

Overdose Prevention and Treatment Program Can Save Lives, Study Suggests



A program that teaches people to recognize and respond to overdoses of opioids can significantly decrease the number of overdose deaths, researchers at Boston Medical Center have found.

Massachusetts instituted the program to combat the problem of opioid-related overdose deaths.

The program trains people who use opioids, as well as their families and friends, to prevent, recognize and respond to drug overdoses. Participants learn to recognize the signs of overdose, to seek help, to stay with the victims, and to use the opioid overdose antidote naloxone.

The new study included 19 communities with high opioid overdose levels. Those communities that implemented the Overdose Education and Nasal Naloxone Distribution (OEND) program had a larger reduction in overdose deaths, compared with those without such programs, HealthDay reports.

The more people enrolled in the program, the greater the decrease in death rates. In the British Medical Journal, the researchers conclude that OEND is an effective intervention to reduce opioid overdose deaths. In February 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that naloxone has successfully reversed more than 10,000 opioid overdoses since 1996.