

Study focuses on prescription addiction

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Researchers at the University of California-San Francisco have started a study to evaluate treatments for addiction to prescription painkillers.

The research is the first large-scale study designed to assess whether addiction to opioid painkillers, such as Vicodin and OxyContin, can effectively be treated with drug treatments currently used for heroin addiction.

The study -- part of a national effort involving 11 clinical research centers -- is in response to increasing incidents of prescription drug abuse, said Dr. Stephen Dominy of the San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center, who is co-leading the University of California-San Francisco portion of the study.

"The abuse of prescription opiates has become a very serious problem in our society but, until now, there have been no large-scale studies to evaluate how to treat those addictions," Dominy said. "This study hopes to assess whether current opiate dependence therapies are effective, as well as the role of counseling in treatment outcomes."

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