

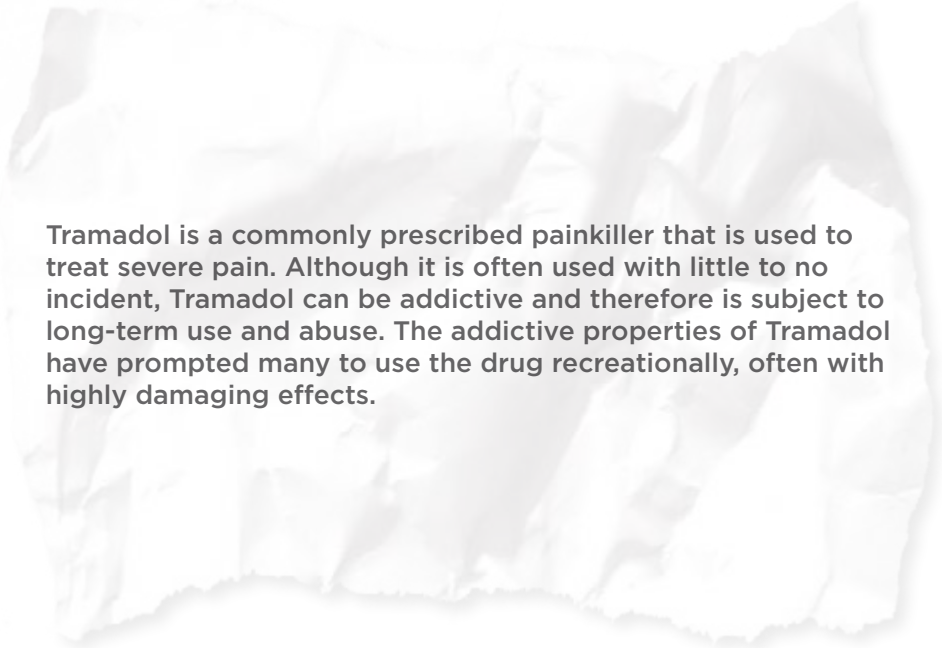
THE

TRAMADOL

EFFECT

WHAT YOU WILL FIND

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RECREATIONAL VALUE OF TRAMADOL
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Tramadol is a commonly prescribed painkiller that is used to treat severe pain. Although it is often used with little to no incident, Tramadol can be addictive and therefore is subject to long-term use and abuse. The addictive properties of Tramadol have prompted many to use the drug recreationally, often with highly damaging effects.

SOCIETAL IMPACT OF TRAMADOL

Many people see Tramadol as just another painkiller, one of many that a doctor can prescribe. Tramadol is often associated with other common painkillers such as Vicodin and Oxycontin. Because the directive to take Tramadol comes from a doctor in most cases, people assume that it's okay to consume the drug. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Tramadol works by physically changing how the body responds to pain. The drug modifies the brain's sensors and enables people to withstand higher amounts of pain. Just as is the case with other narcotics, the changes Tramadol causes on people is what makes it addictive.

Tramadol is commonplace among those suffering from severe pain, particularly of the chronic variety. Tramadol can be prescribed to help surgery patients to recover from their procedures; it can also be given to those suffering from arthritis and other long-term diseases. It is only available by prescription.



RECREATIONAL VALUE OF TRAMADOL

Unlike many narcotics, Tramadol is not commonly associated with recreational use. The many negative side effects of Tramadol inhibit any of the drug's other effects that are typically associated with recreational substances.

However, the initial introduction of Tramadol via prescription frequently leads to recreational use by those who have extra pills left over, or by those who simply enjoyed the effects of the drug. This is typically where addiction to Tramadol begins. Because the drug modifies the brain, kicking the habit isn't as simple as not taking the drug; after all, the brain has been conditioned to believe that it needs Tramadol to survive.

