



LISBON
ADDICTIONS
2019

The Future of Prescription Drug Abuse Beyond Opioids: A UK Perspective

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Funding and Conflicts of Interest

Euro-DEN and Euro-DEN Plus

- 2013-2015: The Euro-DEN project had financial support from the DPIP/ISEC Programme of the European Union
- 2015 onwards: The Euro-DEN Plus Project has received support from EMCDDA since August 2015



Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Control Center

- Grants and statistical assistance with analysis of data from UK Internet surveys and web monitoring surveys
- Honorarium to attend and present at annual RADARS scientific meetings in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018



Sun+

**Why 1.6m
Britons are
addicted to
prescription
pills**

MailOnline

The 'safe' painkiller that is turning
unsuspecting women into drug addicts

- Co-codamol is a painkiller containing paracetamol and codeine
- Over the past decade, the number of prescriptions for it have doubled
- The majority of addicts are not men, but women

A nation of prescription drug addicts: More
Britons die from abusing painkillers and
tranquillisers than heroin and cocaine

Many GPs 'prescribe drugs to addicted
patients'

By Claire Marshall
BBC News

BBC
NEWS HEALTH

theguardian

Prescription abuse outstrips illegal drug
use, UN warns

- Counterfeit market has lethal consequences
- Crackdown on appetite suppressants urged



**BRITAIN'S
OPIOID
CRISIS**



EDITORIALS

BMJ 2018;362:k3208 doi: 10.1136/bmj.k3208

Tackling benzodiazepine misuse

OPEN ACCESS

The time to take decisive action has come

Benedict Hayhoe¹, James Lee-Davey²

¹Department of Primary Care and Public Health, School of Public Health, Imperial College London, UK; ²Department of Psychological Medicine, East London NHS Foundation Trust, Royal London Hospital, UK

PREGABALIN AND GABAPENTIN

BMJ 2017;359:j5312 doi: 10.1136/bmj.j5312

Misuse of gabapentin and pregabalin may be underestimated

Limon K Nahar *toxicologist*¹, Rebecca Andrews *senior toxicologist and deputy head*¹, Kevin G Murphy *professor of endocrinology and metabolism*², Sue Paterson *consultant toxicologist and head*³

¹Toxicology Unit, Imperial College London, London W6 8RP, UK; ²Imperial College London, Hammersmith Campus, London W12 0NN, UK



