

# NEW TRENDS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE IN SPAIN

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## BACKGROUND

Governments and public health organizations worldwide are increasingly aware of drug abuse-related issues and eager to receive systematically-collected surveillance data, which may assist in formulation and solidification of their plans to address this emerging epidemic. Through the coordinated research efforts of the Italian-based Associazione per l'Utilizzo delle Conoscenze Neuroscientifiche a fini Sociali (AU-CNS), Denver Health Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center (RMPDC) in the U.S., and European opioid treatment program physicians, this study will provide for proof of concept for developing an international drug surveillance system as well as feasibility of the pilot study's methods, data collection/aggregation, and related study materials.

## METHODS

Cross-sectional study. The rates of prescription drug misuse have been assessed using patient self-report at treatment program intake. The data has been collected in four countries: France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Patients have been asked to self-report the use of substances and injection history for European-market prescription opioids, prescription stimulants, and heroin, during the past 30-day. Also, basic demographic information, treatment history, and health care worker status have been recorded.

## RESULTS

We present results for Spain. The main characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. From the total sample of 125 subjects (78% males; 39±10 years old), 79% were from Spanish origin; 94% were in treatment for heroin dependence; the rest (7 subjects) has as a main drug methadone, tramadol, codeine, pethidine and opium. From the total sample, 31 subjects (25%) were referred from other centers or prison and they were not using substances “to get high”; 64 subjects (51%) were using one substance, 25 subjects (20%) were using 2 substances, 4 subjects (3%) were using 3 substances and 1 subject (0.8%) was using 4 substances during the last month (Figure 1). The main abused drug during the last month was heroin (63%), followed by methadone, tramadol, codeine, pethidine, fentanyl, buprenorphine, morphine and methylphenidate (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Number of substances abused during the last 30 days.

