

Opioid Addiction and Substance Abuse Alleviated Using Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: Safe and Effective Intervention in Drug Epidemic

The TreatNOW Coalition reports that Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy is being used worldwide to help brain injured patients with their desire to heal their wounded brains, get off and stay off drugs, and alleviate the pain of withdrawal. HBOT research shows similarities in successful treatment of brain wounds from substance abuse, to the wounds caused by traumatic brain injuries, and the brain injuries endured by drug addicts.

Washington, DC ([PRWEB](#)) August 23, 2017 -- Based on worldwide research and decades of evidence, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy continues to prove the safety and efficacy of HBOT in treating and helping to heal addictions and substance abuse disorders. The TreatNOW Coalition, representing clinics across the US, points to research showing the similarities of the wounds to the brain from traumatic brain injuries, and the brain injuries endured by drug addicts. That physical damage, evident in brain scans, shows that HBOT demonstrates positive results in helping brain injured patients with their desire to heal their wounded brains, get off and stay off drugs, and alleviate the pain of withdrawal.

The President, together with HHS Secretary Tom Price, M.D., recently announced grants to help states and territories combat opioid addiction. The funding, which is the first of two rounds provided for in the 21st Century Cures Act, will be provided through the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). And the search is on for alternative and innovative ways to deal with underlying causes of the disease. Addiction is more and more viewed as a disease, not a psychological failure of the will. Damage to the brain caused by substance abuse must be viewed as amenable to medical intervention. Research shows that symptoms of addiction can be reduced and eliminated when the disease to the brain is treated like a wound, without drugs or other palliative and ineffective interventions that lead typically to relapse.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared the opioid crisis an epidemic. The President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis recommended that POTUS declare the crisis a national emergency. They stated: "With approximately 142 Americans dying every day [due to opioid addiction], America is enduring a death toll equal to September 11th every three weeks." The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that there were nearly 35,000 deaths from opioid overdose in 2015, up from over 11,000 in 2002. They are seeking alternatives to failing conventional "standard of care."

On December 2016, the President signed The 21st Century Cures Act. A major component of the law is an effort to expedite approval of breakthrough medical technologies for patients with life-threatening illnesses and limited treatment options. Without specifically focusing on the opioid crisis or brain injuries in general, the Cures Act spelled out conditions for breakthrough interventions like HBOT: available immediately, with a record of safe and effective use, a strong propensity to treat causes of the disease of addiction, with broadly-distributed access.

At the August HBOT2017 conference, participants noted that the opioid epidemic and the attendant increase in deaths through overdose call for new thinking and action. Given the opioid, suicide and Concussion epidemics afflicting all Americans, particularly U.S. service members, and the dearth of treatments that help heal the wounded brains, HBOT is a prime candidate for immediate adoption and application. Published research on the

use of HBOT for addictions and underlying brain injury substantiates the claim of a breakthrough technology:

Two recent studies out of the state of Washington throw more light on HBOT for drug addiction. Researchers at Washington State (tinyurl.com/mesc5gu) in an animal study have shown that HBOT can cut in half both the pain of withdrawal and the amount of time required to be rid of drug dependency. The potential impact for the opioid epidemic is profound, as well as for tens of thousands of brain-wounded veterans with drug dependencies and opioid addictions.

University of Washington School of Medicine researchers (tinyurl.com/k6gy4gx), writing in JAMA Neurology, found that after a concussion, symptoms got worse from one to five years following the injury. Patients likely don't stabilize within one year after injury; psychiatric problems intensify out to five years. The lead authors says that medicine "should not only be working hard to develop therapies that can be administered acutely after injury but also. . . . focus on developing therapies and treatment strategies targeted to the chronic phase of injury."

An observational study of 32 patients studying the use of HBOT for TBI captured data indicating that all patients were able to dramatically cut down on drug use; ideation of suicide was reduced to zero; and improvement in sleep patterns were noted in most cases. Outcome measures included repeated self-assessment measures and automated neurocognitive tests. Improvement in 21 of 25 neurocognitive test measures was observed. The objective neurocognitive test components showed improvement in 13 of 17 measures. Those measures correlate strongly with sequelae experienced during drug withdrawal.

Research in Russia going back several decades demonstrates the beneficial role of HBOT in treatment of alcohol abuse and drug addiction. In a comparative study of over 550 patients, HBOT enhanced recovery from addictions by helping to prevent development of complications and contributing to normalization of neurochemical processes.

Castle Craig in Scotland has a decade of experience using HBOT as a foundational treatment for drug addiction, substance abuse, and chemical dependencies. Their experience is that HBOT reduces pain and emphatically shortens the withdrawal symptoms and time to heal.

In short, evidence shows that addictions and substance abuse cause brain damage which worsens if not treated. Research continues to mount that Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy can treat and help heal brain injury, the one therapy proved by multiple clinical trials around the world to treat and help heal the wound to the brain, safely and effectively. For more, see www.treatnow.org and www.hbot.com.



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