ACMD

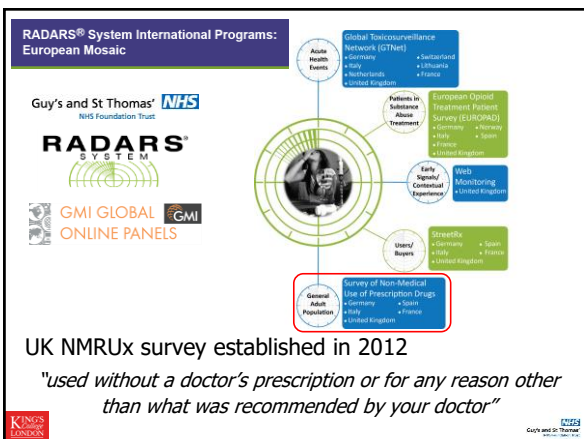
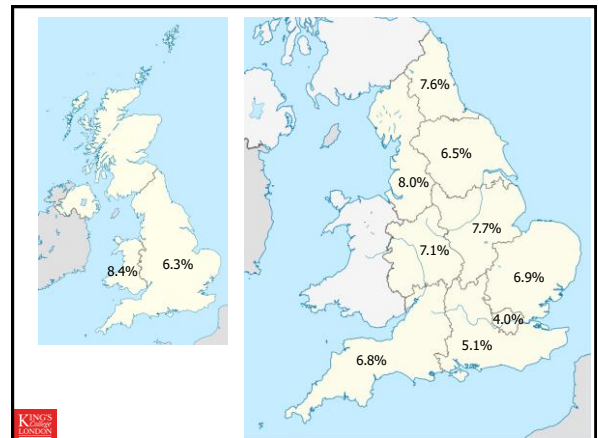
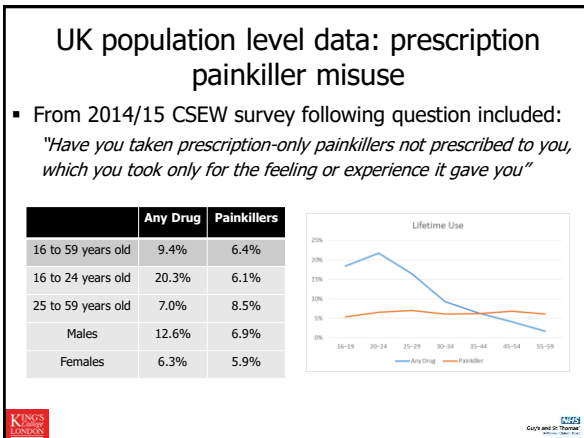
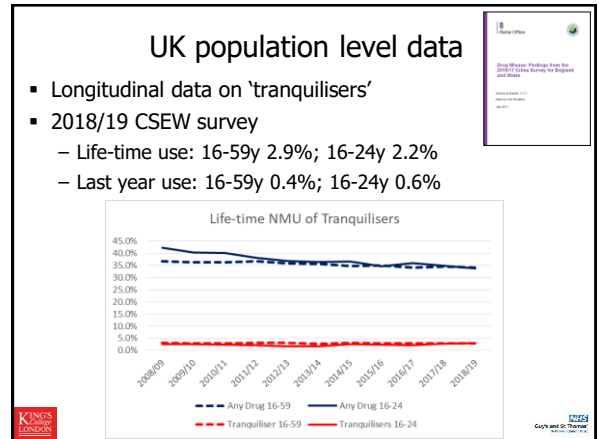
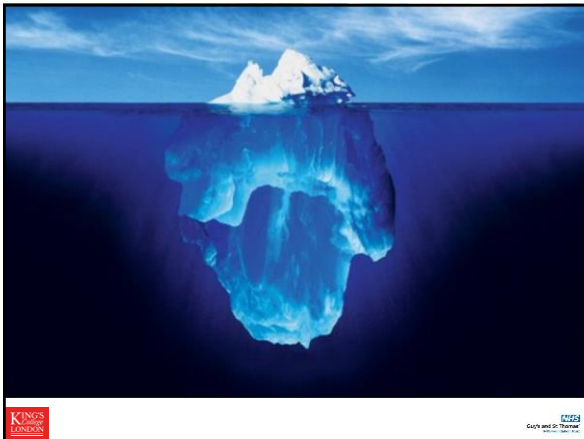
Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

Diversion and Illicit Supply of Medicines

December 2016

Type of drug: The most prevalent diverted drugs are opioids and benzodiazepines. Increasing amounts of gabapentin and pregabalin are being diverted. Cognitive enhancers could be susceptible to diversion in the future. Further attention needs to be given to the misuse of codeine in over-the-counter (OTC) preparations as a precursor to the misuse of prescription opioids.



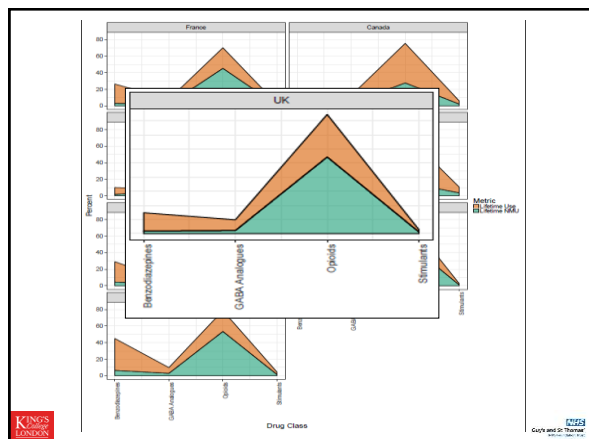


Postgrad Med J 2018;94:627-633. Original article

UK survey of non-medical use of prescription drugs (NMRUx) as a valuable source of general population illicit drug use data

Fu Liang Ng,^{1,2} Karlynn Rockhill,³ Joshua Black,³ Kevin Patrick May,³ Melanie D Whittington,³ David M Wood,^{1,4} Paul I Dargan,^{1,4} Jody L Green^{3,5}

Conclusions The NMRUx survey has a broad reach of participants, and a sampling scheme that achieves external validity, compared with general population demographics. NMRUx's online format allows flexibility in items surveyed and in response to emerging trends.



