

ASAM REVIEW COURSE 2023

Pharmacology and Toxicology: Principles, Applications, and Limitations

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Financial Disclosure

Lewis S. Nelson, MD, MBA, FASAM

- No relevant disclosures

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Learning Objectives

- Explain** the differences between and clinical relevance of tolerance, dependence, and hyperalgesia.
- Describe** the pharmacologic principles of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics and how each impacts addiction risk and addiction treatment.
- Discuss** the interpretation pitfalls of screening and confirmatory urine drug tests in the management of patients with substance use.

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Addiction Medicine IS Pharmacology

- Drugs have to get to the brain to elicit a response.
 - Blood brain barrier is an effective barricade
- The more rapidly the drugs reach the site of action the greater the reinforcement.
 - Dose and dose rate
 - Route of administration
 - Lipophilicity and other pharmacologic characteristics

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Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics

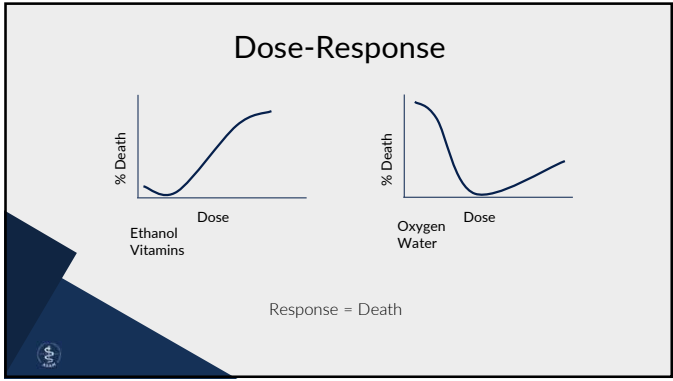
Absorption (Bioavailability)	Distribution	Elimination
Biotransformation	Dose Response (Clinical Effect)	Potency
Drug interaction	Tolerance	Dependence

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Dose-Response

Response = Anything (Blood pressure, Euphoria, Death)

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Potency

Rank order the potency at causing death:

Agent	LD50 (mg/kg)
Ethanol	5,000
Morphine	1
Nicotine	1
Botulinum	0.00001

Don't confuse potency with clinical effect

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Which has more potent THC?

1980's weed

4%THC

2020 weed

20%THC

Trick question:
The THC is the same potency
The higher concentration weed is more "potent"

Don't confuse potency of a drug with its concentration


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Potency doesn't really matter

Agent	Potency (vs morphine)
Tramadol	0.2
Morphine	1
Oxycodone	1.3
Methadone	4
Heroin	4
Buprenorphine	30
Fentanyl	100
Carfentanil	10,000

Any of these drugs will kill you if you take enough

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What is There That is Not Poison?

"What is there that is not poison? All things are poison and nothing [is] without poison. Solely the dose determines that a thing is not a poison"


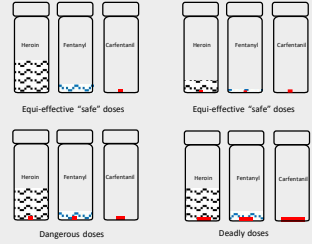
Paracelsus (1493-1541)
in *Third Defense*

"Dose Makes The Poison"

Philip Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim
aka PARACELUS (1493-1541)

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Potency doesn't really matter

Equi-effective "safe" doses

Dangerous doses

Deadly doses

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Absorption

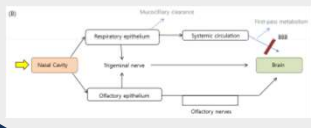


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Routes of Administration

- Oral
 - Potentially extensive first-pass
- IV, IN, IM, SC, SL, buccal, inhalational, rectal
 - Bypass hepatic first-pass
- Intrathecal
 - Unique –bypass Blood Brain Barrier
- Transdermal
 - Bypass hepatic first-pass
 - Depot in skin/body fat can influence absorption
- Intranasal
 - May directly access CNS (nose-to-brain)




