



Title:	Gender Differences in Patients Entering Treatment Programs in Europe
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Abstract:

Introduction: Several studies have shown inconsistent results in gender differences for prescription opioid and heroin misuse. Opioid misuse is a growing problem in Europe and other countries. This study aims to describe gender differences in patients entering treatment programs for opioid addiction in four European countries.

Methods: Data from a pilot project conducted by the RADARS® System in conjunction with Europad was utilized to describe gender differences in patients entering a treatment program for opioid addiction. Patients were surveyed at intake on several measures including demographic data, primary drug, drug endorsements of past 30-day use “to get high”, and route of administration. For this analysis gender was compared by age, self-determined health care professional (Y/N), past opioid addiction treatment, primary drug of abuse, number of drugs endorsed, and endorsements of past 30-day use of prescription opioids as well as heroin in four European countries: Germany, Italy, Spain, and France. Statistical significance was assessed at the 0.05 level, using Fisher’s exact test for categorical variables and t-tests for continuous variables.

Results: In Germany there were 158 respondents (68% male), 309 in Italy (67% male), 123 in Spain (77% male), and 144 in France (77% male). Male respondents outnumbered females in all four countries. In Germany males were older than females but endorsed significantly fewer drugs. There was also a lower proportion of males endorsing past 30-day use of fentanyl and heroin. In Italy there was a lower proportion of males endorsing past 30-day use of codeine compared to females. In Spain there was a higher proportion of males endorsing past 30-day use of heroin compared to females. There were no significant gender differences in France.

Conclusions: In Germany, Italy and Spain proportionally fewer males endorsed past 30 day use “to get high” of prescription opioids than females. Other proportional differences between genders were not consistent across countries. It is unclear if a gender bias exists of all users as this study only reflects those seeking treatment for addiction and who responded to the survey.

