

CHARACTERIZING OPIOID AND BENZODIAZEPINE ABUSE AS REPORTED BY PATIENTS ENTERING MEDICATION-ASSISTED SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAMS IN EUROPE

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Introduction

- In the United States (US), opioid poisoning deaths nearly quadrupled from 1999 to 2011¹.
- While the misuse of opioids is concerning, the misuse of benzodiazepines in combination with opioids result in a higher risk for overdose².
- While these trends have been monitored in the US, the problem of opioids and benzodiazepines may also be present in Europe.
- We assessed country-specific prevalence of benzodiazepine and prescription opioid use of individuals entering European medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and examined demographic differences.

Methods

- Data involving participants aged 18-65 years from the Researched Abuse, Diversion, and Addiction Related Surveillance (RADARS[®]) System European Opiate Addiction Treatment Association (EUROPAD) Program between October 2014 through September 2015 were analyzed.
- Demographics and drugs used "to get high" in the 90 days prior to treatment intake were stratified by country (defined as location of the MAT sites):
 - France
 - Germany
 - Italy
 - Norway
 - Spain
 - United Kingdom (UK)
- Percentages were country specific as opioids and benzodiazepines vary from country to country.
- Participants were divided into two groups: those who endorsed only a prescription (Rx) opioid and those who endorsed both a prescription opioid and benzodiazepine (Benzo and Opioid).

Results: Country Specific Demographics

	N (%) endorsed at least one Rx opioid		N (%)	Gender		Age		
				Female	Male	Mean	Median	IQR
France N = 187	57 (27.81)	Benzo and Opioid	16 (30.77)	3 (18.75)	13 (81.25)	37.50	38	10
		Opioid only	36 (69.23)	8 (22.22)	28 (77.78)	38.28	39	12
Germany N = 148	83 (56.08)	Benzo and Opioid	45 (54.22)	12 (27.27)	32 (72.73)	40.64	41	7
		Opioid only	38 (45.78)	7 (18.42)	31 (81.58)	39.79	40	10
Italy N = 86	26 (30.23)	Benzo and Opioid	7 (26.92)	4 (57.14)	3 (42.86)	28.29	27	6
		Opioid only	19 (73.08)	2 (10.53)	17 (89.47)	35.47	35	23
Norway N = 78	58 (74.36)	Benzo and Opioid	49 (84.48)	13 (26.53)	36 (73.47)	34.1	34	13
		Opioid only	9 (15.58)	5 (55.56)	4 (44.44)	34.44	32	16
Spain N = 62	11 (17.74)	Benzo and Opioid	7 (63.63)	2 (28.57)	5 (71.43)	40.57	39	24
		Opioid only	4 (36.36)	1 (25.00)	3 (75.00)	43.25	410.5	18
UK N = 199	87 (43.72)	Benzo and Opioid	46 (52.87)	9 (19.57)	37 (80.43)	36.00	37	13
		Opioid only	41 (47.13)	10 (25.00)	30 (75.00)	37.02	36	11

The proportion of men and women for the benzodiazepine and opioid group and the opioid only group in Italy were statistically significant different (p= 0.0260).

Conclusions

- Our study found that Spain had the lowest percentage of total respondents who reported they used at least one prescription opioid "to get high". However, they also had the second highest rate of respondents who used a benzodiazepine among those who used a prescription opioid.
- While Norway had the highest percentage of total respondents who reported they used at least one prescription opioid "to get high", they also had the highest percentage of those who used a benzodiazepine among those who also used a prescription opioid.

Limitations

- We caution against comparing data between countries as surveys vary.

References

- ¹Chen LH, Hedegaard H, Warner M. (2014, September 16). Drug-poisoning Deaths Involving Opioid Analgesics: United States, 1999–2011. NCHS data brief, no 166. National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved January 10, 2016 from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db166.htm>
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