Background

- Data on non-medical use (NMU) of prescription opioids in patients with chronic pain are limited.
- Given the high prevalence of chronic pain, it is important to understand NMU in these individuals.

Objectives

- Compare prescription opioid use and NMU in those with and without chronic pain as reported to an online United Kingdom (UK) national survey.

Methods

- The online survey was launched in July 2014 via a survey administration company.
- Lifetime reports of chronic pain (“pain lasting at least 3 months occurring constantly or flaring up frequently”) and prevalence of lifetime prescription opioid use and NMU (without doctor’s prescription or for any reason other than recommended by doctor) were analysed.
- Odds ratios (ORs) were calculated by active pharmaceutical ingredient (API).

Results

- Of 2,499 respondents, 1,132 (45.3%) reported chronic pain.
- Opioid use was more common in those with chronic pain (1,031 [41.3%]) than without (890 [35.6%]) (Table 1).
- Among respondents reporting opioid use:
  - Those with chronic pain were older (52.0 years ± 14.8 versus 46.2 ± 15.8) (Table 2).
  - Chronic pain was more common in females (52.2%) than males (47.8%) (Table 2).
  - Opioid use was two to four times more likely in those with chronic pain (ORs by API=1.8-3.9, p<0.05) (Figure 1).
- Of opioid users, NMU was reported by 507 (26.4%) with chronic pain and 461 (24.0%) without (p=0.2517) (Table 3).

Conclusions

- Opioid use is common in respondents.
- NMU appears common though unrelated to chronic pain; approximately one-quarter of respondents both with and without chronic pain reported NMU.
- Feasibility of evaluating this topic via an online survey is demonstrated, providing groundwork for future studies in Canada.