The recreational use of Tramadol is not unlike that of other narcotics, such as cocaine. The initial use is when most of the benefit is derived, and subsequent uses are ill-fated attempts to recapture that feeling. This pursuit of the initial high, in conjunction with the constant pain that most people who consume Tramadol are plagued with, foments a perpetual spiral of abuse and withdrawal.

Despite these dangers, Tramadol is not well-known for its addictive properties, at least not to the extent that Vicodin and Oxycontin are. Yet, people looking for pain relief are taking note of Tramadol. According to PJ Online, Tramadol prescriptions increased by more than 400 percent over a four-year period between 2007 and 2011. At the same time, prescriptions for Zamadol and Zydol dropped dramatically. It is clear that customers are choosing Tramadol in mass quantities; considering that Tramadol is not considered a controlled substance in the United States and other areas, it is even clearer that governments have been far too slow to react.

**TRAMADOL PRESCRIPTIONS
INCREASED BY MORE THAN**

400%

BETWEEN 2007 AND 2011

PHYSICAL IMPACT

Tramadol is intended to help manage pain, but it often causes a number of side effects. These conditions are exacerbated with continued use and abuse. Not all of these symptoms are present in all people who abuse Tramadol, but any combination of these may be indicative of Tramadol abuse.

- Excessive fatigue
- Inability to remain conscious
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities
- Sweating
- Shivering
- Drastic change in appetite
- Stomach pain
- Decrease in sexual desire
- Pain in joints and limbs
- High blood pressure
- Change in size of pupils

Additionally, Tramadol has some telltale signs of withdrawal. If someone is trying to kick their Tramadol habit, or if they simply have gone too long without a dose, they may be restless or nauseous, or they may have a runny nose or runny eyes.

Behaviorally, Tramadol can change people. Addiction to Tramadol often means going to multiple doctors to get prescriptions, then going to multiple pharmacies to get the prescriptions filled. There is also increased potential for criminal activity, such as robbing a pharmacy or stealing a physician's prescription pad. People addicted to Tramadol and other painkillers may also ask others to procure medication for them; since many people miss the signs of addiction, they agree and unwittingly deepen the addiction.

Each person will react differently to Tramadol, so it's up to the people who are in closest contact with those taking the drug to notice these differences. In many cases, people who abuse prescription drugs know that they have a problem, but they often believe that they can hide it. They also believe that they aren't in any danger until it's too late. It's critical to look for these signs if there is ever any suspicion of an addiction to Tramadol.



MENTAL IMPACT

Because Tramadol's main impact on the body occurs directly in the brain, the mental impact of Tramadol is the most significant aspect of addiction to the drug. The physical symptoms one sees in a Tramadol abuser are relatively insignificant when compared to the inner turmoil experienced by those who habitually use Tramadol.

A common side effect of Tramadol is the sudden development of aggressive behavior. Studies have linked Tramadol use with aggression in dogs, but this has not been proven in a widespread manner with humans as of yet. Still, it is significant because the increase in aggression combined with the urgent need to take more Tramadol can put a user in serious trouble.

Confrontations with well-intentioned friends and family, or even pharmacists who suspect addiction, may arise due to Tramadol abuse. It is urged that those looking to stage an intervention be prepared for the potential of aggression or violence.

Additionally, Tramadol abuse can place people in danger of self-harm or suicidal thoughts. This is especially hard to pinpoint because most prescription drug abusers keep their habit secret; if people don't even know that someone is abusing Tramadol, they are not very likely to

be able to stop an attempt at self-harm or suicide. Again, the brain is changed by Tramadol to the point that people think they need to take it all the time. It isn't easy to get someone to realize that this behavior isn't normal, and in the face of mounting resistance, people may think it's easier to commit suicide than to fight their addiction.

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EMOTIONAL IMPACT

The emotional impact of Tramadol is a double-edged sword. While the person using the drug is the main factor, this abuse also takes a major toll on the family and friends who care about that person. Successfully helping someone to fight this problem requires the right touch, one that is focused almost entirely on the person with the addiction.

