



RECOVERY

WARRIORS

**ADDICTION RECOVERY PERSPECTIVES FROM
ACTIVISTS WITH LIVED-EXPERIENCE**

Sidharth Ramachandran



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the underlying structure of the data. This is particularly relevant in the context of machine learning, where the model's performance is heavily dependent on the quality and structure of the input data. The second part of the paper focuses on the development of a new algorithm for handling missing data. This algorithm is designed to be robust to various types of missingness and to provide accurate imputations. The third part of the paper presents the results of a series of experiments that compare the proposed algorithm to several existing methods. The results show that the proposed algorithm consistently outperforms the baseline methods in terms of both accuracy and computational efficiency. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the current work and potential directions for future research.



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RECOVERY WARRIORS

*ADDICTION RECOVERY PERSPECTIVES FROM
ACTIVISTS WITH LIVED-EXPERIENCE*

This book is dedicated with the deepest gratitude to those whose invaluable contributions—whose lived experience, service, and activism—are presented in the following chapters.

Sidharth Ramachandran

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INTRODUCTION

*Overview of the
addiction epidemic*



“Recovery Warriors,” this book’s title, was inspired by the struggles of human experience that follow, and the arduous journeys each person interviewed made to achieve victory. The subject of this interview-collection, at its core, is the variegated experiences of addiction recovery. Especially well suited as a medium for expression, these interviews record the personal experiences of people suffering from substance abuse disease. Human addictive behavior is a subject of continued academic and periodical analysis, found in the domain of psychoanalysts and economists alike. Specifically with the advent of pharmaceutical giants monetizing the demise of patients seeking relief from pain—incentivizing physicians to over-prescribe addictive opioids—the problem of addiction requires a second look. The United States is known to trailblaze in political freedom and technology, but our nation’s stark mismanagement of the opioid epidemic is uncharacteristic. Despite the purported Reagan-era

victory of “winning the war on drugs,” the reality is that there remain stratas of addicted people marginalized from society for little to no fault of their own. And having turned the corner of the new millennium, this affliction has only been worsening.

Drug addiction and overdose deaths have reached epidemic proportions in the last decade. On average, 128 people die per day due to drug overdose. According to the CDC, 81,000 overdose deaths occurred in a 12-month period ending in May 2020. The staggering number was accelerated by the novel coronavirus pandemic.¹ The intersection of two of the greatest diseases of our generation—COVID-19 and opioid addiction—has been unfolding over the past few months, exacerbating the disease of addiction overall. The number of overdose deaths in 2020 is set to break record levels.

The opioid epidemic affects urban, suburban, and rural areas and spans all age groups and economic classes. Commonly prescribed as a low-cost painkiller, opioid drugs are potently addictive, creating a toxic dependence that in the long run causes brain damage, depression, and fatal overdose for both rich and poor alike. What some are prescribed at the doctor’s office, others buy illegally from the back-alleys of crime ridden neighborhoods. Lately, new combinations laced with substances like fentanyl are even more lethal.

The widespread use of opioids was initially driven by the economic greed of the near-oligopolistic corporations in the pharmaceutical industry. Any FDA effort to regulate prescriptions proved futile against the efficacy of their low-cost chronic pain palliative.² Investigative

journalists hampered down on these companies, correctly portraying them as examples of the dark, predatory side of our free-market economic system. The growing condemnation of the lapsed business and medical ethics of pharmaceutical companies in the context of the opioid crisis led to boycotts. These actions forced pharmaceutical companies like Purdue Pharma to innovate tamper-resistant pills that cannot be crushed or pulverized for the purpose of snorting, the most lethal form of inhalation and a leading cause of overdose death.³ These new formulations have rigid coatings and are insoluble in water.⁴ Yet even with this momentum towards improved opioid-control, there remain problems to be addressed from a half-century of unregulated substance prescription.

