

Controversial treatment: Can we treat drug addiction with heroin?

As overdose deaths have broken records year after year in the U.S., a group of researchers has looked around the world for new treatment options to try and has landed on a counterintuitive method. A [new comprehensive report](#) concludes that it's time for Americans to earnestly pilot and study "heroin-assisted treatment," a controversial approach that involves patients who are severely addicted to the drug injecting medical-grade heroin in a supervised setting.

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"This isn't legalizing heroin or just giving it away," says [Beau Kilmer](#), the lead author of the 93-page report. "These are people who have been using for quite some time and they've tried other treatments and are still injecting. The big takeaway from the research is that this approach stabilizes their lives."

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Double-blind, randomized controlled trials are considered the strongest way to test a drug's effectiveness, and by analyzing 10 randomized trials comparing injectable heroin with other treatments like methadone, [the Rand Corporation] found that the injectable option consistently reduced illicit-drug use and improved treatment retention, all while improving physical and mental health. Rand wrote in one of the key insights of its report that heroin-assisted treatment has the ability to reduce criminal activity among patients.

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It seems unlikely that prescribing heroin to America's young addicted people would ever fly. But experts all agree that one way or the other, they need saving.

Read full, original post: [The Strongest Evidence Yet for a Highly Controversial Addiction Treatment](#)