It's fairly easy for someone to notice that something isn't quite right with a loved one. It's exponentially more difficult to tie these changes to a particular drug, particularly a relatively obscure substance like Tramadol. However, keeping tabs on behavioral and physical changes -- especially pain level -- can be clues that someone is abusing a painkiller. If a painkiller isn't actually helping someone to be pain-free, something is wrong.

The problem comes when people examine the impact of someone else's Tramadol abuse on their own lives. It can be easy to be angry at the user, since their use of Tramadol has added so much stress and worry to their own lives. While there is certainly merit to these feelings, this is the wrong approach to take. People who become addicted to Tramadol didn't necessarily do anything wrong. They just took a medication prescribed by their doctor and found that they couldn't function without it. Therefore, it isn't fair to blame someone for Tramadol addiction. Often times, it just happens.

This isn't to say that the emotional impact of Tramadol addiction can't be used as a positive thing. Interventions and personal pleas can be quite helpful, as long as they're done correctly. Making a Tramadol user feel guilty about his or her habit will just make things worse. Instead, approaching the situation with love and taking actionable steps to get that person help will go a long way.



POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

Due to tramadol's status as an opioid analgesic -- that is, a drug that directly changes the composition of the central nervous system -- the potential for addiction is quite high. It's not surprising that people become addicted to Tramadol when the drug literally tells the body that it has to have it. Therefore, it is strongly advised that those who have battled drug or alcohol addiction in the past not take Tramadol for pain relief. Since

TRAMADOL IS A NARCOTIC, THERE IS A VERY HIGH CHANCE OF A RELAPSE BACK INTO DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE.

Tramadol also lends itself to addiction because it can be taken discreetly, leaving no outward signs of consumption. People can carry Tramadol addictions for lengthy periods of time; as long as there is a steady supply of pills and nobody picks up on the side effects of addiction, there is virtually no way somebody could get caught.

Significant due diligence must be done in any potential case of Tramadol addiction, for if this erratic behavior is written off merely as a coincidence, the ramifications could be fatal. (Note that crushing long-release tablets and snorting them, instead of consuming them regularly, is almost always a sure sign of addiction.)

CONSEQUENCES OF ADDICTION

Although Tramadol is often seen as a “safe” drug, the reality is anything but. According to The Daily Mail, Tramadol is twice as strong as codeine. And people don’t even have to abuse Tramadol to die from taking the drug.

There were 154 accidental deaths caused by Tramadol in the UK in 2011, most of which were caused by innocuous dosage errors. People simply took twice the recommended dosage by accident and paid the price with their lives. Perhaps these deaths could have been prevented by caution, but the reality is that people died from Tramadol without even tempting fate. The potential for fatality due to Tramadol is significantly higher for those who habitually abuse the drug.

Tramadol has been linked with strokes, seizures and heart attacks. Again, these symptoms affect people who simply exceed their normal dosage by accident. People who take more than is recommended by their physician, or who snort long-release tablets, or who abuse the drug for excessive periods of time, place themselves at risk of death on a daily basis.

Doctors prescribe painkillers such as Tramadol to their patients because they believe the benefits will outnumber the drawbacks. Unfortunately, this isn’t such a cut-and-dry equation, nor is it any sort of guarantee. It also assumes that patients will take the pills as directed. Unfortunately, due to the brain-changing properties of Tramadol, it isn’t as simple as waiting four to six hours for another dose. People are literally being trained to take more Tramadol every time they take a pill.

It’s entirely possible to take Tramadol and suffer no addictive consequences and face no health problems. However, approximately one in five adults who takes prescription medication suffers from addiction. Given Tramadol’s strength and the lack of public outcry surrounding the drug relative to this strength, there is definite reason for concern.

Those who are prescribed Tramadol must exercise extreme caution when handling the medication. Furthermore, people with relatives who take Tramadol must spread the word about its addictive properties and the warning signs that come with excessive use. Even with this knowledge, Tramadol addiction and abuse can still take place, but it can be significantly limited.

154

accidental deaths in the UK in 2011