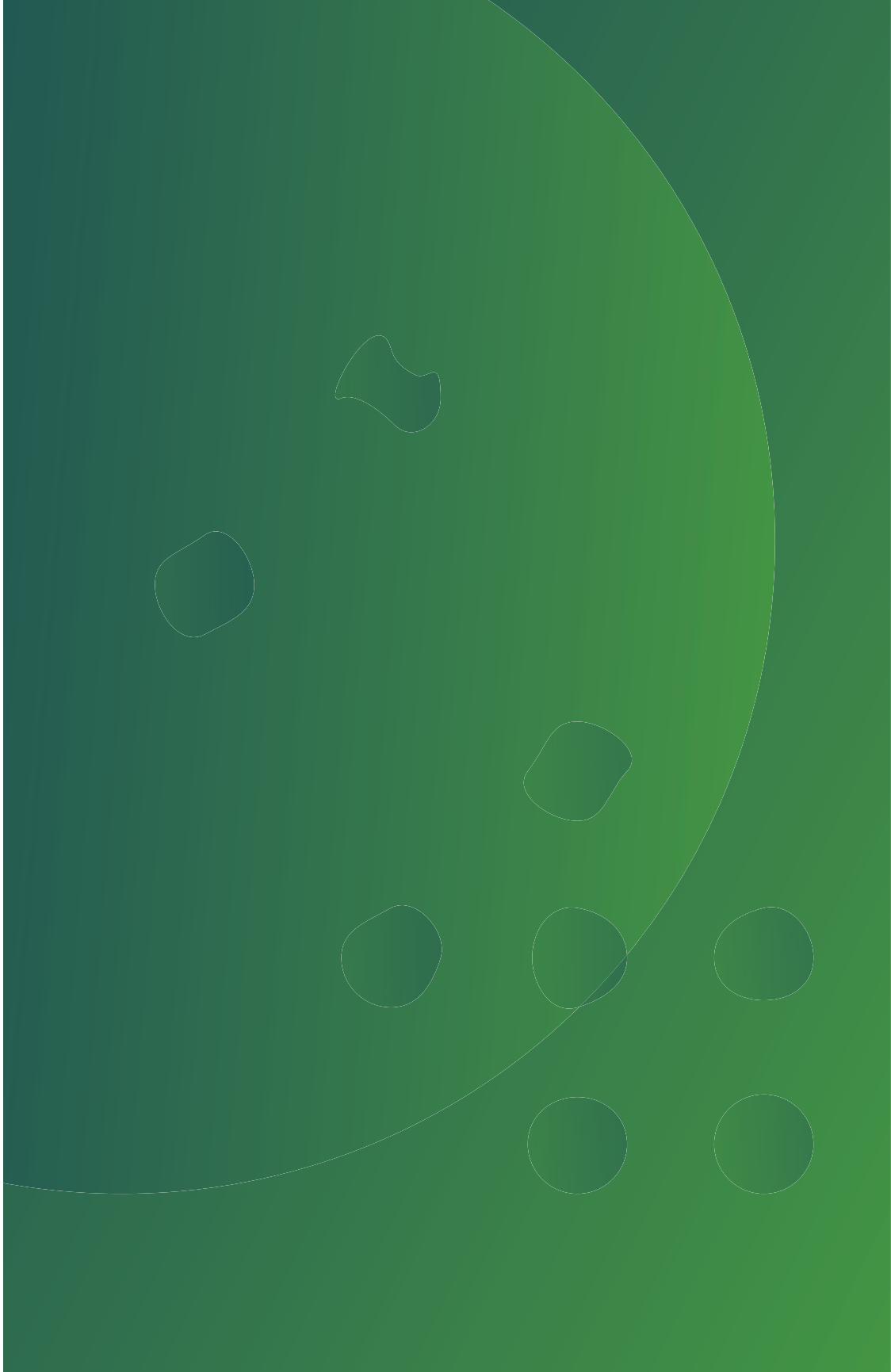
Impacted by a close family member's personal struggle with opioid addiction, I began this book to discover what drives people into addiction and pulls them into recovery. When viewed as a collection of human experiences, *Recovery Warriors* reveals the lives of people who the mainstream media and society's widespread discrimination usually subvert as dangerous and unworthy of respect. In actuality, the situation couldn't be farther from such a description: it is the exact opposite. But as a collection of qualitative research—a series of case-studies that share themes and patterns—this book will rise above its individual aspects to embody the spirit of positive change, to highlight the perseverance and fortitude with which human beings transcended their barriers to overcoming adversity. It is my hope that by raising awareness about recovery options and the complications they entail, this book will inspire us—students, social workers, teachers—to

concentrate our efforts with ever greater vigilance to the purpose of raising a better society in a safer world.

All proceeds from any form of this book or content will be donated 100% to addiction and recovery non-profit organizations.







