

# Cross-border trafficking of prescription oxycodone products manufactured in Canada

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## Introduction

- Abuse of prescription opioids is a significant public health problem in both Canada and the United States (US).
- As more restrictions are imposed on prescription opioids, access to these drugs via unconventional illicit sources is likely to be explored.
- One potential source is the diversion of products across the US-Canada borders.

## Methods

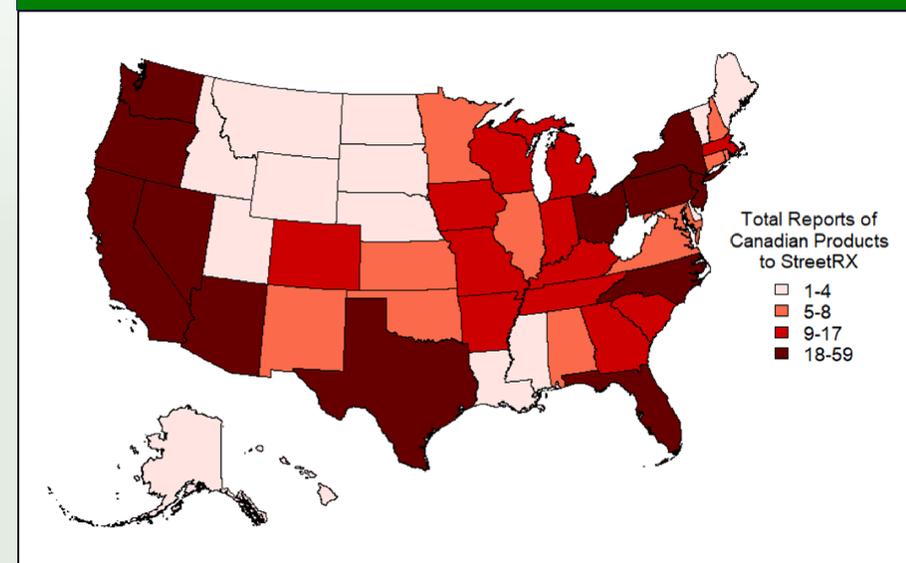
- The RADARS System StreetRx.com is a publicly accessible website that collects anonymously reported street prices for prescription and illicit drugs.
- As of August 2016, US site users reporting acquisition of certain oxycodone products (listed in table) manufactured only in Canada were prompted to confirm the country in which the product was acquired.
- Reports to the US StreetRx website (through September 2018) were studied to quantify this cross-border trafficking of prescription oxycodone products manufactured in Canada and reported in the US.

**Table 1. Reports of Canadian Oxycodone Products to the US StreetRx Program Website August 2016-September 2018**

| Oxycodone Product <sup>a</sup> | Confirmed Country of Purchase |            |           |            |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                                | Not answered                  | US         | Canada    | Total      |
| Actavis CR                     | 24                            | 208        | 11        | 243        |
| Apotex CR                      | 12                            | 177        | 18        | 207        |
| Cobalt CR                      | 10                            | 89         | 6         | 105        |
| OxyIR                          | 2                             | 7          | 1         | 10         |
| OxyNEO <sup>®</sup>            | 4                             | 5          | 9         | 18         |
| Laboratoire CR                 | 1                             | 3          | 0         | 4          |
| Sandoz CR                      | 1                             | 6          | 3         | 10         |
| Targin <sup>®</sup>            | 1                             | 3          | 2         | 6          |
| Pharmascience CR               | 2                             | 10         | 2         | 14         |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>57</b>                     | <b>508</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>617</b> |

<sup>a</sup> When a site user reports these Canadian products in the US, they are prompted to confirm the country in which the product was acquired

## Reports of Canadian Oxycodone products per State



## Conclusions

- Acquisition of Canadian prescription oxycodone products is reported in the US
- This trade is not limited to states near the US-Canada border.

## Limitations

- Data come from anonymous online reports of prescription medications that cannot be confirmed.

## Disclosures

The System is supported by subscriptions from pharmaceutical manufacturers for surveillance, research and reporting services. The System is the property of Canadian Consumer Product and Pharmaceutical Safety Inc. which retains exclusive ownership of all data, databases and systems. Subscribers do not participate in data collection or analysis, nor do they have access to the raw data.

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## Results

- There were 617 reports of Canadian prescription oxycodone products to the US StreetRx Program website.
  - 508 (82%) confirmed that the selected drug was acquired in the US. 52 (8%) confirmed that the selected drug was acquired in Canada. 57 (9%) did not report the country in which the drug was acquired.
- There were 599 (97%) reports of crushable oxycodone products.
- There were 18 (3%) reports of OxyNEO, the only difficult to crush oxycodone product in our analysis.
- Reports in the US came from diverse geographic areas and were not concentrated in states bordering Canada.
  - Reports per state was highly correlated with state population (Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.82)

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