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Drug and Alcohol Problems Booming In Older Adults

Betty Ford Center Expert Guides Families Facing Alcohol and Drug Misuse in Older Adults in New Book

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Statistics show that 17 percent of older adults ages 60 and up have an alcohol or drug problem, compared with 10 percent of the overall population. By 2020, the number of addicted older adults is expected to double to six million, says Harry Haroutunian, MD, in his new book, *Not As Prescribed: Recognizing and Facing Alcohol and Drug Misuse in Older Adults* (Hazelden; April 19, 2016; \$15.95; Original Trade Paperback).

With an increasing population of aging Baby Boomers, Dr. Haroutunian is addressing the problem at a critical time. Many adults over the age of 50 experience life changes, both large and small. When combined with the additional pressures that may come from loneliness or depression, these can create circumstances that make it easier for older adults to overindulge in alcohol or accidentally misuse medications prescribed to them by doctors.

In *Not As Prescribed*, Dr. Haroutunian discusses the challenges individuals age 50 and older may face. He explains how they can develop problems from substance misuse and what caregivers and loved ones should look for to stop a pattern from developing into a more serious addiction.

Not As Prescribed is a comprehensive guide for people who are struggling with drugs or alcohol as well as those who want to help their loved ones. Important topics Dr. Haroutunian covers include:

- The distinction between the symptoms of aging, polypharmacy (the use of four or more medications by a patient), and addiction.
- Which prescription drugs and medical conditions can mimic dementia.
- The difference between abuse and dependence, or misuse and addiction.
- Why an older adult may turn to drugs and alcohol.
- The relationship between prescription painkillers and addiction.
- Tips to help caregivers talk with an older adult's doctor about the need for and proper use of prescriptions.
- Information about how and where to find treatment for older adults, and recommendations to help them stay on track in recovery.

Not As Prescribed bravely outlines a condition that could become an epidemic among older adults. Filled with anecdotes and stories from older adults who have achieved recovery, statistics and facts about drug and alcohol use in this demographic, and a wealth of useful information for caregivers who want to take helpful action, *Not As Prescribed* is a vital resource that will save lives and families.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harry Haroutunian, MD, is an internationally known speaker and authority on addiction-oriented topics—including drug misuse among older adults. He is widely read online and has appeared on The Dr. Oz Show and Dr. Drew On Call as well as in The New York Times and Cosmopolitan. Board certified in both addiction and family medicine, Dr. Haroutunian serves as physician director of professional and residential programs at the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, California. He is the author of Being Sober: A Step-by-Step Guide To, Getting Through, and Living in Recovery.

ABOUT THE HAZELDEN BETTY FORD FOUNDATION:

The Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation is a force of healing and hope for individuals, families and communities affected by addiction to alcohol and other drugs. It is the nation's largest nonprofit treatment provider, with a legacy that began in 1949 and includes the 1982 founding of the Betty Ford Center. With 16 sites in California, Minnesota, Oregon, Illinois, New York, Florida, Massachusetts, Colorado and Texas, the Foundation offers prevention and recovery solutions nationwide and across the entire continuum of care for youth and adults.

ABOUT AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into 'Real Possibilities' by changing the way America defines aging. With staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and promote the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare security, financial security

and personal fulfillment. AARP also advocates for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the world's largest circulation magazine, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow [@aarp](https://twitter.com/aarp) and our CEO [@JoAnn_Jenkins](https://twitter.com/JoAnn_Jenkins) on Twitter.

Not As Prescribed: Recognizing and Facing Alcohol and Drug Misuse in Older Adults

By Harry Haroutunian, MD

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CONTACTS:

Claire McKinney, 908-955-7563, claire@clairemckinneypr.com

Greg Phillips, 202-434-2560, media@aarp.org, [@AARPmedia](https://twitter.com/AARPmedia)

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