Hong, S. *Pharmaceutics* 2019;11:540

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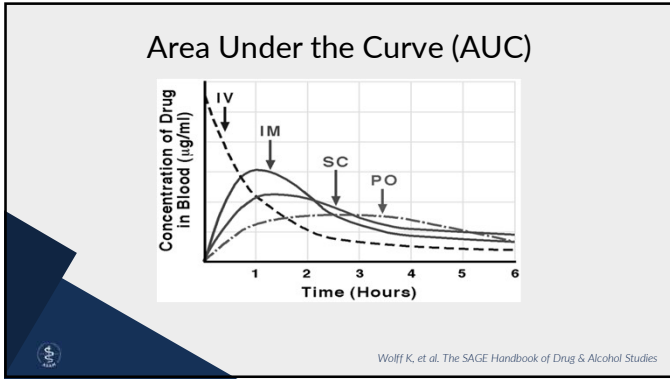
Bioavailability

- The amount of unchanged drug reaching systemic circulation after administration is the bioavailability (F).
- F depends upon:
 - Route (IV is 100%)
 - Site specific membrane permeability
 - Drug transporter activity (p-glycoprotein)
 - First-pass metabolism (oral)

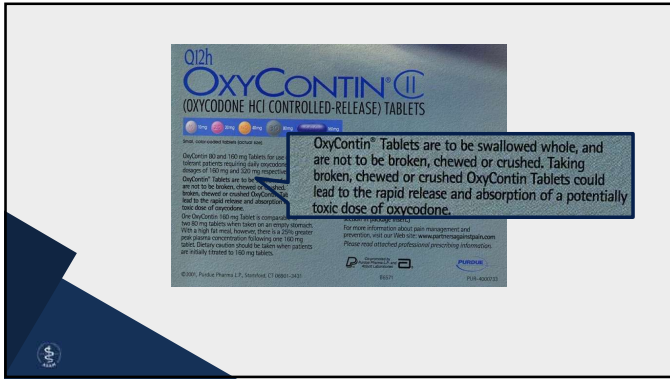
	Route		
	Oral	Sublingual	Buccal
Buprenorphine	10%	30%	50%
	Oral	Sublingual	Intranasal
Naloxone	1%	20%	50%
	Oral		
Morphine	33%		
Oxycodone	75%		



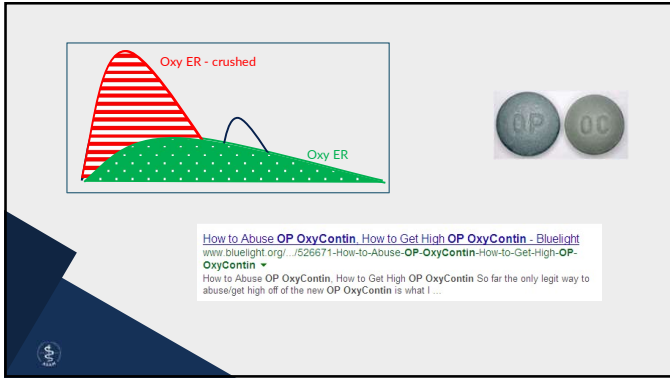
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Biotransformation

Phase 1

Lipophilic Drug/Chemical → Oxidation, Reduction, Hydrolysis → Metabolite

Phase 2

Metabolite → Conjugation, Sulfation, Glucuronidation → Conjugated metabolite

Water soluble

Ethanol Metabolism

$$\text{CH}_3-\text{CH}_2-\text{OH} + \text{H}^+ - \text{Co} \xrightarrow[\text{CYP2E1}]{\text{NADPH} \rightarrow \text{NADP}^+} \text{CH}_3-\text{C}=\text{O} + 2\text{H}_2\text{O} \quad \text{MEOS}$$

$$\text{CH}_3-\text{CH}_2-\text{OH} \xrightarrow[\text{Alcohol dehydrogenase}]{\text{NAD}^+ \rightarrow \text{NADH}} \text{CH}_3-\text{C}=\text{O} + \text{H}^+ \quad \text{Cytosol}$$

$$\text{CH}_3-\text{CH}_2-\text{OH} \xrightarrow[\text{Catalase}]{\text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{O}} \text{CH}_3-\text{C}=\text{O} + \text{H}_2\text{O} \quad \text{Peroxisome}$$

Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, 11th

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Activation through Biotransformation

- Codeine is demethylated in the liver to morphine
- Occurs via CYP2D6
- Codeine is a "pro-drug" (drug undergoes hepatic biotransformation or 'metabolism' to its active component)
- Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse™) is another example of a pro-drug

Fun pharm fact: heroin does not bind to the mu receptor. Metabolism occurs in the CSF.

CN1CC[C@]23[C@@H]4OC5=C(C(=O)OC)C=CC(=C5C2=O)C1

Codeine

CN1CC[C@]23[C@@H]4OC5=C(O)C=CC(=C5C2=O)C1

Morphine

CN1CC[C@]23[C@@H]4OC5=C(C(=O)OC)C=CC(=C5C2=O)C1

Heroin

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Biotransformation

CYP Isozyme	P450	2D6	2C9	2C19	2D6	2E1	3A4
Percent of liver CYPs	4%–10%	2%–5%	5%–20%	1%–4%	1%–4%	6%–17%	15%–37%
Contribution to enterocyte CYPs	None	None	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	70%
Organs other than liver with enzyme	Lung	Kidney	Small intestine, nasal mucosa, heart	Small intestine, nasal mucosa, heart	Small intestine, kidney, lung, heart	Lung, small intestine, kidney	Much in small intestine; some in kidney, nasal mucosa, lung, stomach
Percent of metabolites of optically active pharmaceuticals	9%	7%	13%	7%	20%	3%	32%
Polymorphism	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Allelic Frequency							
Decreased Activity							
African American	—	38%–62%	0%–3%	10%–17%	14%–30%	—	—
Asian	—	14%–25%	2%–8%	25%–39%	47%–56%	—	—
Caucasian	—	23%–39%	10%–23%	6%–16%	37%–45%	—	—
Increased Activity							
African American	—	0%–25%	—	15%–27%	—	—	—
Asian	—	0%–15%	—	0%–2%	1%	—	—
Caucasian	—	6%	—	21%–25%	1%–9%	—	—
Ethiopian	—	—	—	—	30%	—	—

*Polymorphism is a genetic change that exists in at least 1% of the human population. Interpersonal allelic variations exist even in those listed as "No" for polymorphism.

Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, 11th

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Biotransformation

TABLE 11-1 Characteristics of Different Cytochrome P450 Enzymes^{11,12,13}

	2B6	2C9	2C19	2D6	2E1	3A4
Prevalence	2%–5%	5%–29%	1%–4%	1%–4%	6%–17%	15%–37%
Gene	None	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	70%
Location	Kidney	Small intestine, nasal mucosa, heart	Small intestine, nasal mucosa, heart	Small intestine, kidney, lung, heart	Lung, small intestine, kidney	Much in liver; also in placenta, lung, stomach
Percent of total clearance of typically used pharmaceuticals	7%	13%	7%	20%	3%	30%
Polymerphom	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Albetic Frequency						
Decreased Activity						
African American	—	38%–42%	—	—	—	—
Asian	—	14%–25%	—	—	—	—
Caucasian	—	23%–39%	—	—	—	—
Increased Activity						
African American	—	0%–25%	—	—	—	—
Asian	—	5%–15%	—	—	—	—
Caucasian	—	6%	—	—	—	—
Ethiopian	—	—	—	—	—	—

1. Polymerphom is a genetic change that exists in at least 1% of the human population. Interpersonal albic variations exist even in those listed as "No" for polymerphom.

Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, 11th

Genetically based alterations in gene product function.

