



Title:	Prescription Opioid Misuse in Europe: From Opioid Treatment Programs to Poison Centres
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Abstract:

Objective: To describe prescription opioid misuse in Germany and Italy reported by patients entering opioid treatment programs (OTP) in Munich and Piemonte, Puglia and calls to poison centres (PC) in Göttingen and Milan.

Methods: For PCs, analyses include intentional exposures reported in 2012 for buprenorphine, methadone, and oxycodone. For OTPs, data include self-reports of drug use “to get high” by patients entering opioid addiction therapy from January 2012 - August 2013 for buprenorphine, methadone, oxycodone, codeine, fentanyl, morphine, and tramadol. As the focus is on prescription drug misuse, heroin was excluded.

Results: In Germany, 70% of PC calls were intentional exposures. Mean age was 43.1 (SD=16.0), 59% male. Majority (87%) of intentional exposures involved oral route. Majority (57%) were suicidal intent. Forty-six percent involved methadone, 36% oxycodone, and 18% buprenorphine. Of the 158 patients from OTP, 37% reported a prescription opioid as their primary drug used to get high, including methadone (39%) and buprenorphine (29%). Patients surveyed were 60% male with mean age of 36.6 (SD=9.8) years. Injection of ≥1 drug the past 30 days was reported by 81%, and 86% had previously been in treatment.

In Italy, 77% of PC calls were intentional exposures. Mean age was 40.1 (SD=15.1), 56% male. Majority (93%) of intentional exposures involved oral route. Of intentional exposures, 51% were for misuse and 49% were for suicide. Fifty-one percent were for methadone, 34% for oxycodone, and 15% for buprenorphine. Of the 309 patients from OTP, 36% reported prescription opioid as their primary drug used to get high, including buprenorphine (43%) and methadone (32%). Patients surveyed were 69% male with mean age of 28.6 (SD=8.2) years. Injection of ≥1 drug the past 30 days was reported by 18%, and 49% had previously been in treatment.

Conclusions: Data from PCs and OTPs in Germany and Italy illustrate similar pictures of prescription opioid misuse within each country. Drugs typically used to treat opioid addiction are among those most misused. Germany had a high rate of injection in OTPs as well as a high percentage of patients who had previously been in treatment.