Short report
The British Journal of Psychiatry (2014)
205, 407–408. doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.114.149252

Misuse of benzodiazepines and Z-drugs in the UK

V. Kapil, J. L. Green, C. Le Lait, D. M. Wood and P. I. Dargan

- Life-time misuse of any benzodiazepine or Z-drug: 7.7%
- Highest life-time rates in frequently prescribed drugs:
 - Diazepam: 6.2%; Zopiclone: 2.8%
- 1.7% misusing weekly or more frequently
- Commonest reason for misuse was to help with sleep
 - Only 1.2% reported use to manage come down

BJCP British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology Br J Clin Pharmacol / 78:1 / 190–191

Letter to the Editors

Misuse of the γ -aminobutyric acid analogues baclofen, gabapentin and pregabalin in the UK

Vikas Kapil,^{1,2,3} Jody L. Green,⁴ Marie-Claire Le Lait,⁴ David M. Wood^{1,5} & Paul I. Dargan^{1,5}

- Life-time misuse of any GABAergic: 2.5%
 - Baclofen: 1.3%
 - Gabapentin: 1.1%
 - Pregabalin: 0.5%
- Misuse drugs sourced variety of routes:
 - Health services: 63%
 - Family/Acquaintances: 58%
 - Internet: 8%

SHORT REPORT

Nonmedical use of alprazolam in the UK: Results from a nationally representative survey

Joanna Hockenhuil¹ | Elise Amioka² | Joshua C. Black² | Colleen M. Haynes² | Paul I. Dargan^{1,3} | Richard C. Dart² | David M. Wood^{1,3}

Br J Clin Pharmacol. 2019;85:1841–1845.

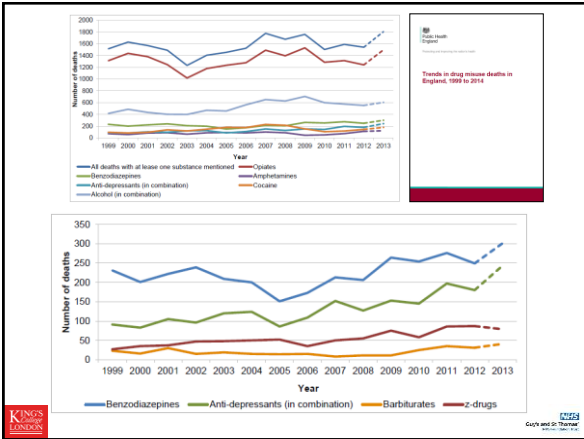
- Survey of 10,019 UK based respondents
- Estimated national prevalence of lifetime NMU:
 - Alprazolam: 0.3% (males 0.5%, females 0.2%, $p=0.021$)
 - Diazepam: 1.3% (males: 1.4%, females: 1.2%, $p=0.475$)

- Estimated national prevalence of recent NMU:
 - Alprazolam: 0.08% (males 0.09%, females 0.08%)
 - Diazepam: 0.21% (males: 0.19%, females: 0.24%)

| | Last 90 day nonmedical use weighted % (95% CI) | P-value |
|-------------------|--|---------|
| ALPRAZOLAM | | |
| All ages | 0.08 (0.01–0.15) | <.001 |
| 16–24 y | 0.37 (0.00–0.81) | |
| 25–34 y | 0.14 (0.00–0.34) | |
| 35 + y | 0.01 (0.00–0.03) | |
| DIAZEPAM | | |
| All ages | 0.21 (0.12–0.31) | .262 |
| 16–24 y | 0.17 (0.00–0.41) | |
| 25–34 y | 0.39 (0.07–0.72) | |
| 35 + y | 0.18 (0.08–0.27) | |

