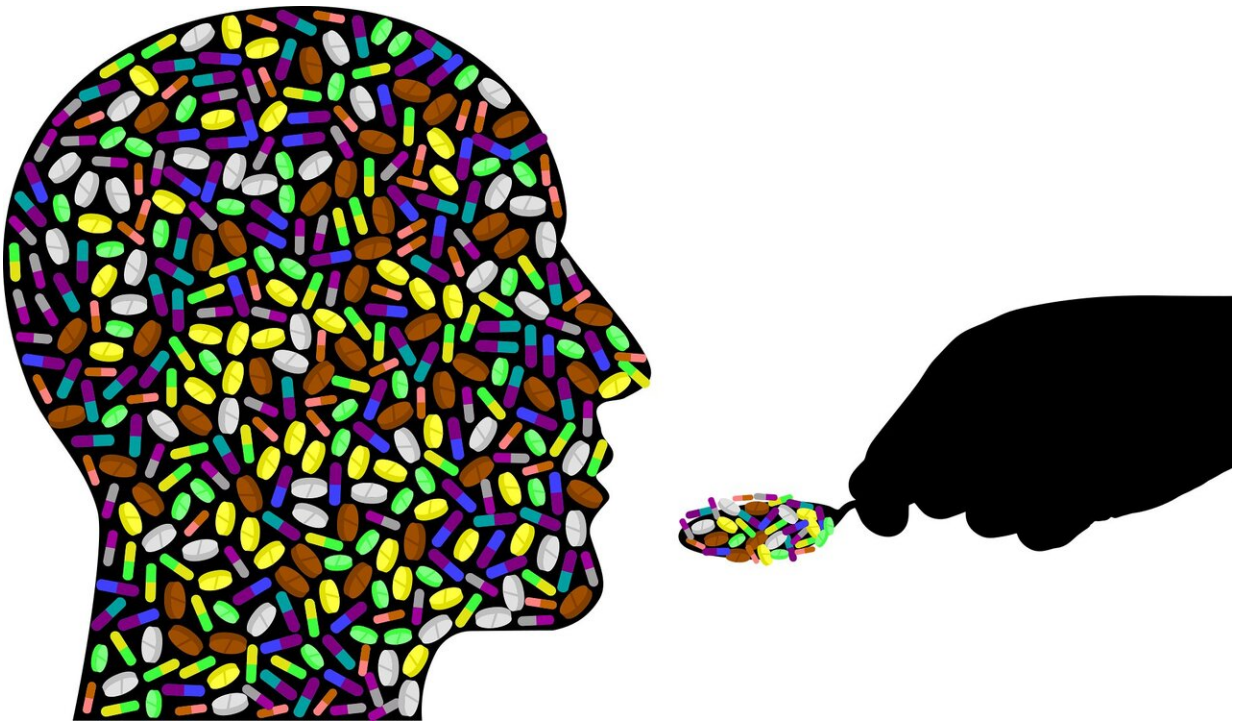


People with addiction more likely to get COVID-19, die

November 11 2020, by Georgea Kovanis



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People who are addicted to drugs or other substances are more likely to contract COVID-19 and to be hospitalized or die from it, according to a National Institutes of Health study.

People with a [substance use disorder](#) made up 10.3% of those studied in

the NIH-funded project but accounted for 15.6% of the COVID-19 cases, according to the study. Those with a recent opioid use disorder diagnosis were most likely to develop COVID-19, followed by people with tobacco use disorder.

In terms of complications, the hospitalization rate for people with substance use disorder was 41%, compared to about 30% for those without it. The death rate was 9.6% for people with substance abuse disorder and 6.6% for those without.

Why the disparity?

"The lungs and cardiovascular system are often compromised in people with (substance use disorder), which may partially explain their heightened susceptibility to COVID-19," Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, said in a prepared statement.

"Another contributing factor is the marginalization of people with addiction, which makes it harder for them to access health care services," she said.

Meanwhile, African Americans with a recent opioid use disorder diagnosis were over four times more likely to develop COVID-19, compared to whites. According to the study, hypertension, diabetes, [cardiovascular disease](#) and renal disease—all [risk factors](#) for COVID-19—were more prevalent among African Americans than white people with an opioid addiction.

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