CHAPTER SEVEN





MY FATHER'S RECOVERY

Suresh Ramachandran

Author's Father

In the spring of 2008, still young and impressionable, I was en route to a tennis match. My father, an avid athlete, had waited anxiously throughout my youth for the day I'd match him in sports the way I did in humor. Those warm afternoons, we spent hours on the court, playing serve after serve, until the sunshine's fading beckoned us indoors. Yet, for no distinct reason, after one such match, my father's ankle swelled. Initially, he dismissed it as a bad sprain, but it started occurring with greater frequency, until he made a habit of consuming Tylenol before leaving for each match. Only after a year did he see a doctor. After a few scans—CT and MRI—, ice packs, no sports, and more painkillers, he was all set for a few more months of lobs and drops. Yet, with the deteriorating influence of continued strain, simple walking began to provoke the same acute sting as our tennis did. This development made work-related travel for his business near impossible.

Turning to the MRI for diagnosis, an NYC-based

specialist indicated arthritis on his left leg as the culprit and recommended surgery to realign the left tibia. Following his orthopedist's advice, my father underwent surgery in 2010. During the recovery period, while his still functional right leg balanced the load of his body weight, the ankle on that leg developed arthritis. The years of inability to play sports had weakened his muscles even in the non-arthritic leg, which resulted in imbalanced joint-weight distribution. To deal with the constant pain, he was prescribed small doses of Percocet. It became common in our family to ask our father to pop a pill, so we could go out or play a game.

What was at stake in this short-term benefit was my father's health and physical stability. Because of heightened pain sensitivity, the pill which we originally hailed as a last resort, now became the go-to solution 24/7. Without his opioids, my father could not be active or sedentary. Stomach ailments and periodic depression were complications of his sustained substance overuse. The opioid medications affected his mind and our family's harmony, disrupting the father-son bond and his marriage. Yet, even amid these pressing challenges, my father displayed many inspiring examples of fortitude. When his leg granted him permission, he coached me in squash, from the vantage point of a wheelchair (a benefit which gave him a closer view of the ball). He still traveled overseas for work for weeks and managed by asking for a wheelchair wherever he went. When we went out, he did his best to maintain a cheerful demeanor. These positive instances, while seemingly minor, beneficially impacted our familial psyche at large, feeding our need for hope. They were ever more erratic beacons of light in our otherwise dim future.

In 2017, a technological innovation in stem cell therapy promised my father relief. In The New York Hospital for Special Surgery, my father had an arthroscopy done to allow right-leg cartilage regrowth. A cage-like contraption was fitted to his right ankle, requiring five holes to be drilled into his femur to hold a high-pressure cage to separate the joints. According to the surgeon who performed this surgery, this procedure and treatment was pure torture—a last resort for afflictions of my father’s type. To deal with the severe pain of four months in the ankle cage, my father was prescribed progressively higher doses of opioids, at times, going close to the 30 MME limit per day. While the surgery fixed the actual problem, other smaller joints in the arch of his right foot developed arthritis. The only way he could get through the day without excruciating pain was by continuing to take opioids.

Before any of us could have a say, my father became addicted—the way we had always feared, but never thought he would. The truth is that none of us knew he was not even himself. His pain sensitivity was very high, forcing him to constantly increase his opioid dosage. With little options left for medical treatment, his dependency on medication could not be circumvented. I had just entered high school at the time of the surgery. With my school schedule keeping me out of the house for long periods of the week, and with my mom back to work, my father self-administered his medications. The prescriptions came and went, and we were just happy to get by. The scariest incident occurred as we drove back from a doctor’s appointment. His chest was tightening to the extent that he feared cardiac arrest (a possible outcome of opioid allergic reaction) and he had to pull

over the car. Just as he called my mother, the spasm passed, and he came home safely. He was then put-on prescription medical marijuana drops to complement a milder dosage of opioids. The CBD oil helped a bit with his pain, but the accompanying nausea and inability to focus on day-to-day activities removed that palliative as a long-term option.

With severe muscle loss from the continued bed rest, my father's right knee now showed symptoms of arthritis. The surgeon who cleaned up his knee recognized that my father was dealing with a rare form of gout that does not show up in his blood work. The new line of treatment for gout—a non-additive steroid injection directly into his knee-joint—finally gave him some relief from the pain. My father slowly started weaning off the medications and resorted to physiotherapy to restore his movements. After almost 13 years, he is now on a very minimal dosage of the opioids and can manage with restricted walking. Since my parents run their own software business, it was easier for him to rehabilitate and get back to work at his own pace and choosing. My father reflects on his recovery path, "In order for an individual to come out of addiction, he or she must have a very strong purpose and meaning for what they are doing in life. This will give the motivation to go for recovery but real progress requires a strong family and work support to help them heal."

