

# GABAPENTIN AND PREGABALIN ABUSE AMONG EUROPAD SUBJECTS

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## Background

- Gabapentin and pregabalin are widely used to treat neuropathic pain, seizure disorders, and anxiety disorders, and prescriptions have increased markedly over the past decade. However, these drugs also carry a potential for misuse.
- We describe gabapentin and pregabalin abuse among subjects seeking opioid treatment in the European Opioid Treatment Patient Survey (EUROPAD) Program.

## Methods

- The European Opiate Addiction Treatment Association (Europad) and the Researched Abuse, Diversion and Addiction-Related Surveillance (RADARS<sup>®</sup>) System treatment program is a cooperative effort between the Associazione per l'Utilizzo delle Conoscenze Neuroscientifiche a fini Sociali and the Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Center, and is comprised of 11 participating European opioid treatment programs.
- Participating programs survey abuse of prescription drugs among patients entering drug dependence treatment programs.
- Data from 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2014 through 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2017 were analyzed. Descriptive statistics on demographic and co-endorsement variables for respondents who endorsed abuse of gabapentin and pregabalin ("GABA-Users" in figure) are presented.

## Table 1. Demographics

	Gabapentin	Pregabalin
Total	79	75
Average Age (Std.)	33.62 (8.7)	34.91 (8.66)
Avg. Age at First Treatment (Std.)	24.08 (8.26)	24.91 (8.00)
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	51 (64.6)	49 (65.3)
Female	28 (35.4)	26 (34.7)
<b>COUNTRY</b>		
France	1 (1.3)	5 (6.7)
Germany	32 (40.5)	13 (17.3)
Italy	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)
Norway	7 (8.9)	8 (10.7)
Spain	1 (1.3)	4 (5.3)
UK	37 (46.8)	44 (58.7)
Primary Drug: Heroin	54 (68.4)	59 (78.7)
Primary Drug: Oxycodone	2 (2.5)	4 (5.3)
Health Care Professional	4 (5.1)	0 (0.0)
Chronic Pain	22 (27.8)	26 (34.7)
Prior Overdose	39 (49.4)	33 (44.0)
Avg. Endorsed APIs (Std.)	5.73 (2.70)	6.09 (2.72)

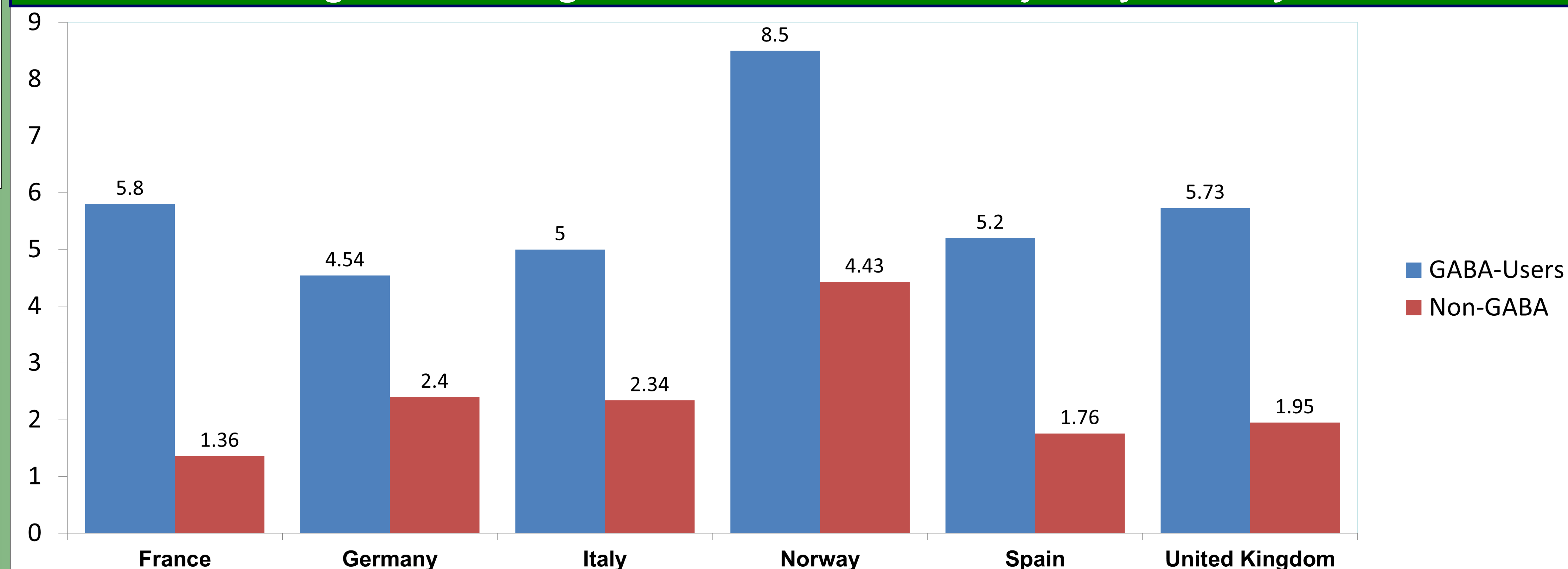
## Results

- From 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2014 through 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2017, 1865 respondents completed the survey. 79 respondents (4.2%) endorsed past 90-day gabapentin abuse, and 75 (4%) endorsed pregabalin abuse (Table 1).
- Heroin was the most common primary drug of abuse (68.4% of gabapentin respondents, 78.7% of pregabalin respondents).
- Respondents reporting past 90-day abuse of gabapentin and pregabalin endorsed abuse of 5.73 (SD 2.70) and 6.09 (SD 2.72) Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) on average per person respectively (Figure 1).
- Reports of pregabalin or gabapentin as the respondent's primary drug of abuse were rare (3 and 1 respondents, respectively).

## Conclusions

- Among EUROPAD Program subjects, gabapentin and pregabalin abuse are most often reported by respondents who endorse polysubstance abuse.
- Endorsement of gabapentin and pregabalin as primary drugs of abuse is rare.

Figure 1. Average Endorsements Per Subject by Country



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