Prescribing opioids for chronic pain conditions has been associated with a significant increase in opioid-related deaths, a high risk of dependency and addiction, and other side effects associated with long-term opioid use.

- An estimated 27 million people suffered from opioid use disorders in 2016.
- The number of opioid overdoses has increased in recent years, in part due to the increased use of opioids in the management of chronic non-cancer pain.
- In the United States of America alone in 2016, there were an estimated 63,632 deaths due to drug overdose, a 21% increase from previous years. This was largely due to a rise in deaths associated with prescription opioids.

How can physical therapy help?
Physical therapy is effective in treating and reducing chronic pain.

A physical therapist can design an individualised treatment programme combining the most appropriate techniques to address the underlying problem, including:

**Exercise:** people who exercise regularly experience less pain

**Stress management:** mindfulness, relaxation, visualisation, and graded exposure to stress-producing events can help people reduce pain and improve their functional capacities

**Sleep hygiene:** physical therapists can help educate people about appropriate sleep hygiene to help combat the vicious cycle of persistent pain

**Pain neuroscience education:** physical therapists can educate people about modern pain science that highlights the processes involved in pain

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**Movement for Health**

**World Physical Therapy Day**

World Confederation for Physical Therapy

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