TABLE 2 Reason for nonmedical use among respondents reporting lifetime nonmedical use of alprazolam or diazepam

| Reason | Alprazolam weighted % ^a (95% CI) | Diazepam weighted % ^a (95% CI) |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| To treat a medical condition | 54.9 (34.3–75.5) | 71.5 (62.8–80.1) |
| To get high | 39.1 (19.0–59.1) | 33.7 (24.6–42.7) |
| To come down | 26.8 (8.1–45.5) | 21.1 (13.2–28.9) |
| To prevent withdrawal | 11.3 (1.3–21.3) | 8.5 (3.9–13.0) |
| Other | 5.4 (0.0–12.9) | 6.6 (2.3–10.9) |



Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2016 registrations

Office for National Statistics

Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales from 1993 onwards, by cause of death, sex, age and substances involved in the death.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| All drug poisoning deaths | 2,597 | 2,955 | 3,346 | 3,674 | 3,744 |
| Any opiate ⁴ | 1,290 | 1,592 | 1,786 | 1,989 | 2,038 |
| - Heroin and/or morphine | 579 | 765 | 952 | 1,201 | 1,209 |
| - Methadone | 414 | 429 | 394 | 434 | 413 |
| - Tramadol | 175 | 220 | 240 | 208 | 184 |
| - Oxycodone | 37 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 75 |
| - Fentanyl | 22 | 22 | 40 | 34 | 58 |
| Cocaine | 139 | 169 | 247 | 320 | 371 |
| Any amphetamine | 97 | 120 | 151 | 157 | 160 |
| Any new psychoactive substance | 55 | 63 | 82 | 114 | 123 |
| Any benzodiazepine | 284 | 342 | 372 | 366 | 406 |
| Pregabalin | 4 | 33 | 38 | 90 | 111 |
| Gabapentin | 8 | 9 | 26 | 49 | 59 |
| All antidepressants | 468 | 466 | 517 | 447 | 460 |
| Paracetamol ⁵ | 162 | 226 | 200 | 197 | 219 |
| Propranolol | 39 | 46 | 54 | 55 | 45 |

Source: Office for National Statistics

Journal of Analytical Toxicology, 2019, 43, 564-570
doi: 10.1093/jat/kkz036
Advance Access Publication Date: 7 May 2019
Article

Misuse and Mortality Related to Gabapentin and Pregabalin are Being Under-Estimated: A Two-Year Post-Mortem Population Study

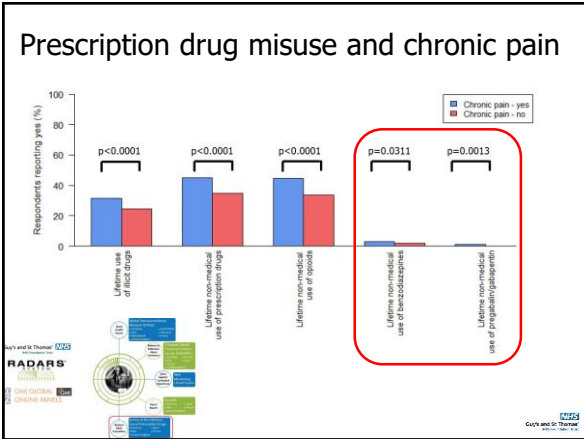
Limon Khatun Nahar^{1,*}, Kevin G. Murphy², and Sue Paterson¹

¹Toxicology Unit, Imperial College London, Charing Cross Campus, St. Dunstan's Road, London W6 8RP, UK, and
²Department of Endocrinology & Metabolism, Imperial College London, London W12 0NN, UK

