Medicated to Death: Painkillers Kill More Than All Drugs Combined

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28 dead in one city in the last year.

The killer.. is painkillers.

The war on drugs in Port St. Lucie is now focused on Oxycontin, Endocet, Percocet, Methadone, Xanex, Hydrocodone.

Attached to that long list of drugs is long list of families hurting. More than 12 died in recent months from a painkiller overdose, their families' lives shattered by narcotic abuse.

"Just because it is happening quietly behind closed doors, there's no less attention that should be paid to it than if people were being shot on the street." said Sgt. Derek Brieske, "It's an epidemic. The medication was never intended to be shot up or snorted."

Port St. Lucie Police say it is their number onepriority to intercept the pills coming in to town. But it is a new war on drugs.

"The mentality out there is, it is just one tiny little capsule, what can it do to me?" Brieske said.

"They are easy to get. Very easy. They are getting cheaper and cheaper and cheaper. What used to be $25, can cost as little as $7-per-pill." said Ashley Shaw. Ashley woke up to her boyfriend David Brooks, only 24, dying in her arms from an painkiller overdose.

"Something would be done about it if it was guns or rape or a serial killer something would be done about it. It's our dirty little secret No one wants to talk about it." Ashley said.

We contacted all 12 families who lost loved ones this year to speak out on the rash of deaths. Ashley was the only one who was strong enough to go on camera. What did she want to tell other families?

"God I don't even know. I havent figured out what to tell myself." Ashley breaks down as she says this. "It's killing people and no matter how strong you think you are, it can take you down." Ashley said with tears running down her face recalling that March morning. "At one point one of the officer came out to talk to me and I asked what was going on and they said David had passed and I ..uh.. screamed. I just basically kept screaming and crying."

This is not a one-town problem.

Police call it an epidemic that we must pay more attention to. 5,200 died last year in Florida from abusing prescribed pain pills, like oxycontin. That is more deaths from painkillers than from any other type of drug in the world *combined.*

Port St. Lucie Police are working overtime and undercover. The Chief is pushing legislators take action to stop this crisis killling the young and old.