Despite rare polymorphism, 3A4 is a major cause of drug interactions

Metadone

- Primarily responsible for metabolism
- Some HIV meds induce 3A4
- Variability (despite minimal polymorphism) complicates induction

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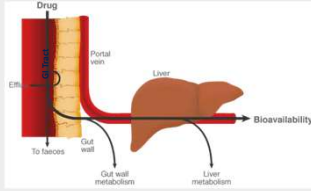
Distribution

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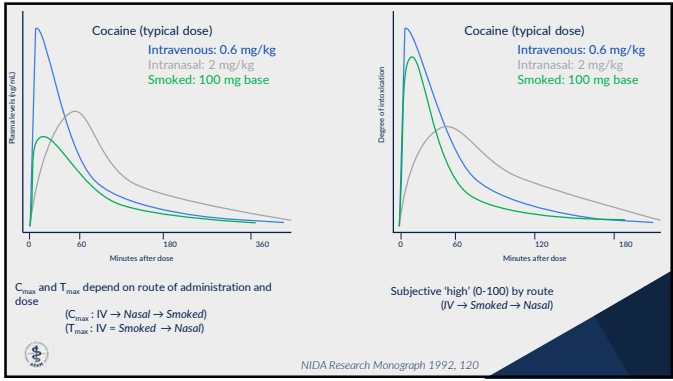
First Pass Hepatic Metabolism

Bypass first pass

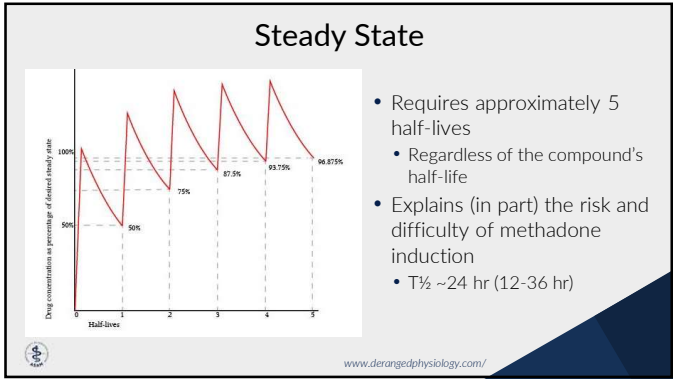



www.doctoralerts.com

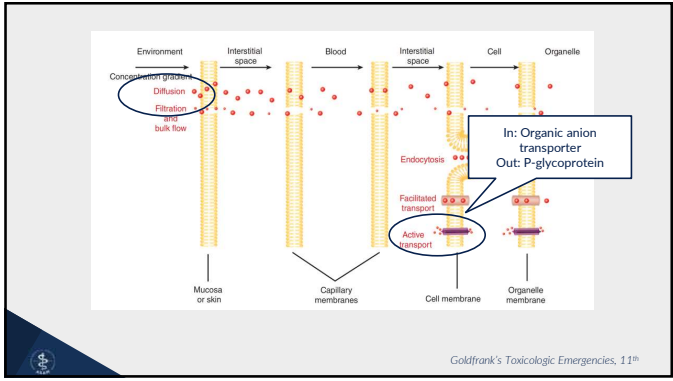
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P-Glycoprotein

Loperamide the OTC fentanyl (reason for no CNS activity) [A...]
www.kidney-international.com/article/S0954-6820(13)00111-1
Aug 21, 2013 - 50 points - 30 authors
These food items commonly available items (herbal extracts, supplements or food items) which are p-glycoprotein inhibitors, but inhibition of...
Inhibition of P-gp and P-gp inhibitors (abstract) ... 6 points Jan 12, 2013
Loperamide (anti-diarrheal) (abstract) ... 13 points Oct 2, 2012
Fentanyl Loperamide through the BBB (abstract) ... 20 points Jun 21, 2011
Fentanyl Loperamide through the BBB (abstract) ... 50 points May 23, 2006
More results from www.kidney-int.com

Loperamide and P-glycoprotein inhibition: assessment of ...
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3120111/...
by Choudhury et al. 2011 | Clinically 12 | Review article
Loperamide and P-glycoprotein inhibition: assessment of the clinical relevance ...
co-administration of loperamide with a P-glycoprotein inhibitor or substrate ...

