

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Study Overview

The studies discussed in the podcast shed light on different facets of the opioid epidemic in the United States. The studies reveal geographic disparities in polysubstance fentanyl overdose deaths. Additionally, they underscore the role of factors such as poverty and lack of healthcare in creating environments in which substance use disorders take hold, while also emphasizing the impact of social networks and stigma on individual behaviors. Together, these studies underscore the need for comprehensive, targeted interventions addressing both regional disparities and underlying factors to effectively combat the opioid crisis.



The opioid epidemic has spread across the country, but exhibits significant geographic disparities, with regions like Appalachia, the Rust Belt, and certain southern states experiencing higher rates of opioid-related deaths.

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Regional differences are influenced by factors such as economic decline, historical opioid prescribing practices, and availability of illicit opioids.
- ✓ Over the past decade, there has been a notable increase in polysubstance fentanyl overdose deaths, particularly in the mid- to late-2010s.
- ✓ Factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to healthcare play a crucial role in perpetuating the epidemic.
- ✓ Effective responses to the opioid epidemic must include evidence-based interventions at both individual and community levels.