UK population level data: prescription painkiller misuse

- Association with illicit drug use
 - Used in last year 10.7% -vs- not used 5.9%
- Demographic factors associated with increased use
 - Most deprived 8.3% -vs- least deprived 4.4%
 - Rural 6.2% -vs- Urban 6.4%
 - Employed 6.2% -vs- Unemployed 7.2%
 - Long-term illness / disability

| Drug | Yes | No |
|--------------------------|-------|------|
| Prescription painkillers | 12.6% | 5.6% |
| Any illicit drug | 12.7% | 9.0% |
| Cannabis | 10.9% | 7.2% |



Full length article: Drug and Alcohol Dependence 193 (2018) 131–136
Substance misuse in patients who have comorbid chronic pain in a clinical population receiving methadone maintenance therapy for the treatment of opioid dependence
Cassie Higgins^a, Blair H. Smith^a, Keith Mathew^a

| | CP | | NoP | |
|---|-----|----|-----|----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Patient-reported illicit opioid use | | | | |
| Yes | 111 | 52 | 110 | 59 |
| No | 102 | 48 | 77 | 41 |
| Patient-reported illicit heroin use | | | | |
| Yes | 86 | 40 | 92 | 49 |
| No | 128 | 60 | 95 | 51 |
| Patient-reported illicit diazepam use | | | | |
| Yes | 73 | 34 | 62 | 33 |
| No | 142 | 66 | 125 | 67 |
| Patient-reported illicit cannabis use | | | | |
| Yes | 172 | 81 | 126 | 68 |
| No | 41 | 19 | 59 | 32 |
| Positive biochemical opioid results | | | | |
| Yes | 106 | 47 | 114 | 55 |
| No | 120 | 53 | 95 | 45 |
| Positive biochemical benzodiazepine results | | | | |
| Yes | 153 | 69 | 121 | 58 |
| No | 70 | 31 | 87 | 42 |
| Positive biochemical cannabinoid results | | | | |
| Yes | 46 | 84 | 34 | 65 |
| No | 9 | 16 | 18 | 35 |

Gabapentinoid Abuse in Order to Potentiate the Effect of Methadone: A Survey among Substance Misusers

Colin R.W. Baird^a Pauline Fox^b Lesley A. Colvin^a

- 22% of those surveyed admitted NMU of Gabapentinoid
 - 76% took to become intoxicated ('high', 'stoned')
 - 38% took to potentiate the effect(s) of methadone ('brings my methadone to highest peak', 'to get a little stoned from my methadone')

- UK Twitter posts 1st October to 31st December 2018
 - Modafinil tweets (196); methylphenidate tweets (436)
- Common keywords for modafinil
 - "cognitive" (7.7% of total modafinil tweets)
 - "smart" (5.6%)
 - "nootropic", "student", and "study" (each 5.1%)
- Common keywords for methylphenidate
 - "school" (4.4% of total methylphenidate tweets)
 - "focus" (3.4%)
 - "brain" (2.5%)
 - "concentrate" (1.6%)



Health and Social Care in the community

Health and Social Care in the Community (2013) 21(3), 254-262

doi: 10.1111/hsc.12012

Surveillance and uncertainty: community pharmacy responses to over the counter medicine abuse

Richard Cooper BSc MA LLB PhD
School of Health and Related Research (SchARR), University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK

Accepted for publication 5 October 2012

News

hsc Health Innovation Network South London
Spreading up the best in health and care, together

NHS

London-wide initiative to tackle chronic joint pain could reduce use of strong painkillers

Leading NHS health innovator and physiotherapist speaks out after London newspaper The Evening Standard's 'The Opioid Timebomb: Special Evening Standard investigation into the overuse of prescription painkillers'.

Parting Thoughts

- Increasing evidence of non-medical use of prescription medicines in the UK other than opioids
 - True extent of the problem not understood
 - Non-opioid NMU appears to be less than opioid NMU
- Misuse appears associated with chronic illness and pain, lower income and social deprivation
- Significant harms being associated with misuse
 - Drug treatment, drug-related deaths, ED presentations
- Understanding relationship between prescribing patterns will enable improved harm reduction strategies
 - Warning patients and clinicians of the risks of NMU

Thank You