Combinations - Loperamide Potentiation + p-glycoprotein in...
www.drugsforum.com ... | DRUGS FORUMS | Quotes & Opinions
Mar 2, 2012 - 9 points - 4 authors
BWM is going to be performing an experiment with Loperamide, he is ... BWM is
aware of the importance of inhibiting p-glycoprotein but is not ...

Addition - inhibition of loperamide + possible PGP ...
6 points Feb 28, 2013
Combinations - Cheap quality nifedipine ...
22 points Dec 27, 2012
Experiments - Loperamide Report
22 points Jan 16, 2012
Block that same administration
17 points Dec 4, 2010
More results from www.drugsforum.com

Pepper inhibits P-Glycoprotein (just add loperamide??) [Ar...

**"Street pharmacologists"
understand these principles**

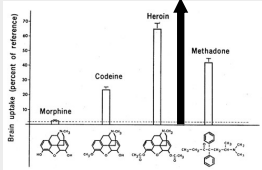
Loperamide and p-glycoprotein inhibitors

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Lipophilicity

Lipophilicity = Reward = Abuse liability

Drug	LogP
Buprenorphine	4.98
Fentanyl	4.05
Metadone	3.93
Naloxone	2.09
Hydromorphone	1.6
Heroin	1.58
Morphine	0.89



Morphine


Heroin (diacetyl morphine)

Oxycodone

Oldendorf WH. Science. 1972

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Addiction Medicine IS Pharmacology



CC(=O)OC1=CC=CC=C1C2=CC3=C(C=C2)OC4C(C=CC5=C4N(C)CC5)C3

CC(=O)OC1=CC=CC=C1C2=CC3=C(C=C2)OC4C(C=CC5=C4N(C)CC5)C3

Cocaine hydrochloride (salt)

Cocaine base (alkaloidal)

Changes in the pharmacologic properties of a substance and how it is used can lead to dramatically different levels of reward and reinforcement

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Elimination

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T1/2 (Half-life) is The Time For Cmax to Fall by Half

The graph plots drug concentration as a percentage of Cmax against units of time. It shows a biphasic decay curve. The initial steep decline is labeled as the distribution half-life (t1/2α), and the final shallow decline is labeled as the terminal elimination half-life (t1/2β). The concentration drops from 100% to 50% at the distribution half-life and from 50% to 25% at the terminal elimination half-life.

- Distribution t_{1/2}
 - Redistribution t_{1/2}
- Terminal elimination t_{1/2}
 - Context sensitive t_{1/2}
 - Apparent t_{1/2}

Drug	Half life (distrib)	Half life (redistrib)	Half life (term)	LogP
Fentanyl	2 min	12 min	480 min	4.05
Methadone	120 min	---	1440 min	3.93

www.derangedphysiology.com/ Note: all half-lives have ranges, not shown

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Receptor Pharmacology

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Efficacy

Ligand	% Efficacy
Full agonist	E = 100
Partial agonist	0 < E < 100
Antagonist	E = 0
Inverse agonist	E < 0

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Affinity

Ligand	Ki (Affinity) (nmol)
Hydrocodone	41.58
Oxycodone	25.87
Heroin	9.6
Methadone	3.38
Fentanyl	1.35
Morphine	1.14
Naloxone	1.1
Hydromorphone	0.6
Buprenorphine	0.21

Volpe DA. Uniform assessment and ranking of opioid Mu receptor binding constants for selected opioid drugs. Reg Toxicol Pharmacol. 2011

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Receptor kinetics On-off

Occupation governed by affinity Activation governed by efficacy

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Pharmacodynamics

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Tolerance

- Tolerance is the reduction in response to a drug after its repeated administration
- Tolerance shifts the dose-response curve to the right
 - Higher doses than initial doses to achieve the same effect

Analgesia

Morphine (mg/kg)	Baseline	3.2 mg/kg/day	6.4 mg/kg/day	Abstinence
1	~10	~10	~10	~10
10	~60	~35	~15	~10
100	~100	~70	~45	~25

