

# ANALGESIC ABUSE PROBLEMS

**Mike McDonough.**

*Department of Addiction Medicine & Toxicology, Western Hospital, Footscray, Australia*

## Abstract

**Objectives:** To describe the current Opioid Analgesic epidemic in Australia.

**Methods:** Literature review with clinical case descriptions.

Results: An aging population increases the prevalence of degenerative disorders (musculoskeletal and rheumatological) together with malignancies. This is likely to have been a key factor leading to an escalation in opioid analgesic prescribing; other likely factors include analgesic availability and marketing. In Australia, like has been described in some other countries, some people abuse analgesics and related to this, some specific pathologies have been identified e.g. Medication Overuse Headache, Analgesic Nephropathy etc. Following the increased availability of opioid analgesics, it now appears that more related problems are being identified. There is evidence of an epidemic of opioid analgesic related deaths in the USA and now in Australia, rates of opioid analgesic related problems including addiction, overdose and death are increasing.

**Conclusion:** A “drug epidemic” is identified which requires both a clinical management and public health response .