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Barriers to Employment: A Substance Abuse Story

Ralph E. McKinney

Marshall University, mckinney23@marshall.edu

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Apr 12th, 12:00 AM

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Barriers to Employment: A Substance Abuse Story

Ralph E. McKinney, Jr., DBA

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify barriers (e.g., criminal convictions, financial resources, and jobseeker KSAO (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Other Characteristics)) in obtaining sustainable employment that individuals may experience as a result of an association with substance abuse.

Research Methodology

Content analysis of public information to focus semi-structured open-ending interviews with individuals associated with providing supportive services to those impacted from substance abuse.

Interviews focus on criminal defense attorneys and related support personnel, individuals administering public assistance, and employers.

Analysis of information using grounded theory techniques where themes are identified and categorised to form an overarching understanding of the primary issues.

Stereotypes - [Perceptions]

“West Virginia substance abuser”

Not just drugs!

Thomas, Nick. (2017, 11/16). Opioid abuse: fighting the epidemic of epidemics. United Way Blog.



Jacobs, Harrison. (2016, 5/1). Here's why the opioid epidemic is so bad in West Virginia - the state with the highest overdose rate in the US. Business Insider.



Fort Gay, WV
05/19/2014 REUTERS /
Robert Galbraith

Siemaszko, Corky. NBC News. (2018, 9/25). "Dr. Katherine Hoover, accused of fueling West Virginia's opioid crisis, still thinks she didn't do anything wrong"



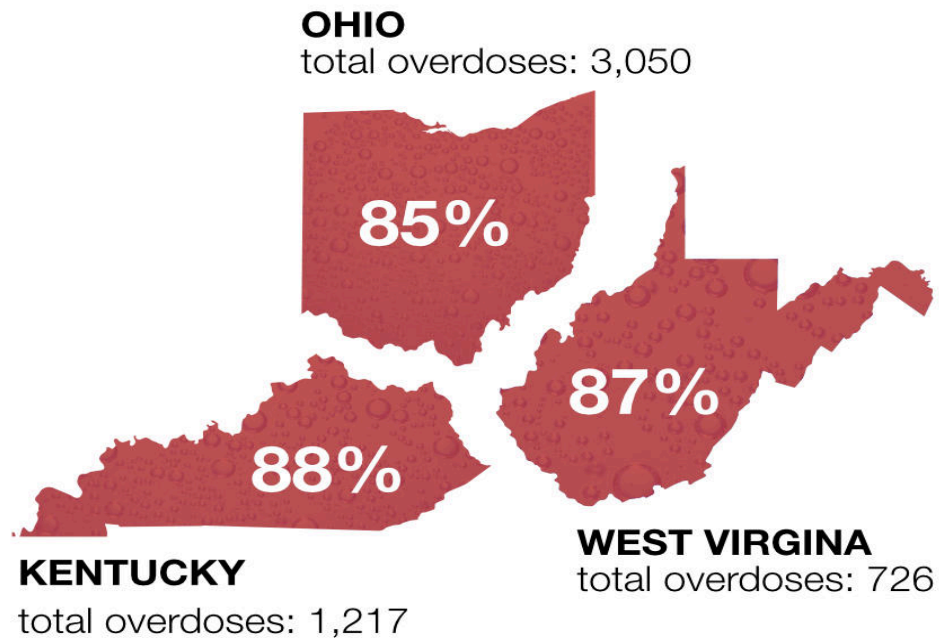
>335,130 Rx
for painkillers.

Average of 130
Rx per day
working 7 days
a week.

*Note: Data
Analytics*

Payne, Aaron. (2016, 10/7). Lazarus drug: the medicine saving lives amid the opioid crisis. WV Public Broadcasting.

2015 Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths



Sources: West Virginia Health Statistics Center, Vital Statistics System, Drug Overdose Database; Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, Kentucky Resident Drug Overdose Deaths, 2015; Ohio Department of Health, 2015 Ohio Drug Overdose Report

Graphic by Alexandra Kanik

Health Care Professionals

Hall et al. (2008) contend that a significant increase in non-medical prescription drug abuse, specifically narcotics, is highest in The State of West Virginia: Identifying poverty and Medicaid eligibility as significant contributors to this abuse. Moreover, drug diversion (i.e. the illegal sale and dispersal) was *“by health care professionals, employee theft, forged prescriptions, and the Internet”* (p. 2619).

Access to Rx

A critical requirement in reducing drugs abuse is **changing the prescribing practices** that lead to the overprescribing of drugs (Paulozzi et al., 2014). The use of best practices (e.g., consumer education as a component of regulating Medicaid pharmacy benefits, enacting legislation targeting use and dispensing of drugs, and implementing guidelines associated with prescribing drugs to facilitate decision-making) are needed in mitigating drugs abuse.

Access to Rx (part 2)

The implementation and development of guidelines, especially in the State of West Virginia, is essential as many health care providers lack the required knowledge in the appropriate and proper use of drugs (Ponte & Johnson-Tribino, 2005). An example is that ~67% of respondents from the medical field answered incorrectly when considering the administration of fentanyl to opioid-naïve patients (p. 479).

Complications from Drugs Use

The primary risk for intervenes drugs use is infections (i.e. Hepatitis C Virus) (Zibbell et al., 2015); and as such [ADA ISSUES]. Again, The State of West Virginia experienced a significant (i.e., ~364%) increase in infections relating to this type of drugs abuse amongst individuals under 30 (p. 455).

