE PROGRAMS
- ▶ ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND ADVOCACY OF PEER ASSISTANCE SERVICES PROVIDED BY PROFESSIONALS AND DENTAL COLLEAGUES
- ▶ DENTAL PRACTICE COVERAGE

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## PROCEDURAL SEQUENCE



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## GOOD NEWS

- ▶ ONE OF HIGHEST LONG TERM SUCCESS RATES IS SEEN AMONG HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS WHO ENTER INTENSIVE TREATMENT PROGRAMS WITH STRUCTURED AFTERCARE PROGRAMS
- ▶ **5 YEAR SUCCESS RATE IN DENTISTRY EXCEEDS 86%**

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