

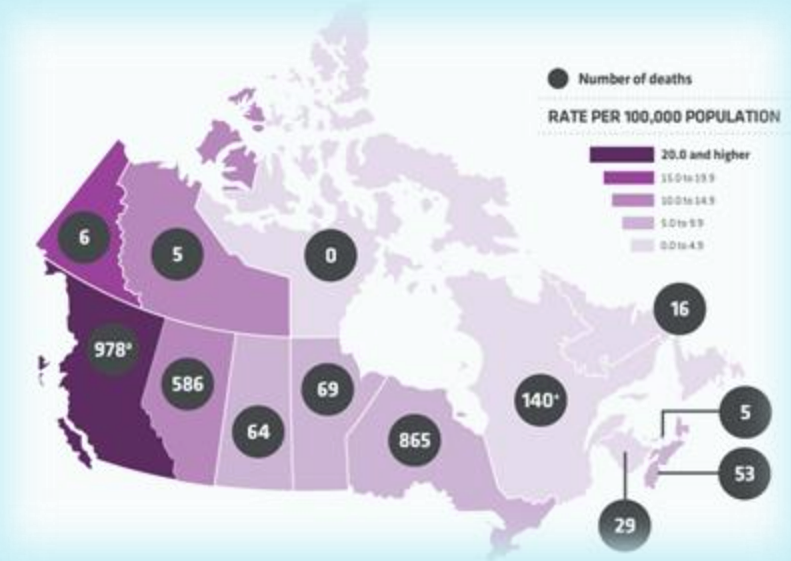
Opioid Crisis in Canada

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Introduction

- The opioid crisis in Canada is a significant public health concern, with rising rates of overdose, addiction and mental disorders.
- This policy brief showcases an overview of the issue, examines policy options and provides strategies to address the crisis at hand.



(Government of Canada, 2019)

What's the issue?



- Canada is facing a huge opioid crisis that has many underlying factors that contribute (Neilson et al., 2019).
- Opioids have been used for a variety of medicinal purposes, in addition to their medicinal use opioids have been used for recreational purposes due to their euphoric effects (Neilson et al., 2019).
- Uneasy tension between the use of the drug for medicinal purposes versus their potential for abuse and addiction.
- The first accurate and comprehensive monograph on opiate addiction was written by the pioneering addiction psychiatrist Eduardo Levinstein (Neilson et al., 2019).



What's the issue?



- Opioids are a significant part of modern medical treatments primarily used for the management of pain and anaesthetics, the prescription of these drugs rose drastically within the last 25 years (Neilson et al., 2019).
- The results of opioid overdose is devastating “In 2019, there were 3,923 reported deaths from opioid overdose, and 94% of these deaths were unintentional (Government of Canada, 2019)”.



Cause



- Substantial increase in the prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription opioids (Neilson et al., 2019).
- The limited accessibility to opioid agonist treatments (OATs) (George et al., 2021).



Policy options

- The implementation of psychosocial interventions such as motivational interviewing, motivational enhancement therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy and contingency are all ways that help reduce the negative effects of the opioid crisis (George et al., 2021).



Opioid Agonist Treatment

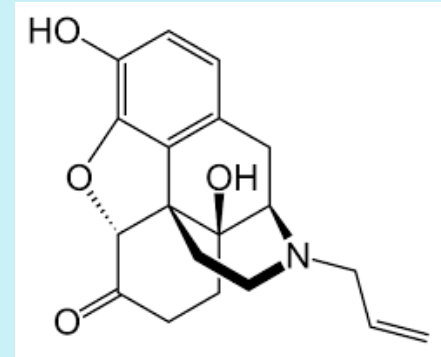
Policy options

- The treatment option of psychosocial interventions has been implemented it is not as widely available.
- It has been known that the provided evidence based psychosocial interventions has significantly increased the treatment retention in opioid agonist treatment programs (George et al., 2021).
 - Methadone, buprenorphine/naloxone
- The combination of these two treatment



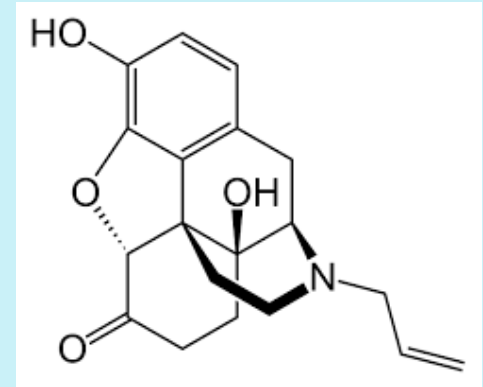
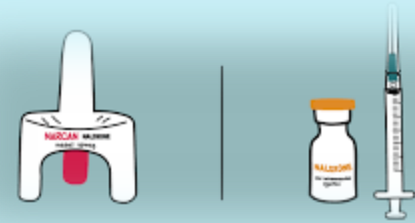
Policy options

- More openly available access to naloxone.
- According to Paynter & Richardson, the importance of naloxone use is a key strategy for tackling Canada's opioid issue. Naloxone administration is acknowledged by the Canadian Nurses Association and other nursing associations as a practical and evidence-based harm reduction strategy to lessen the negative impacts of substance use on one's health, relationships, and finances (Paynter & Richardson, 2018).



Policy options

- Take-home naloxone kits
- When given via take-home kits, naloxone enables both medical professionals and the general population to respond appropriately to opioid toxicity and possible overdoses (Paynter & Richardson, 2018).
- harm reduction counselling, quickly responding to overdose symptoms, and identifying overdose signs
- With 60 documented overdose reversals and more than 1,500 kits distributed in Nova Scotia, the program's success highlights naloxone's potential to be a critical component in lowering the number of opioid-related deaths (Paynter & Richardson, 2018).



Recommendation

- Expanding the integration of naloxone to mitigate the opioid crisis.
- This take on mitigating the crisis can be introduced in schools at an age-appropriate level allowing the public to be exposed to the possible resources that they can access in case of an emergency. This ensures that individuals are equipped with life-saving skills provided in a safe educational environment.



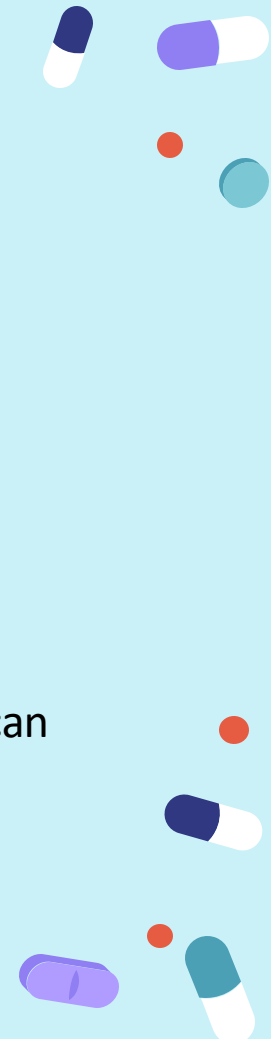
Recommendation

- Incorporating Naloxone education into school programs can include interactive workshops like the BRAVO and DARE program offered in the Halton District School Board, introduced in elementary school.
- Incorporating this can emphasise the importance of timely intervention and the proper usage of naloxone.





Conclusion

- The opioid crisis in Canada demands a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to effectively mitigate its devastating effects.
 - The rising rates of overdose, addiction, and mental health disorders showcase the urgency of addressing this public health concern.
 - While policy options such as psychosocial interventions have shown promise in reducing the negative impacts of the crisis, their limited availability highlights the need for broader implementation, which can be explored using naloxone.
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References

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