

# Stanford researchers: The secret to overcoming the opioid crisis may be partly in the mind

September 13, 2017

## **The Washington Post:**

Chronic pain affects an estimated one in three Americans — more than cancer, heart disease, and diabetes combined. This widespread struggle has led to the wide use of pain medications, and a mounting national crisis of opioid addiction and deaths. It's enough to make you wonder whether there's a way that we can help ourselves and our loved ones ease pain safely and effectively without becoming overly dependent on drugs.

The good news is that there is — and it's well within our grasp.

Most people — including most physicians — think of pain as a physical symptom, but science reveals that emotions also play a big role. In other words — psychology is integral to the pain experience, and it can make it better or worse.

When pain is treated solely with medications, only part of the problem has been addressed. Meanwhile, patients may receive too little of another kind of pain care, one that teaches them self-management techniques for treating pain. Our scientific research in the growing area of pain psychology shows that pain relief is more effective when you address the body *and* the mind.

Read the whole story: [The Washington Post](#)