

The misuse of and addiction to opioids, including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, has been labelled “a serious national crisis” in the US affecting public health as well as social and economic welfare. The US opioid epidemic has yet to cross the Atlantic to the United Kingdom. ***But why has opioid use reached crisis point in the US but not in the UK?***

In a [blog for the London School of Economics US Centre](#) Senior Physiotherapist and CLAHRC HEE NCEL Fellow Diarmuid Denny and CLAHRC Academy Teaching Fellow Silvie Cooper discuss the roots of the US crisis, and the different culture of pain management in the UK which may explain why we have not experienced the same devastating consequences.....



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## Why has the US opioid crisis not spread to the UK? Thank the NHS

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*The US is currently experiencing an epidemic of opioid use – a crisis which has yet to cross the Atlantic to the United Kingdom. But why has opioid use reached crisis point in the US but not in the UK? **Diarmuid Denny** and **Silvie Cooper** argue that the US crisis has its roots in the promotion of opioids for chronic pain management more than 20 years ago which led to a culture of attempting to end chronic pain rather than to manage it. The National Health Service in the UK, by contrast, made pain management services universally accessible and offers pain-management strategies beyond opioids.*