

Pharma purdue and the opioid crisis



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The first step of our decision making model is to determine all the facts in the case being studied and judged. This paper will dive into the issue currently at hand with Purdue Pharma, a privately held drug company and their lawsuit with the state of Oklahoma, which was taken to court in March of this year, among many others. Purdue Pharma is known for their most famous product, OxyContin, which is a prescription painkiller. Purdue Pharma was founded in 1892 by doctors John Purdue Gray and and George Frederick Bingham. It was in 1952 that the company was sold to brothers Raymond and Mortimer Sackler, whose descendants are owners of said company to this day (Wikipedia). Purdue Pharma is renowned as being the pioneer in developing medication to reduce pain, something we know today to be simple painkillers we can pick up at a convenience. In 1995, Purdue Pharma's most popular and groundbreaking drug OxyContin was released to the world. With this came a push for the company to have doctors aggressively praise the pill as being a safe choice to take on a 12 hour cycle. This marketing tactic worked as the people were convinced the drug was safe to consume frequently and allowed this to become one of Purdue Pharma's biggest products. Unfortunately, the business' choice to aggressively market the product as safe would hurt the general public due to a highly addictive and dangerous ingredient: oxycodone.

OxyContin contains oxycodone as its only active ingredient. When released in 1995, it was lauded as being a "breakthrough, long lasting narcotic" that would help patients dealing with an intense pain (Keefe). The drug was a huge market success for the company making well over thirty five billion dollars in revenue. However, oxycodone is a dangerous additive to be using

as it is similar in chemical structure to “ heroin, which is up to twice as powerful as morphine” (Keefe). Many doctors are averse to prescribing opioids like these as they are highly addictive. To counter this precedent, Purdue Pharma hired out doctors and paid for research in an attempt to convince the public that the opioid crisis was no more than a myth and that their drug would be able to treat them for many conditions. With this marketing pushed on the public, millions of people to date have purchased OxyContin believing it to be a safe choice to treat their conditions.

From 1999 onwards, there have been over 200, 000 deaths attributed to overdoses involving OxyContin. In fact, in 2017 there were 74, 000 deaths caused by drug overdose with 40, 000 of them being caused by opioids. It should also be noted that those who get hooked to opioids are likely to find themselves taking solace in other drugs including heroin. Today, multiple states have taken action against Purdue Pharma for their false marketing and downplaying of the addictive nature of OxyContin. Nearly 1, 600 lawsuits have been filed against the company and Oklahoma is one of the first to be taken to court in March of 2019. Attorney General Mike Hunter filed in June of 2017 alleging that Purdue helped to ignite the opioid crisis (Bebinger). He sought 20 billion dollars in damages to the state. Although this case ended with Purdue Pharma paying 270 million to the state for funds of research and treatment in the state, they are still selling the harmful drug.

The second step of the decision making model is to determine the dimensions of right and wrong concerning those involved. First, we should ask whether it was right or wrong for Purdue Pharma to market their product as being a safe and non addictive product when they clearly knew it wasn't.

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We have to decide whether this was an immoral action or not. Another dimension we should delve into is if it was justifiable for Mike Hunter to claim Purdue Pharma was at an entire fault for the opioid crisis within Oklahoma. We should consider that there may be factors outside of just this drug that caused it. Finally, we should consider the ethics of the doctors who were paid off by Purdue Pharma and if it was moral for them to take pay in exchange for not considering their patients' health. We must look at what may be right or wrong within cases in order to assess biases properly.

For the third step of the decision making model, we must assess every stakeholder.

Stakeholder	Their Stake in the Case
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General Attorney Mike Hunter	They would like to see justice brought to the people of Oklahoma. With reparations from the company, they could
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work on
rebuilding
and
nursing the
people
affected by
this crisis.

Purdue They would
Pharma like to
 continue
 marketing
 and selling
 OxyContin.
 Without
 this drug,
 their
 company
 would
 assuredly
 go under
 with all the
 bad press
 and their
 other
 products

might fail
to come off
shelves.

Consume They are
rs/ now aware
Patients of the
harm being
brought by
these
drugs and
would like
to see
alternative
s. It isn't
right for
them to
not have
known
what was
going on
with their
drugs
being
given to

them.

They would

like to

continue

working.

Workers They have

of Purdue their own

Pharma lives to

attend to

and need a

salary to

fund it.

Opioid They are

Addicts the ones

hurt the

most by

this crisis.

The

reparations

that would

be paid out

should go

to these

people as

they try to
build their
lives once
more and
research
will let
them know
action is
being
taken to
prevent
and treat
this awful
addiction.

Family of They would
Opioid like to see
Addicts justice
(alive or brought for
deceased their family
) members
who have
fallen
victim to
addiction.
For those

deceased,
they
should
receive
some
compensati
on in some
form and
want to
see the
crisis being
handled to
prevent
others
from
hurting in
the same
way.

Doctors They want
to supply
their
patients
with the
best
medication

for their
health and
having not
to sell
OxyContin
would of
course aid
in this. It
would
alleviate
the guilt of
selling a
harmful
product in
some
sense as
well.

In this step, it is important to also assess my own bias. I have not been affected by the opioid crisis in anyway as my family nor I have been addicted to any kind of painkiller or drug.