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Differential Tolerance

A Analgesia

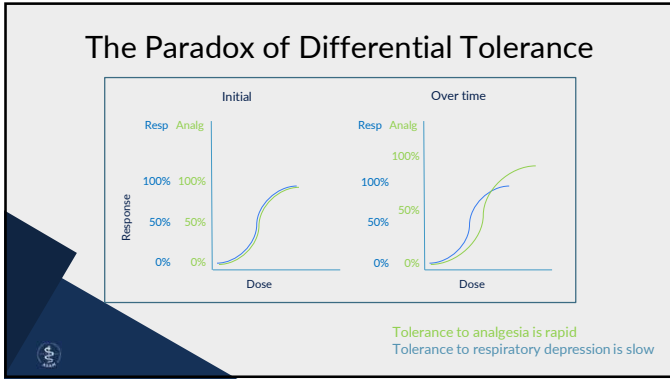
Morphine (mg/kg)	Baseline	3.2 mg/kg/day	6.4 mg/kg/day	Abstinence
1	~10	~10	~10	~10
10	~60	~35	~15	~10
100	~100	~70	~45	~25

B Respiratory depression

Morphine (mg/kg)	Baseline	3.2 mg/kg/day	6.4 mg/kg/day	Abstinence
1	~100	~100	~100	~100
10	~40	~45	~50	~55
100	~15	~20	~25	~30

Hayhurst. Anesthesiology 2016;124:483-8

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Pharmacokinetic Tolerance

- A consequence of increased metabolism after a drug is repeatedly administered
- Results in less drug being available at the receptor for drug activity.
- Ethanol
 - Although ADH is not inducible, CYP2E1 is
 - Accounts for more rapid elimination of alcohol in heavy, chronic users

Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, 11th

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Pharmacodynamic Tolerance

- Down-regulation of receptors (higher drug concentration needed)
 - Desensitization of GABA (ethanol)
 - Receptor conformation
 - Desensitization of MOR (opioid)
 - Signal transduction
 - Decreased density (internalization)
- Up-regulation of receptors
 - Increased number of NMDA

Quantity	Ethanol status	Neuronal effect	Clinical effect
None	None	Baseline inhibition	Baseline normal
Low	Low	Enhanced inhibition	Intoxication, sedation
High	High	Downregulated receptor path	Unergized receptor modulation
Very High	Very High	Overwhelmed inhibition	Controlled reaction
Extremely High	Extremely High	Loss of inhibition	Uncontrolled reaction

Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, 11th

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Other Clinical Examples of Tolerance

- Mellanby effect
 - Less "intoxicated" on descending limb of BAC curve
- MDMA, psilocybin, and LSD
 - Serotonergic
- BZD resistant alcohol withdrawal from IV (not really PO) diazepam

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Conditioned Tolerance

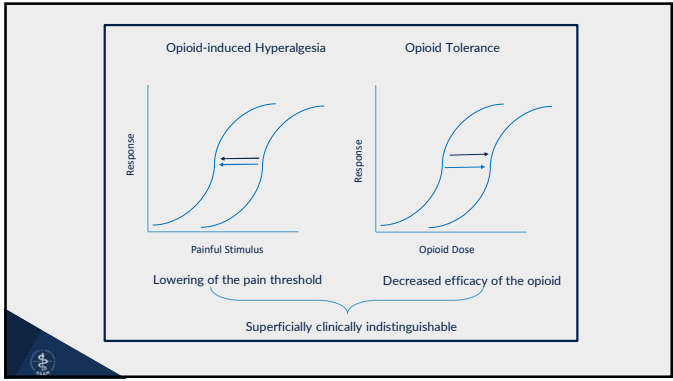
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Cross-Tolerance

- Tolerance to the repeated use of a specific drug in a given category is generalized to other drugs with the same structural or mechanistic category.

Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, 11th

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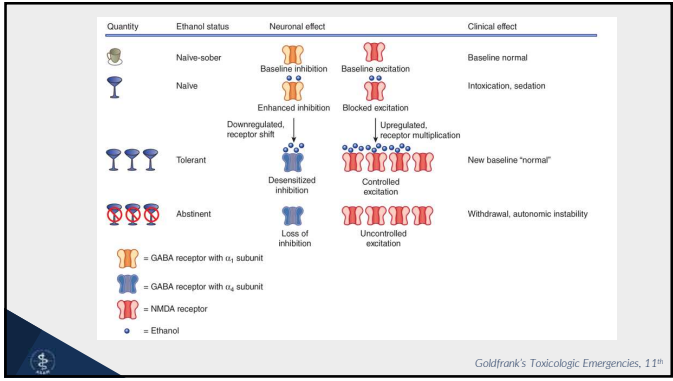


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Physical Dependence



- A state that develops as a result of adaptation and the resetting of homeostatic mechanisms
- Withdrawal syndrome can occur in physically dependent person when the drug is abruptly stopped or dose reduced
 - Typically improves on restarting the drug
 - Can be a "point of no-return"
- Can occur with both addictive and non-addictive use of drugs
 - Caffeine, nicotine
- And with therapeutic use
 - Clonidine

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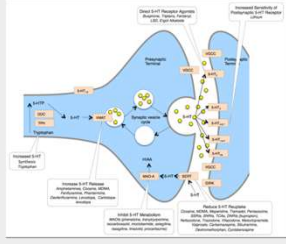
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Physiological Drug Interactions

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PK/PD Drug Interactions



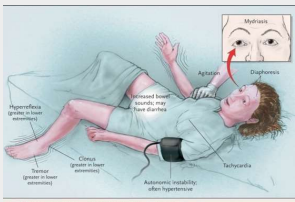





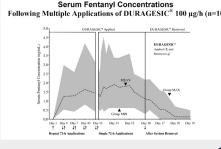
Figure 1. Findings in a Patient with Moderately Severe Serotonin Syndrome.
Hyperreflexia, characteristic finding of tremor or clonus and hyperreflexia should lead the clinician to consider the diagnosis of the serotonin syndrome.

www.real-psychiatry.blogspot.com
Boyer E. NEJM 2005

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Exposure Pathway

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The image shows two document covers. The left one is titled 'Appropriate Use of Drug Testing in Clinical Addiction Medicine' and features a book icon. The right one is titled 'Medical Review Officer Guidance Manual for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs' and includes a photo of a doctor and a patient, along with a logo for the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Division of Workplace Programs.

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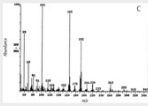
Philosophical Considerations (for substance use)

- Testing is not meant to "catch" the patient
 - Testing identifies recent use it does NOT identify addiction or impairment
 - A positive finding suggests need to review treatment plan
 - Not to prevent, limit, or punitively change treatment
- Tests must be interpreted in the context of patient self-report and other information from observed behaviors or reliable sources
- Language is important
 - e.g., clean vs dirty, pass/fail

The cartoon shows a doctor in a suit pointing at a man in a white Pepsi shirt. A sign on the wall says 'PEPSI'. The caption reads: "You're fired, Jack. The lab results just came back, and you tested positive for Coke."

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Screening and Confirmatory Tests

 	 
<p>Screening (Presumptive) Assays - indicate the presumptive presence of drugs Highly sensitive Rapid, inexpensive Cutoff - Yes/No</p>	<p>Confirmatory (Definitive) Assays - specifically identify the drug detected in the screening assay Highly specific Quantitative Complicated, expensive</p>

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Buprenorphine analysis

- Can only generalize about expected levels
 - No credible way to say "X" dose should give "Y" level
 - Patients tend to stay within a certain range over time unless dose change
 - Trending helpful and can detect aberrancy
- Adulterated specimen
 - Bup without metabolite (always)
 - Bup >1000 ng/mL, even with metabolite (suggestive)
- Higher Bup levels than Norbup levels due to:
 - Dosing shortly before urine test
 - CYP 3A4 inhibitor or substrate which slows conversion to metabolite

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Matrix Considerations

- Window of detection
- Time to obtain results (availability of POCT)
- Ease of collection (need for trained personnel, collection facilities)
- Invasiveness/unpleasantness of collection
- Availability of the sample (e.g., renal health, shy bladder, baldness, dry mouth)
- Susceptibility of the sample to tampering

