

Chronic Pain and Non-Medical Use of Prescription Opioids in a United Kingdom National Survey

Janetta L Iwanicki, MD¹, Andrea C Besharat, MPH¹, Erin M Goodman, MS¹, Paul I Dargan, MD², David M Wood MD², Richard C Dart, MD, PhD¹, Jody L Green, PhD¹

¹Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Center, Denver Health, Denver, CO, USA

²Clinical Toxicology, Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and King's Health Partners, London, UK

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 \pm 14.8 versus 46.2 \pm 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.

Figure 1. Ratio of Use Among Those With Chronic Pain to Those Without

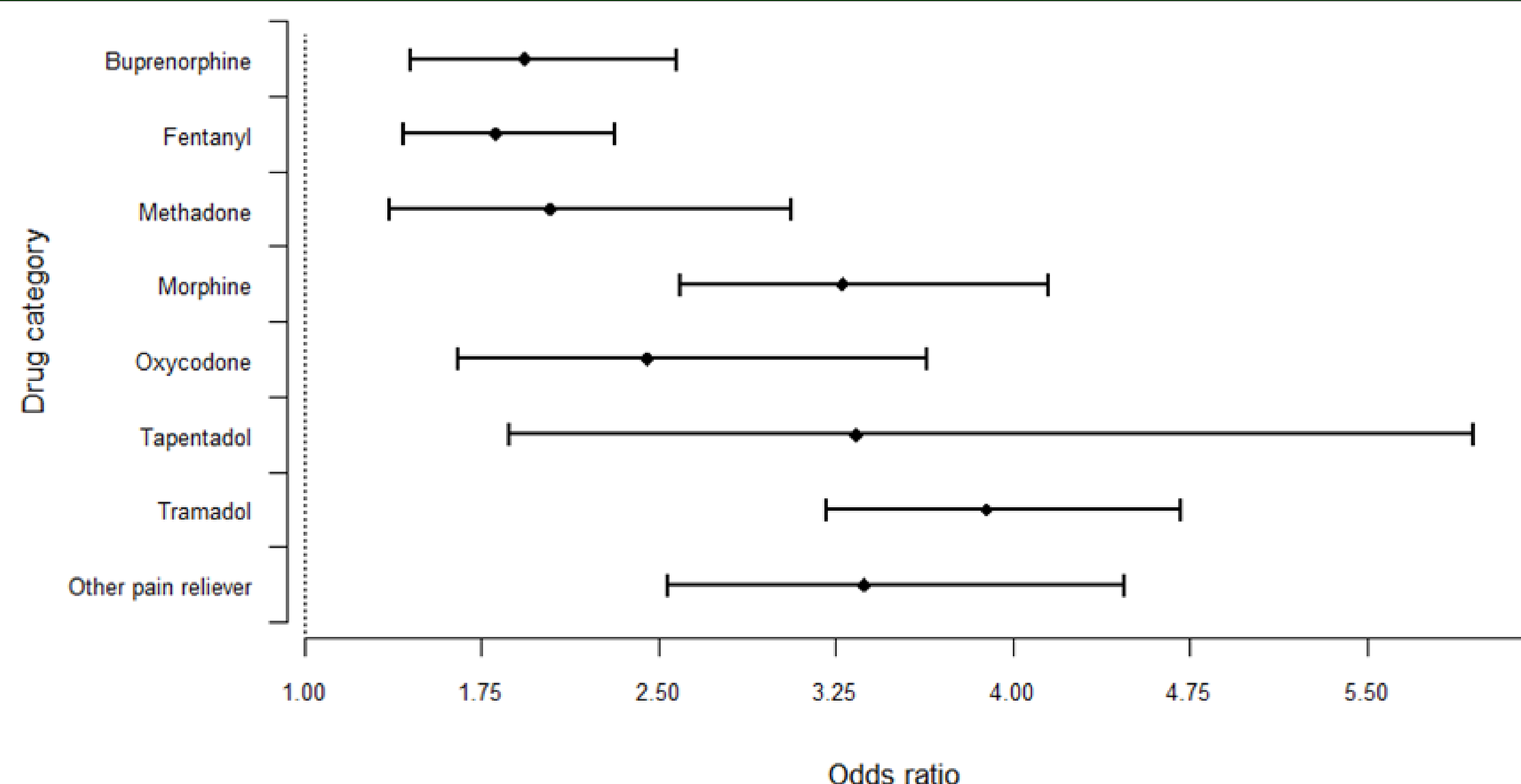


Table 1. Opioid Use and Chronic Pain

| | Chronic Pain | | p-value |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------|
| | Yes n=1,132 | No n=1,367 | |
| Opioid Use (n, %) | | | |
| Yes | 1,031 (41.3) | 890 (35.6) | <0.0001 |
| No | 101 (4.0) | 477 (19.1) | |

Table 2. Respondent Demographics Among Those Reporting Opioid Use

| | Chronic Pain | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Yes n=1,031 | No n=890 |
| Gender (n, %) | | |
| Male | 493 (47.8) | 483 (54.3) |
| Female | 538 (52.2) | 407 (45.7) |
| Age | | |
| (Mean \pm SD) | 52.0 \pm 14.8 | 46.2 \pm 15.8 |

Table 3. Opioid Non-Medical Use and Chronic Pain

| | Chronic Pain | | p-value |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Yes n=1,031 | No n=890 | |
| Opioid Non-Medical Use (n, %) | | | |
| Yes | 507 (26.4) | 461 (24.0) | 0.2517 |
| No | 524 (27.3) | 429 (22.3) | |

Figure 2. Ratio of Non-Medical Use Among Those With Chronic Pain to Those Without

