

The Opioid Epidemic in the United States: The Role of Pharmaceutical Companies in the Opioid Crisis

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Abstract

High rates of addiction, overdose, and death make the opioid epidemic one of the most urgent public health issues in the United States, with more than 47,000 opioid related deaths in 2017. Evidence from the United States shows that opioid manufacturers' strategies to deceive the medical community about the safety and efficacy of opioids played a pivotal role in the American opioid epidemic. This paper investigates how pharmaceutical promotion practices in the United States influenced health professionals, the regulator and the public, and contributed to the opioid crisis. The study focuses on the approval of OxyContin (an opioid) in 1995 and the aggressive and misleading marketing campaign that followed its approval by its manufacturer, Purdue Pharma. This paper argues that drug companies' strategies to influence the medical community represent a significant public health concern. Identifying the influence of drug companies on the medical community can help prevent similar public health crises.