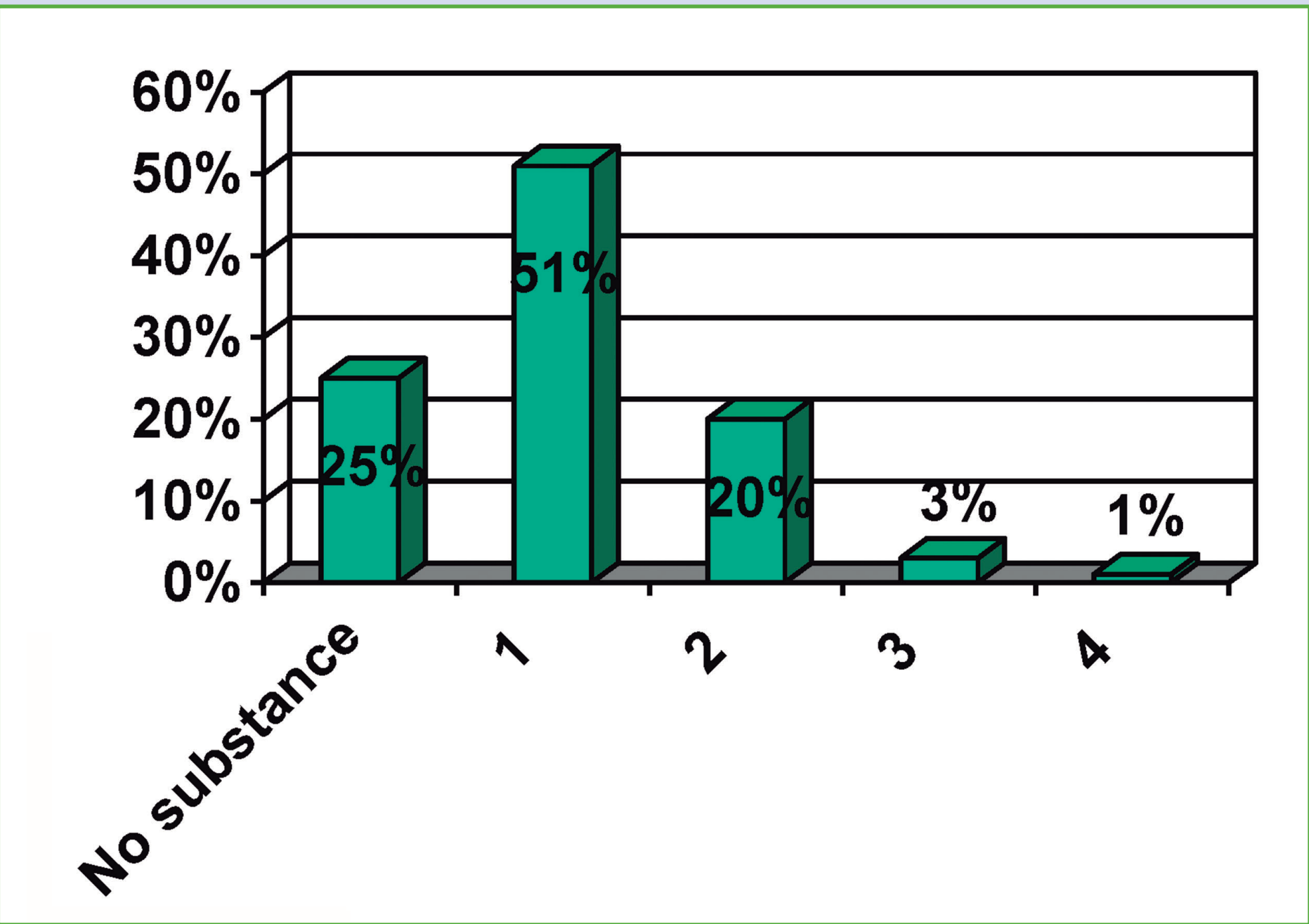
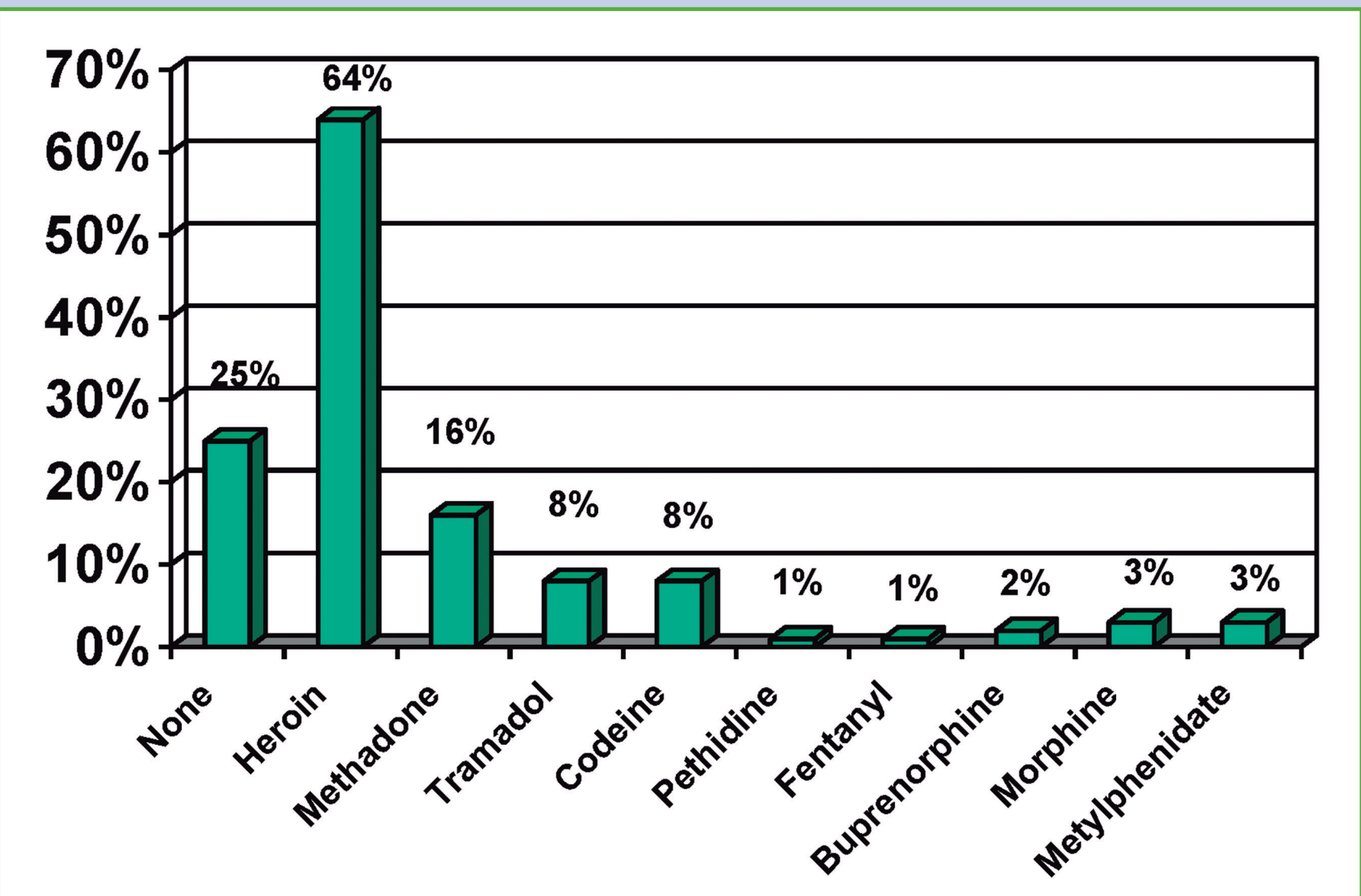


Figure 2. Substances abused during the last 30 days (subjects can use more than one substance).



## CONCLUSIONS

Preliminary data show that besides heroin, in Spain, there is a concomitant abuse of prescription opioids (methadone, tramadol, codeine). The knowledge of drug use patterns can provide useful information to develop effective prevention and treatment.

Table 1. Main characteristics of the Spanish sample

	Spanish Sample N= 125
Males (%)	98 (78%)
Age (mean±SD)	39±10
Origin (%)	
• Spain	98 (78)
• EU (except Spain)	11 (9)
• Europe non-EU	9 (7)
• Asia	4 (4)
• America	3 (2)
Main drug (%)	
• Heroin	118 (94)
• Methadone	3 (2)
• Tramadol	1 (1)
• Codeine	1 (1)
• Pethidine	1 (1)
• Opium	1 (1)
Last treatment (%)	
• Never treated	17 (14)
• Less than one month	61 (48)
• More than one month	47 (38)
Number of substances abused last 30 days (%)	
• No substance abuse	31 (25)
• 1 substance	64 (50)
• 2 substances	25 (20)
• 3 substances	4 (4)
• 4 substances	1 (1)
Substances abused last 30 days (%)	
• None	31 (25)
• Heroin	80 (64)
• Methadone	20 (16)
• Tramadol	9 (8)
• Codeine	9 (8)
• Morphine	3 (3)
• Pethidine	1 (1)
• Fentanyl	1 (1)
• Buprenorphine	2 (2)
• Methylphenidate	3 (3)
Intravenous drug use (%)	36 (29%)