



MEDICATION OVERDOSE

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Thanks, Justin!
Moving on to lesson five, besides the drugs of abuse that we saw in the earlier lesson, we will discuss the overdose of medications,. As a part of this chapter, we will be dealing with the overdose of cardiac, psychiatric, and non-prescription pain medications, and discuss Salicylates, Acetaminophen, and other drugs.
So, let's jump in and understand the common causes of overdose, assessment, and the ensuing treatment and management of these conditions.
Good studying.

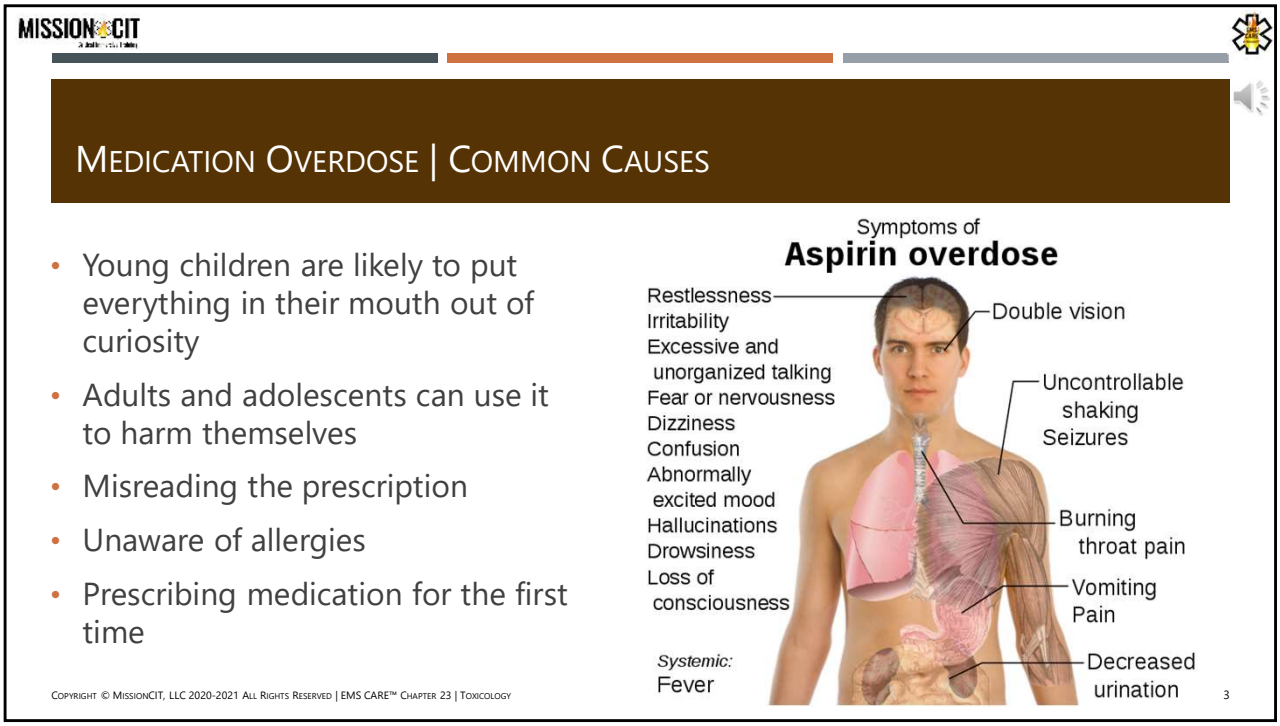
Medication Overdose | Introduction

- Hyper-sensitivity to drugs, so even lower doses have a big impact
- Accidental or intentional
- No difference in physiological effects
- If it was intentional, mental and emotional support needed



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Generally speaking, drug overdoses can be intentional or accidental, and they occur when a person has taken a higher dose than what is prescribed. It is important to note that some people are very sensitive to some drugs, so even lower than normal doses may be toxic to them.
Regardless of whether a drug overdose happened intentionally or accidentally, the physiological effects don't change. But if it was intentional, the root cause must be understood to ensure that such a situation is not repeated.



Let's talk about some of the common causes of medication overdose.

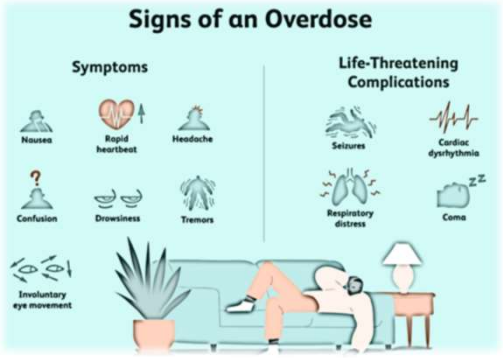
- Young children may swallow medications accidentally out of their curiosity. In fact, children under the age of 5 are likely to place anything they find in their mouths.
- When adolescents or adults swallow it with an intent to harm themselves, it denotes an underlying mental condition that needs to be treated at the earliest.

- Adults may also accidentally overdose by misreading the prescription
- If the caregiver is not aware of the patient's allergies to certain medications, it can lead to an overdose. Sometimes, this can happen when no one is aware of these allergies and the medications are prescribed to the patient for the first time.

Thus, these are some of the common causes of medication overdose.

Medication Overdose | Symptoms

- Sudden increase or decrease in vital signs
- Altered mental state, feeling of confusion
- Blackouts and coma
- Over drowsiness
- Chest pain and shortness of breath
- Cool and clammy or hot and dry skin
- Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, blood in bowel movements, and diarrhoea
- May impact the concerned organ directly



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The most common symptom of medication overdose is the heightened level of therapeutic effects on the body. Also, the side effects of the drug are more pronounced than what would be seen in normal dosages.

In particular, these overdoses can be lethal for a young child, while in adults, it can worsen a chronic disease like asthma.

Some of the signs to watch out for include,

- A sudden increase or decrease in vital signs such as temperature, pulse rate, and blood pressure
- Altered mental state and a feeling of confusion in

the patient. Blackouts and coma are also a possibility
- Over drowsiness
- Chest pain and shortness of breath
- Cool and clammy or hot and dry skin
- Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, blood in bowel movements, and diarrhea

Besides these symptoms, there can be other underlying ones that may impact the concerned organ directly.

Medication Overdose | Assessment and Management

- Stabilize the patient
- Make a note of the medications used
- Check the patient's medical history
- Physical examination
- Provide physical and mental care
- Create a supporting environment
- Follow the course of treatment



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As a first step, stabilize the patient and address any life-threatening symptom. In the meantime, talk to the caregivers and family members about the medications being taken by the patient to determine the cause of the problem. If you're unsure about the drug and its effects, reach out to the local poison control center and they may be able to help you.

Now, coming to the treatment, it's important to understand that each patient reacts differently to different drugs, so check the patient's medical history to get some information on allergies.

With this, we come to end of this lesson and in the next one, Justin will take you through some general treatment principles.

Good Studying.