



# Surge in UK Death Rates Connected to a Widely-used Anxiety Medication: A Report by ScienceAlert

## Description

Deaths linked to the anxiety drug, **pregabalin**, have more than doubled in England and Wales from 187 in 2018 to 441 in 2022. This drug, also known by brand names Lyrica and Alzain, treats epilepsy, nerve pain, and anxiety. It produces feelings of euphoria, calmness, relaxation, and can create a **dependence** if taken for extended periods. While typically not dangerous on its own, combining it with other **substances** can lead to negative interactions and even fatalities. The majority of pregabalin-related deaths involved other opioids, often not prescribed to the same individuals, indicating possible illicit drug use.

The recent surge in pregabalin deaths coincides with an increased number of prescriptions. There were 8.4 million people prescribed pregabalin in the UK in 2022, a rise from 5.5 million in 2016. To curb this trend, more resources should be devoted to patient education, particularly about potential drug interactions and the risk of dependency.

Substance use disorder sufferers are particularly vulnerable to pregabalin dangers due to co-existing mental health issues. Moreover, there's growing concern about the misuse of pregabalin in the illegal market, creating a higher risk for harm. Also, studies show more prescriptions in northern England, an area with more social deprivation, suggesting an **inequitable** access to proper support.

The increasing number of deaths related to pregabalin must spur crucial conversations about the reasons for **concomitant** drug use. Since pregabalin is an effective medication for many, banning it may not be the best solution. A **comprehensive** approach, considering the context and reasons behind the misuse, is essential.

### **Vocab Corner:**

- Pregabalin**: a medication used to treat epilepsy, nerve pain, and anxiety.
- Dependence**: a condition where a person needs a particular substance to function normally.
- Substances**: materials, often related to medication or drugs, with a particular kind of quality.
- Inequitable**: unfair; not providing equal opportunities or advantages for everyone.
- Concomitant**: occurring or existing simultaneously with something else, usually in a way that is connected.
- Comprehensive**: including all or nearly all aspects or elements of something.

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## Vocabulary List:

1. **Pregabalin** // (noun): a medication used to treat epilepsy, nerve pain, and anxiety
2. **Dependence** // (noun): a condition where a person needs a particular substance to function normally
3. **Substances** // (noun): materials often related to medication or drugs with a particular kind of quality
4. **Inequitable** // (adjective): unfair, not providing equal opportunities or advantages for everyone
5. **Concomitant** // (adjective): occurring or existing simultaneously with something else, usually in a way that is connected
6. **Comprehensive** // (adjective): including all or nearly all aspects or elements of something

## Vocabulary quizzes

### Multiple Choice ( Select the Correct answer for each question. )

1. Which medication is commonly used to treat nerve pain?

- Option: Pregabalin
- Option: Escalation
- Option: Hygiene
- Option: Concomitant

2. What process involves making an individual immune to a particular disease?

- Option: Inequitable



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- Option: Immunisation  
Option: Samples  
Option: Dependence
3. Which term describes something likely to cause disagreement or argument?  
Option: Commemorative  
Option: Contentious  
Option: Consolidated  
Option: Wirings
4. What term refers to a revival or increase after a period of little activity?  
Option: Hygiene  
Option: Resurgence  
Option: Samples  
Option: Inequitable
5. Which word means having a quality or feature that makes something easily recognizable?  
Option: Boost  
Option: Dependence  
Option: Distinctive  
Option: Inequitable
6. What term describes something that requires great effort and determination to deal with?  
Option: Dependence  
Option: Samples  
Option: Challenging  
Option: Pregabalin
7. Which term means to make something denser or more viscous?  
Option: Consolidated  
Option: Inequitable  
Option: Thicken  
Option: Hygiene
8. What term refers to the state of relying on or being controlled by something?  
Option: Dependence  
Option: Wirings  
Option: Palliative Care  
Option: Controlling
9. Which word means reduced in size or pulled together?  
Option: Immunisation  
Option: Contracted



Option: Underestimated

Option: Cavalier

10. What term means to make something physically stronger or more solid?

Option: Immunisation

Option: Resurgence

Option: Consolidated

Option: Challenging

**Gap-Fill ( Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

11. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a historical account or biography written from personal knowledge.

12. The chef's \_\_\_\_\_ attitude towards food safety led to hygiene issues in the restaurant.

13. The laboratory technician collected blood \_\_\_\_\_ from the patients for analysis.

14. Regular exercise can provide a natural \_\_\_\_\_ to your immune system.

15. Proper \_\_\_\_\_ practices are essential in preventing the spread of infections.

16. The distribution of resources was deemed completely \_\_\_\_\_ by the committee.

17. The electrician checked the \_\_\_\_\_ in the building to identify the faulty connection.

18. The conflict led to an \_\_\_\_\_ of violence in the region.

19. The politician's speech resonated with the concerns of the \_\_\_\_\_.

20. The doctor noticed an \_\_\_\_\_ in the test results that required further investigation.

**Matching Sentences ( Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

21. Some people develop a psychological on substances like alcohol or drugs.

22. The opponent's skills were severely leading to a surprising defeat.

23. The misuse of harmful can lead to serious health consequences.

24. The government implemented strict measures aimed at the spread of the disease.



25. The decision-making process is influenced by the activities of the in the brain.
26. Patients with terminal illnesses may benefit from the support provided by services.
27. The city erected a statue as a tribute to the fallen war heroes.
28. The laboratory requires blood and tissue for diagnostic testing.
29. The electrician carefully inspected the building's electrical for any faults.
30. Adding flour to the sauce will help to it for a richer texture.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Pregabalin 2. Immunisation 3. Contentious 4. Resurgence 5. Distinctive 6. Challenging 7. Thicken 8. Dependence 9. Contracted 10. Consolidated

**Gap-Fill:** 11. Memoir 12. Cavalier 13. Samples 14. Boost 15. Hygiene 16. Inequitable 17. Wirings 18. Escalation 19. Populace 20. Abnormality

**Matching sentence:** 1. Dependence 2. Underestimated 3. Substances 4. Controlling 5. Prefrontal cortex 6. Palliative Care 7. Commemorative 8. Samples 9. Wirings 10. Thicken

## CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL4

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