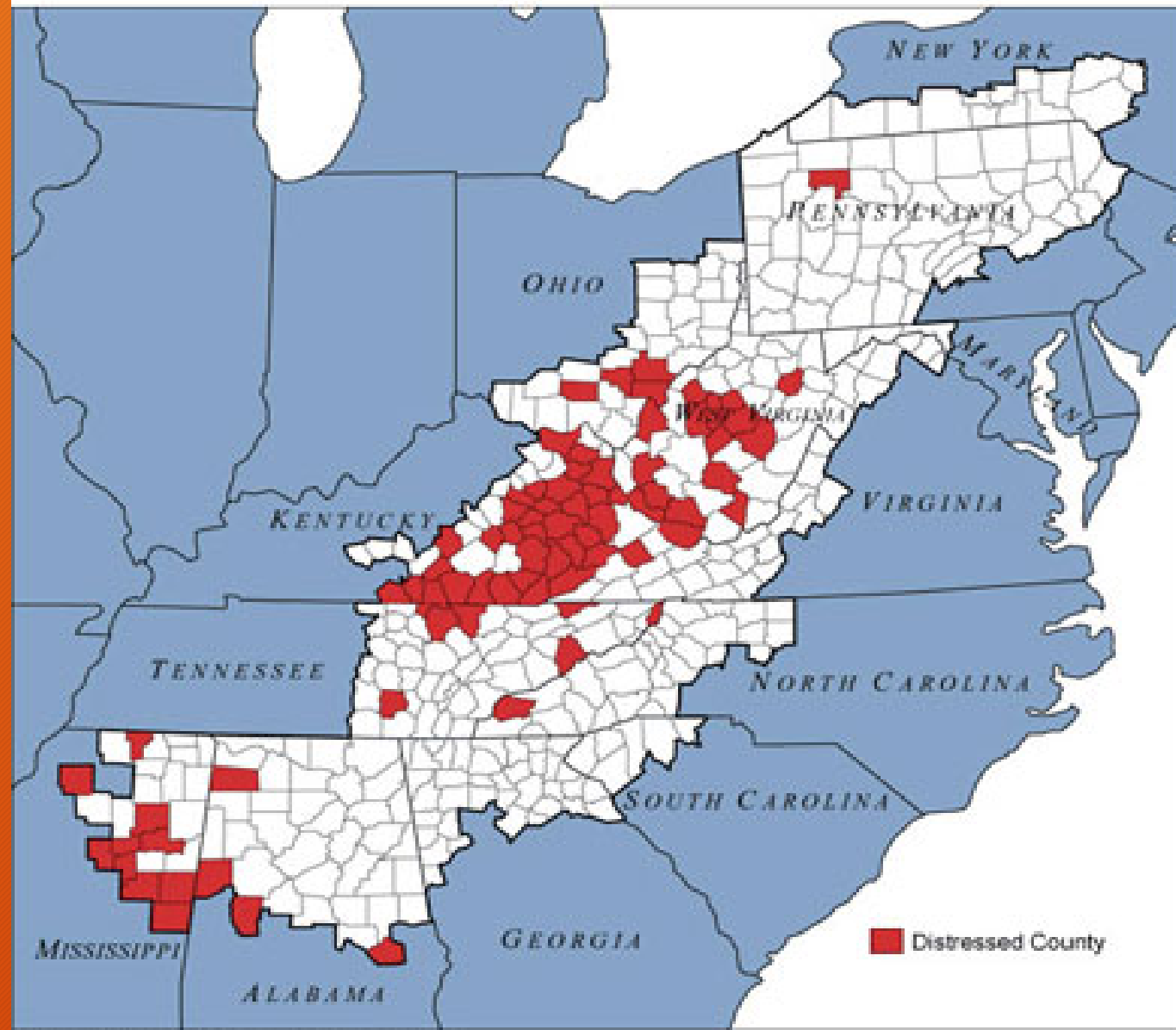
Stigmatized Populations

Within the workforce, a need exists to **reduce the prejudice in employment decisions** surrounding individuals that are associated with stigmatized populations (Young & Powell, 2015). The weighting of this **negative information** can reduce the information gathering process as an identifiable cue, stemming from the stigmatization, triggers the decision-maker to withdraw effort in finding supporting information concerning the individual and potential organizational fit (Dewberry; McKinney).

Additional Stigmatization

In addition to being associated with substance abuse, some individuals may be associated with a criminal conviction. **Ex-offenders**, as a stigmatized group, may further be defined and experience additional prejudice based upon the type of conviction (i.e. felony and misdemeanors; “blue-collar” and “white-collar”; people and property), time since conviction, “race and ethnicity”, and “sex” (Young & Powell, 2015, pp. 302, 307).

ARC-Designated Distressed Counties, Fiscal Year 2007



Prepared by the Appalachian Regional Commission

Date Sources:

Unemployment data: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002–2004

Income data: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003

Poverty data: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2000

Barriers - Individual Job-Seekers

Need to take Accountability of Actions

Need to have a Desire to Change

Need to consider Individual Stories (Characteristics that impact decision)

Lack of Interpersonal communications

Lack of Life skills (e.g. financial & legal literacy, legal literacy)

Lack of Appropriate Social Connections (e.g. family, friends, mentors)

Lack of Resources (e.g. financial, housing, and food)

KNOWN

Employment and workplaces are identified as access points and hubs for drugs (Hall et al, 2008). Medical professional lack the proper knowledge in prescribing drugs (Ponte & Johnson-Tribino, 2005). Conversely, providers may be motivated financially in erroneous and overprescribing practices. [Issues with accountability]

Complications from drugs use (Zibbell et al., 2015) may increase the need for employers to be flexible and reasonable accommodation. [Issues with anger]

The type of criminal conviction, (i.e. crimes against persons versus crimes against property) can significantly influence employment decisions (Young & Powell, 2015). [Issues with desire to change]

Stage

IRB application under preparation

Preparing Interviews with Participants

Student researchers to assist

Mekalynn Jones

Nacoma Smith

Questions



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today?**