USA Today: “American Pain is a tale of sun-baked greed that could have sprung from the keyboards of Florida novelists Carl Hiaasen and Tim Dorsey.”

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Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths
United States, 1970–2007

43,982 drug overdose deaths in 2013

To the Editor: Recently, we examined our current files to determine the incidence of narcotic addiction in 39,946 hospitalized medical patients who were monitored consecutively. Although there were 11,882 patients who received at least one narcotic preparation, there were only four cases of reasonably well documented addiction in patients who had no history of addiction. The addiction was considered major in only one instance. The drugs implicated were meperidine in two patients, Percodan in one, and hydromorphone in one. We conclude that despite widespread use of narcotic drugs in hospitals, the development of addiction is rare in medical patients with no history of addiction.

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AKRON, Ohio — Drug overdose deaths in 2016 most likely exceeded 59,000, the largest annual jump ever recorded in the United States, according to preliminary data compiled by The New York Times.

The death count is the latest consequence of an escalating public health crisis: opioid addiction, now made more deadly by an influx of illicitly manufactured fentanyl and similar drugs. Our estimate of 62,500 deaths would be a 19 percent increase over the 52,404 recorded in 2015.

Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death among Americans under 50, and all evidence suggests the problem has continued to worsen in 2017.
Drug deaths rising in all 50 states

Drug and opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 people (age-adjusted), 1999-2014

- 1.9-7.5
- 7.5-11.5
- 11.5-15.5
- 15.5-21.5
- 21.5-36.3
- Unavailable

Source: CDC
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