



Doctors challenge evidence of "safer supply" fentanyl harm mitigation

ADAM ZIVO

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Dr. Lori Regenstreif, an addiction physician with decades of experience on the frontlines of Canada's opioid crisis, is sounding the alarm about the country's rapidly expanding "safer supply" programs.

While proponents of safe supply contend that providing drug users with free tablets of hydromorphone – a pharmaceutical opioid roughly as

potent as heroin – can mitigate harms, Dr. Regenstreif expresses grave concern that these programs may inadvertently perpetuate new addictions and entrench existing opioid use.

She sees ominous similarities between safer supply and the OxyContin crisis of the late 1990s, when the widespread overprescribing of opioids flooded North American communities with narcotics, sparking an addiction crisis that continues to this day. Having witnessed the devastating consequences of OxyContin in the late 1990s, she believes that low-quality and misleading research is once again encouraging dangerous overprescribing practices.

[Editor's note: This story is co-published with Adam Zivo's [Break the Needle](#)

Flashbacks to the OxyContin Crisis

Soon after Dr. Regenstreif received her medical license in Canada, harm reduction became the primary framework guiding her practice in inner-city Vancouver. This period coincided with Health Canada's 1996 regulatory approval of oxycodone (brand name: OxyContin) based on trials, sponsored by Purdue Pharma, that failed to assess the serious risks of misuse or addiction. Dr. Regenstreif subsequently witnessed highly addictive prescription opioids flood North American streets while Purdue and its distributors reaped record profits at the expense of vulnerable communities. "That was really peaking in the late 90s as I was coming into practice," she recounted during an extended interview with [Break The Needle](#). "I was being pressured to prescribe it as well."...



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