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Risk of opioid use disorder and related consequences: A longitudinal study of spinal cord injury



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Longevity After Injury Project Opioid Study NEWS & UPDATES

Policy brief

Understanding Opioid use Among Adults with Chronic Spinal Cord Injury Living in the United States: An Issue Brief

The purpose of this policy brief is to summarize the state of the science of opioid use, misuse, and OUD among individuals with spinal cord injuries (SCI).

What are Opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs that include licit (legal) prescription analgesics often prescribed to treat moderate to severe pain, illicitly produced synthetic opioids (e.g. fentanyl), and illicit drugs such as heroin. In addition to providing pain relief, prescription opioids can make people feel very relaxed/calm and have euphoric effects. When taken as directed, and for short periods of time, prescription opioids are generally safe, but serious risks exist, including numerous side effects (even when taken as prescribed) and risks of misuse, addiction, overdose, and death.

How are individuals with SCI at risk?

Despite the growing national efforts to address the opioid epidemic, limited research exists regarding the prevalence rates and risks of opioid use, misuse, OUD, and adverse opioid-related outcomes in individuals with SCI.

Substance use, including the use of psychoactive substances (i.e., psychotropic medications, alcohol, and illicit drugs), and substance use disorders are high among those with SCI. Although a number of earlier studies addressed substance use, findings from more recent reviews highlight the sparsity of research regarding opioid use, misuse, and OUD. In a small early study, the reported rate of opioid use was around 4%. Another early study of 30 participants from the SCIMS found 20% of individuals with SCI reported illicit drug use in the past 6-12 months; among those, 12.5% reported heroin/opiate use. However, in the wake of the current epidemic, these prevalence rates should be interpreted with caution. Opioid

Prescriptions

Quick Facts

- The number of written opioid prescriptions peaked in 2012 and has decreased annually, owing in part to heightened awareness and changes in prescribing practices.
- In 2020 (the latest year with data), there were still more than 142 million prescriptions for opioids.
- Despite the significant reductions in the number of prescriptions, there has been an increase in the average days of supply of prescriptions filled, and the average daily morphine milligram equivalent (MME) per prescription remains high, at more than 42.9 MME

The following is a link to review the full Issue Brief:

https://chp.musc.edu/-/sm/health-professions/research/f/fact-sheet-covid-19_final.ashx



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Opioid Study Updates

Study 1 Update:
Risk of opioid use disorder and related consequences:
A longitudinal study of spinal cord injury

Our goal is to generate new knowledge and develop new tools to reduce opioid misuse, opioid use disorder (OUD), and opioid related consequences among those with traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI).

The objectives are to identify the: (1) incidence of opioid use, misuse, and OUD, analyzing and adjusting for potential underreporting, (2) person and environmental predictors of opioid misuse and the development of OUD, and (3) relationship of opioid use, misuse, and OUD with health, participation, and employment.

In August of 2021, we started the data collection for this study. As of August 15, 2022, we collected 867 surveys and will continue collecting data. We are cleaning the initial data in preparation for analysis.

Opioid Addiction Hotline Hot line

Opioid addiction is becoming preoccupied with two things: when you can take your next dose and whether your supply is enough.

Call 800-662-HELP (4357), the national helpline run by the U.S. government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

RehabCast



Podcast Episode about Opioids and SCI

Opioids and SCI Pod Cast

In September 2021, Dr. Nicole DiPiro presented a Podcast presentation on Opioids and SCI for the RehabCast Podcast, Online: Episode 38.

The additional topic in this Podcast includes TBI & Voting.

Podcast Link:

https://www.archives-pmr.org/content/podcast_collection

Recent Publications

The following manuscripts were recently accepted to be published in upcoming issues of *Rehabilitation Psychology* and *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*.

DiPiro, N. D., & Krause, J. S. (2022). Psychoactive Substance Use Among Individuals With Chronic Spinal Cord Injury: Patterns and Characteristics. *Archives of physical medicine and rehabilitation*, 103(3), 570–573.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2021.08.005>