In the fourth step of our decision making model, we must delineate and create alternative courses of action. These solutions should be feasible ways to solve our case. The first possible solution/outcome is that Purdue Pharma chooses not to comply in any way and continues the same practices with OxyContin. This would mean they continue to pay off doctors and push their <https://assignbuster.com/pharma-purdue-and-the-opioid-crisis/>

marketing scheme. Another possible solution/outcome is that Purdue Pharma is forced to openly admit on their products that it can be addictive and that consumers should be cautious. This means each product will be labeled accordingly to their level of potential danger. Finally, Purdue Pharma could continue to sell their product but not be allowed to persuade doctors with monetary gain to promote the product. This means doctors will no longer be forced to tell customers that the product is safe when they are aware it isn't.

In the fifth step of our decision making model, we must assess how the stakeholders would respond to each alternative presented.

Stakeholder	Responses
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General	Act 1:
Attorney	Without
Mike	any action
Hunter	taken, the
	crisis will
	simply
	worsen
	overtime
	and Hunter
	will not be
	able to
	combat for
	the sake of

Oklahoma.

Act 2: They

will be

okay with

this

situation

as now the

public will

likely take

note of

their

products

and Hunter

can focus

on helping

those

already

affected

instead of

prevention.

Act 3:

Same as

Act 2 as

doctors

now

prevent
people
from
getting a
hold of the
drugs and
misusing
it. Hunter
will be able
to take
funds and
funnel it
into
research to
aiding
patients
who have
already
succumb
to
addiction.

Purdue Act 1: They
Pharma continue to
sell their
products

without
interferenc
e. They are
able to
have
doctors
vouch for
their
product as
they pay
them off.

Act 2: They
are forced
to label
their
products.

Most likely
their
products
will take a
dip in
purchase
as people
are put off
from

purchasing
it, meaning
their
revenue
falls.

Act 3:

Without
doctor
push,
people are
less likely
than
before to
use
OxyContin
for pain
relief
meaning
again their
revenue
would
drop.

Consume Act 1: They

rs/ would still

Patients be

receiving
products
that are
harmful to
them and
addictive.

This would
be good in
the short
term for
pain but
long term
leads to a
longer
opioid
crisis.

Act 2: With
labeled
products,
consumers
are able to
make an
educated
decision on
whether or

not they'd

like to

purchase

this

supposedly

addictive

product.

Informed

consumer

is best!

Act 3:

Patients

will no

longer be

persuaded

by doctors

to

consume

this

product.

Less

people will

fall victim

to the

facade and

be able to
avoid
becoming
addicted.

Workers Act 1: They
of Purdue will

Pharma continue to
work in the
same way
as the
revenue of
the
company is
not hurt so
they can
continue to
fund
workers.

Act 2 and
3: These
outcomes
are roughly
the same.

With a
decrease

in revenue
for the
company,
it is likely
they will
need to lay
off workers
to
circumvent
the loss.

Opioid Act 1: They

Addicts can
continue to
consume
the opioids
without
warning or
awareness
from
others.

This will
prolong
the crisis.

Act 2: With
warning

labels,
people are
more likely
to become
educated
on their
addiction
and
attempt to
seek help.

Act 3:

Doctors
will likely
take more
action to
recognize
those who
abused
opioids
and give
them
alternative
s and the
aid they
need to

get over it
rather than
allow them
to have it.

Family of Act 1: No
Opioid justice is
Addicts served to
(alive or their family
deceased member
) was a
victim of
the crisis.

Act 2 and
3: Justice is
brought for
the family
as they see
other
people are
kept from
falling
victim to
the crisis
as a result
of labeling

and
doctors no
longer
vouching
for the
drug.

Doctors Act 1: They
continue
their
practice of
accepting
pay from
Purdue
Pharma
and push
the
harmful
drug on
people.

Act 2: They
are
unaffected
by this
mostly as
people on

their own
become
aware of
the harm
of the
drugs.

Act 3: They

no longer
receive
pay but
are able to
instruct
people on
the
dangers of
the drug.

Removes
guilt and
allows
them to
put the life
of the
patient as
the main

priority.

The sixth step of the decision making model is to seek guidance. In doing so, we are able to assess our solutions and possibly create more for our case. In this case, we have a company choosing to hide the addictive nature of a product from their consumers through heavy marketing. I would first inquire researchers of the active drug, oxycodone. I would like to see them publicly explain, to myself as well, how harmful this makes OxyContin to consume on a regular day to day basis. They can confirm public distress over the product and show how Purdue Pharma has had a large hand in the opioid crisis plaguing states all over the country, namely Oklahoma. I would also ask doctors who have treated opioid addicts and ask them how effective labeling of products is in preventing abuse further was. I would like to see how much of an impact treatment can make for victims as well as how labels caution people from using the drugs. This will allow me to confirm my decision in this case and decide whether or not Purdue Pharma should follow through.

The final step in the decision making model is to make a decision and then ultimately decide whether the accused have been ethical. In this case, I have found Purdue Pharma to be truly unethical in their choice to market the product OxyContin as a nonaddictive drug. Their immoral decision has lead to a large opioid crisis in the state of Oklahoma as well as plenty of others and has cost many their lives. I would like to see alternatives 2 and 3 brought to fruition where Purdue Pharma can no longer pay off doctors to promote their product and they must label their products as containing highly addictive ingredients. With this choice of using both solutions, we should be able to prevent the continuation of the opioid crisis with and

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funnel more care into researching ways to help those already affected. The consumer has a right to be informed of the harm in what they are consuming and that is what this mix of solutions strives for. With this, Purdue Pharma will be doing what they should have done from the start which was ensuring the safety of any and all customers.

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