

M/S

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# Controversial drug treatment underway in York

By JENNIFER BROWN  
Staff Writer

Behind the unmarked door leading to suite 206 at the Oak Ridges medical clinic, a controversial drug treatment awaits addicts seeking an end to the habits that grip their lives.

One patient is a 40-year-old businessman and father, whose recreational drug of choice for three years was the popular pain killer Percodan.

He is one of six people to go through the rapid opiate detoxification program at the Oak Ridges Addiction Treatment Centre - a process said to alleviate the horrors of going cold turkey and eliminate the need for a lengthy and often unsuccessful course of methadone treatment.

It's only been seven weeks, but Derek - who requested anonymity to protect his privacy - already feels confident he's on the road to true recovery, hopefully for good.

By the time he decided to end his dependence on the pills that cost him \$5 to \$10 each, Derek was spending \$400 to \$500 per day on Percodan bought off the streets of Toronto.

There were many ways to feed the habit, Derek said last week, reflecting on what he hopes is a closed chapter in his life. "It was a nice high - it gave me energy and I thought I was thinking more clearly."

But the drug was starting to affect his health, specifically his central nervous system, not to mention his relationship with his wife and son.

Before arriving at the Oak Ridges clinic, Derek had tried a clinic on Queen Street in Toronto, where a doctor suggested he could quit by going cold turkey with the assistance of valium and other medications.

But he described the experience as torturous because he quickly fell into the nightmare of withdrawal.

"My world fell apart - every part of my body ached," Derek said. "Mentally, it was horrible. I

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Dr. Michael Varenbut, Dr. Jeff Daiter (centre) and Dr. David Teplin operate the Oak Ridges Addiction Treatment Centre.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE



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