Doctor for Kosar uses disputed detox care

'Unknown method called safe by supporters but risky by critics

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Rick Spanglie entered the national spotlight last month when former Cleveland Browns quarterback Bernie Kosar said he had cured him. Twelve years in the NFL and multiple concussions left Kosar with headaches, insomnia and slurred speech. He said that after he visited Spanglie's clinic, those symptoms were gone.

But the Florida doctor isn't certified in neurology. His résumé says he's board certified in anesthesiology and addiction, but for more than a decade, the 57-year-old specialized in a controversial treatment known as "rapid detox." The treatment involves placing patients under anesthesia for hours while they are given drugs to aid what is normally a painful withdrawal.

"You can learn to do anything regardless of your training," Spanglie said in an interview. "You have a brain, you have a passion and you want to learn."

An estimated 46 million adults — or 16 percent of the American population — suffer from addiction, and there is rising concern about the lack of standard of care, according to a 2012 report by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. "Addiction treatment is largely disconnected from mainstream medical practice," said Susan Foster, director of policy research and analysis at the center.

The five-year study evaluated the disease as well as the types of care provided to patients. Foster called addiction a "complex brain disease" and said that few people who suffer from addiction receive evidence-based care, or treatment based on research that supports the safety and efficacy of the work.

Rather than supporting a multi-day detox treatment or the widely known 30-day inpatient stint, the report recommends approach...
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Peer and social support and, in some cases, the use of prescription medications may also be needed. The report found that different treatment facilities and programs are not adequately regulated or operated, leading to problems in providing treatment that is consistent with medical standards.¹

Media reports, government documents, and court records show that the evolution of Sponsa's practice, his treatments, and his patients has been a controversial issue for some time. The story is one of a doctor who is known for his contributions to medical research and his involvement in the field of addiction medicine.

The story begins when Sponsa, a doctor, was found dead in his home in 2004. An investigation into his death revealed that he had been using a new treatment method that involved the use of a special device. The device was claimed to be effective in treating addiction, but it was later discovered that Sponsa had no training in addiction medicine and that he had been using his patients as test subjects.

It was revealed that Sponsa had been using a laser treatment to treat addiction, and that he had no medical license. The story gained national attention, and Sponsa was eventually charged with fraud and malpractice. He died in prison before the case went to trial.

The story of Sponsa highlights the importance of regulation and oversight in the medical field, and the need for greater transparency and accountability in the treatment of addiction.