

REPORTED CHRONIC PAIN AND OVERDOSE BY PATIENTS ENROLLING IN OPIOID DEPENDENCE TREATMENT IN FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Objective

Opioid addiction and overdose are serious public health issues in Europe¹. We describe chronic pain and overdose survey data reported by a sample of individuals entering substance abuse treatment in France and the United Kingdom.

Methodology

European Opioid Treatment Patient Survey (EUROPAD) Program data from January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016 from the France and the United Kingdom (UK) collection sites for active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) with 50 or more endorsements were analyzed. Respondents who endorsed more than one drug product within an API were counted once in each API group. Chronic pain and overdose questions were dichotomized to yes or no/never. If individuals answered a question by marking both the yes and no/never responses, they were dichotomized to the yes group. Frequencies and percentages for chronic pain and overdose questions were calculated for each API endorsed.

Results

In France (Figure 1), heroin and buprenorphine had the highest number of abuse endorsements followed by morphine. Individuals endorsing past 90-day tramadol abuse reported the highest rates of chronic pain (69.2%), while those who reported past 90-day fentanyl abuse had the highest rates of visiting a healthcare professional for their chronic pain (66.7%) and also receiving a prescription opioid for their chronic pain (50.0%). Endorsers of morphine had the highest proportion reporting heroin overdose (20.0%) and prescription opioid overdose (8.9%).

In the UK (Figure 2), heroin and codeine had the highest number of abuse endorsements followed by methadone, buprenorphine, and tramadol. Individuals endorsing past 90-day oxycodone abuse reported the highest rates of chronic pain (35.7%), visiting a healthcare provider due to chronic pain (35.7%), and receiving a prescription opioid for their chronic pain (21.4%). Those who endorsed past 90-day abuse of morphine, codeine, tramadol, and methadone also reported having experienced chronic pain (33.3%, 24.7%, 22.6%, and 22.0% respectively). Endorsers of morphine had the highest proportion reporting heroin overdose (40.0%) followed by endorsers of methadone (26.0%). Endorsers of oxycodone had the highest proportion of prescription opioid overdose (14.3%) while endorsers of buprenorphine abuse had the highest rate of other drug overdose (12.0%).

References

¹European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) (2017), *Perspectives on Drugs: Preventing Overdose Deaths in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

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Conclusions

In France, more than half of the individuals in our sample who endorsed past 90-day abuse of tramadol, fentanyl, morphine, and oxycodone reported a history of chronic pain. Endorsers of these prescription opioids also reported being treated for some form of overdose.

In the United Kingdom, one-fifth to one-third of the individuals who endorsed past 90-day abuse of oxycodone, morphine, codeine, and tramadol reported a history of chronic pain. Endorsers of these prescription opioids also reported being treated for heroin, prescription opioid, and other drug overdose.

Figure 1. Chronic Pain & Heroin Overdose by Most Endorsed Drugs - France

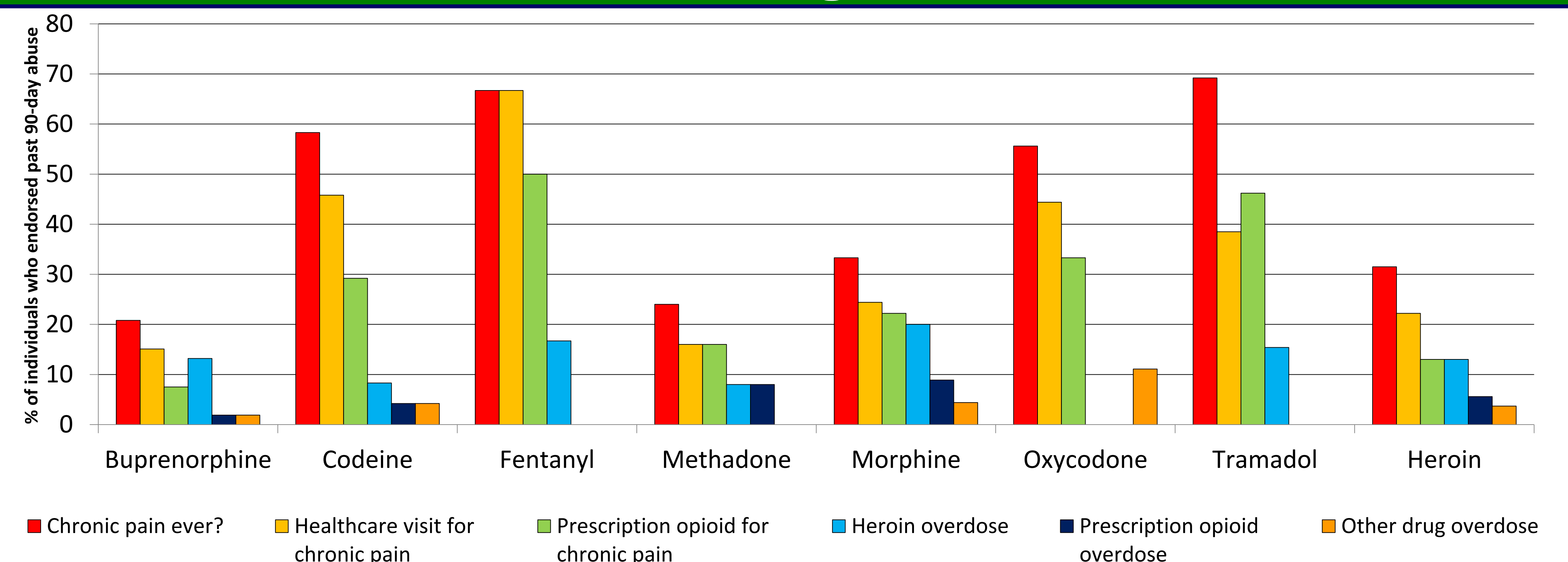


Figure 2. Chronic Pain & Heroin Overdose by Most Endorsed Drugs - United Kingdom

