



The American College of Medical Toxicology will sponsor the “Prescription Opioid Misuse Academy: The Dark Side of Prescription Opioids” on March 15, 2012

This event will educate healthcare providers on the challenges of managing chronic pain and dangerous complications related to opioid use. Hydrocodone, oxycodone, and fentanyl are widely used pain medications associated with a national epidemic of prescription opioid abuse, misuse, and death. The ACMT will present strategies for identifying and managing prescription opioid misuse in order to reduce the burden of this epidemic on individuals, families, and the public health.

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In many parts of the United States, adults are more likely to die of a [prescription opioid overdose](#) than a car crash. Medical toxicologists, who specialize in the diagnosis and management of human poisoning, directly witness the devastating human effects of this epidemic. “Healthcare providers often feel pressured to prescribe opioids due to patient satisfaction requirements and regulatory mandates. Their training in pain management, opioid misuse, and alternative therapies may be limited, and the full spectrum of repercussions of opioid prescribing may not be evident to them” says Kavita Babu, M.D., the course director.

A variety of opioid-related problems can lead to hospitalization, and in some cases death, including accidental overdose, adverse side effects, and withdrawal syndromes. Experts in medical toxicology, addiction medicine, and pain management, among others, will address public health concerns associated with [prescription opioid misuse](#), and describe strategies for identifying and managing patients with opioid addiction. The challenges of managing chronic non-cancer pain and alternatives to opioid therapy will be discussed. A particularly vulnerable population affected is young children, who may ingest opioids that have been prescribed to a family member. The Prescription Opioid Misuse Academy will address pediatric concerns as well as opioid toxicity in other special populations.

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