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	Drugs and metabolites are concentrated in urine Can compare to creatinine
	Drugs are found in much lower concentrations Easy to observe
	Drugs and metabolites incorporated into hair Concentrations of drugs low with sporadic use
	Prospective collection, 1-2 weeks Inter and intraindividual variability
	Invasive and expensive to test More direct relationship to impairment
	Easy to collect and observe Essentially limited to ethanol

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TABLE 4. Comparing Testing Characteristics Across Matrices

	Blood	Breath	Oral Fluid	Urine	Sweat	Hair
General detection period	<24 hours [2] 1–8 hours [22] 1–48 hours [26]	~1 hr per standard drink	<24 hours [2] 12–24 hours [27] 1–36 hours [28] 5–48 hours [29] 12–48 hours [25]	1.5–4 days [29] 1–3 days [25,26,30]	Continuous, usually 1–4 weeks [2,20]	7–90 days [2] 7–100 days [26]
POCT/on-site immunoassay available	Yes, primarily used for alcohol	For alcohol	Yes	Yes	No	No
Primarily detects	Parent drug compound; blood alcohol concentration	Parent drug compound; blood alcohol concentration	Parent drug compound	Drug metabolite	Parent drug compound	Parent drug compound
Best use in treatment setting	Determination of acute impairment or intoxication for alcohol	Determination of acute impairment or intoxication for alcohol	Short-term detection in ongoing treatment	Intermediate-term detection in ongoing treatment	Medium-term prospective monitoring	Long-term monitoring; inpatient drug use history
Ease of collection	Requires staff trained in phlebotomy	Easily collected	Easily collected	Requires specialized collection facility (museum)	Easily collected	Easily collected
Intrusiveness of collection	High for intravenous access	Low	Low	High	Low	Low
Resistance to tampering	High	High	High, but some secondary	Low	High, but some secondary	High when chemically analyzed
Retesting same sample	Difficult	Generally not possible	Difficult	Possible	Possible depending on patch used	Easy

ASAM Appropriate Use of Drug Testing in Clinical Addiction Medicine, 2017

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Specimen validity testing

The image shows four products used for specimen validity testing: GEE WHIZ! (a drink), URINE LUCK (a detoxifying agent), QUICK FIX PLUS (a product for urine), and WHIZZINATOR (a product for urine). Each product is shown in its packaging.

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Where Can I Get Help with Interpretation?

The image shows a hand in a suit jacket holding a black marker, pointing towards three large blue question marks on a whiteboard. The background is a blurred office setting.

- Medical or forensic toxicologist
- Staff at the testing laboratory
- A physician with MRO certification

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References

- Nelson LS, Howland MA, Lewin NA, Smith SW, Goldfrank LS, Hoffman RS. Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, 11th Edition. New York, McGraw Hill, 2019.
- Hayhurst CJ, Durieux ME. Differential Opioid Tolerance and Opioid-induced Hyperalgesia: A Clinical Reality. *Anesthesiology*. 2016;124(2):483-488.
- Oldendorf WH. Some Relationships Between Addiction and Drug Delivery to the Brain. NIDA Research Monograph 120: Bioavailability of drugs to the brain and the blood brain barrier. 1992.
- ASAM Appropriate Use of Drug Testing in Clinical Addiction Medicine, 2017

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What property of fentanyl accounts for its enhanced psychoactive effects compared to morphine?

A. Charge
B. Lipophilicity
C. Molecular weight
D. Potency

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A patient started on opioids requires increasing doses of medication to get adequate pain relief. At the same time, painful stimuli elicit more pain that they previously did. What does this represent?

A. Hyperalgesia
B. Pharmacodynamic tolerance
C. Pharmacokinetic tolerance
D. Withdrawal


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Which of the following drug screening tests is associated with the lowest rate of false positive results?



- A. Amphetamine
- B. Cocaine
- C. Opioids
- D. Phencyclidine



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Get in Touch

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