Presented above is the story I must share, both my own and that which I present through the life of my father. It is not elegant or stylish, but it rings with the truth that only experience can wield. When this journey began, and I looked wearily to discard all ideas of confession,

the efforts of past writers moved me. In my search to understand what was happening to my father and family, I found the books of recovery activists Ryan Hampton and Carl Hart and delved into their brazen unmasking of the truth of addiction behind bars, broken homes, and neglected families.³² It is the infectious passion of their words that has allowed me to express my own.

Further still, I think of the interviews, face-to-face through a screen, and the way they moved me. Each unique, yet united with respect to action. These interviewees accept what has happened to them yet refuse to accept this fate for others.







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My dear father for the warrior that he is and for helping me see the positive in every situation in my life. He is my inspiration for this book.

My mom—thank you for being there always!





the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age is expected to increase from 1.1 billion to 1.5 billion.

As the world's population grows, the demand for food and other resources will increase. This will put pressure on the environment and on the world's food supply.

One way to meet this demand is to increase the amount of food that is produced. This can be done by using more land for agriculture.

Another way to meet this demand is to increase the efficiency of food production. This can be done by using better farming techniques.

One of the most important ways to increase food production is to use fertilizers. Fertilizers help plants grow faster and produce more food.

There are many different types of fertilizers. Some are made from natural materials, and some are made from synthetic materials.

One of the most common types of fertilizers is nitrogen. Nitrogen is an essential nutrient for plants, and it is found in many different fertilizers.

Another common type of fertilizer is phosphorus. Phosphorus is also an essential nutrient for plants, and it is found in many different fertilizers.

There are many other types of fertilizers, and each one has its own benefits and drawbacks. It is important to choose the right fertilizer for your plants.

One of the most important things to remember is that fertilizers should be used carefully. Too much fertilizer can harm the environment.

It is also important to use fertilizers in a way that is safe for people and animals. Fertilizers can be harmful if they are not used properly.

By using fertilizers carefully, we can help to increase food production and meet the needs of a growing world population.

There are many other ways to increase food production, and it is important to use all of them. This will help to ensure that we have enough food to eat.

One of the most important things to remember is that we need to take care of the environment. This will help to ensure that we have enough food to eat.

By taking care of the environment, we can help to ensure that we have enough food to eat and that the world is a better place.

There are many other things that we can do to help the world, and it is important to do all of them. This will help to ensure that we have a better future.

One of the most important things to remember is that we need to take care of the world. This will help to ensure that we have a better future.

By taking care of the world, we can help to ensure that we have a better future and that the world is a better place.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sidharth Ramachandran is a senior at The Lawrenceville School and is passionate about normalizing inequities in society. Sidharth founded the RADAR (Raise Awareness about Drug Addiction and Recovery) project to explore ways to help marginalized people in recovery. He loves programming, squash, and philosophy.









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The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and the role of the auditor in ensuring the integrity of the financial statements. It highlights the need for transparency and accountability in the financial reporting process, particularly in the context of public companies and government entities.

The second part of the document provides a detailed overview of the auditing process, from the initial planning and risk assessment to the final audit opinion. It covers the various types of audit evidence, the importance of professional judgment, and the role of the auditor in identifying and reporting on potential misstatements.

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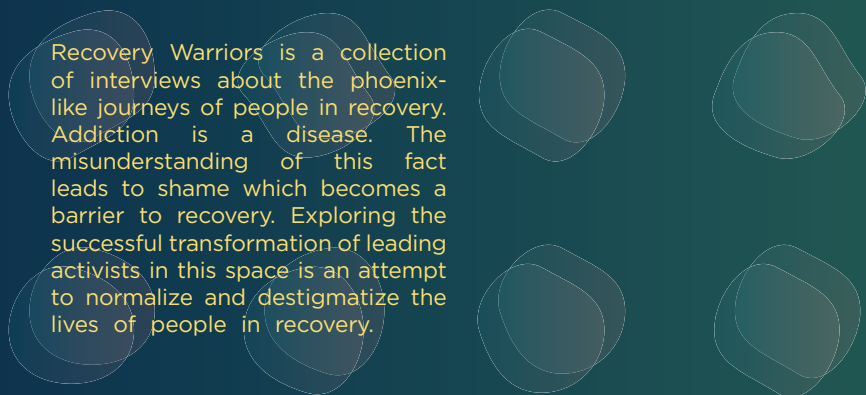
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Recovery Warriors is a collection of interviews about the phoenix-like journeys of people in recovery. Addiction is a disease. The misunderstanding of this fact leads to shame which becomes a barrier to recovery. Exploring the successful transformation of leading activists in this space is an attempt to normalize and destigmatize the lives of people in recovery.

