

Reported Chronic Pain and Overdose by Patients Enrolling in Opioid Dependence Treatment

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Objective

- Opioid addiction and overdose continue to rise in Canada.¹ We describe survey data on chronic pain and overdose reported by a sample of individuals entering opioid dependence treatment in Canada.

Methodology

- Active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) endorsed by at least 50 respondents from January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016 were analyzed.
- Respondents who endorsed multiple drugs were counted once in each unique group.
- Chronic pain and overdose questions were dichotomized to yes or no/never; frequencies and percentages were calculated for each API and question of interest.

Results

- Oxycodone and hydromorphone had the highest number of abuse endorsements.
- Individuals endorsing past month codeine abuse reported the highest rates of chronic pain (75.5%), visiting a healthcare provider for chronic pain (58.5%), and receiving a prescription opioid for chronic pain (56.6%) (Figure 1).
- Those who endorsed past month abuse of oxycodone, morphine, and hydromorphone also reported experiencing chronic pain (69.3%, 67.9%, 61.6% respectively).
- Endorsers of benzodiazepines had the highest proportion reporting prescription opioid (29.6%) and other drug overdose (27.2%) followed by endorsers of morphine (25.5%, 21.9%) (Figure 2).
- Nearly half of those who endorsed heroin abuse in the past month had sought treatment for heroin overdose (43.8%).

Conclusions

- Over two-thirds of the individuals in our sample who endorsed past month abuse of prescription opioids reported a history of chronic pain.
- More than a quarter of those who endorsed a benzodiazepine reported seeking treatment for a prescription opioid overdose.
- Additionally, more than 40% of those who endorsed heroin reported seeking treatment for a heroin overdose.

References

¹Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2016). Prescription Opioid Policy Framework. Toronto: CAMH.

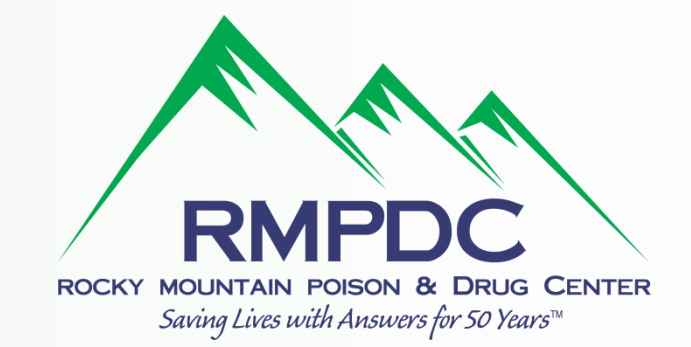


Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents Endorsing Chronic Pain Items by Drug Group

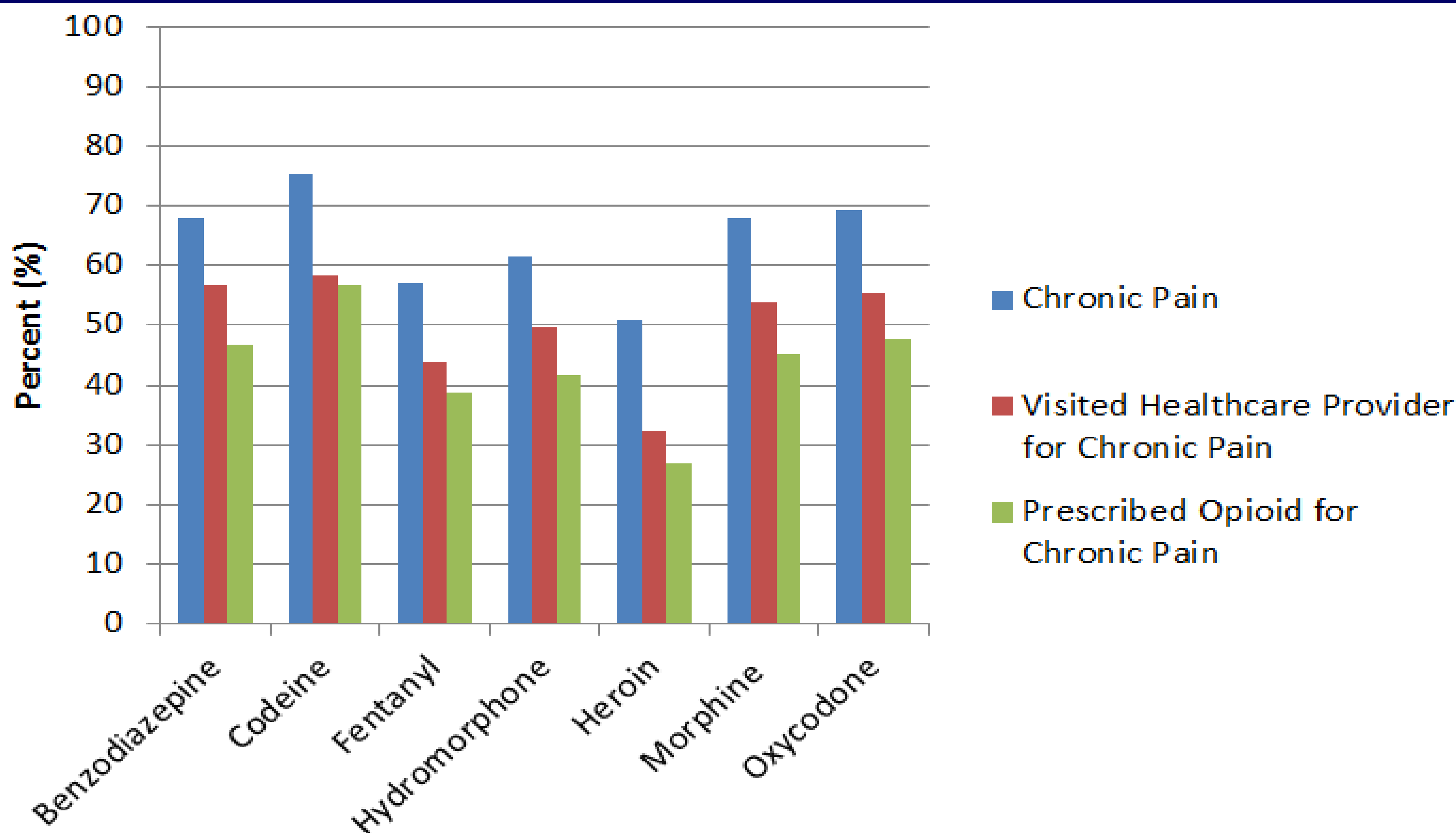


Figure 2. Percentage of Respondents Endorsing Treatment for Overdose Items by Drug Group

