



Research Brief

Self-Reported Benzodiazepine Use Among Adults with Chronic Spinal Cord Injury in the Southeastern USA: Associations with Demographic, Injury, and Opioid Use Characteristics

Introduction

People with spinal cord injuries (SCI) often have various health problems and are more likely to suffer from other serious health issues over time. To manage SCI and its symptoms like pain, muscle tightness, anxiety, and depression, people may need to take prescription medicines long-term. In this study, we will 1) look at how much people have used a certain medicine called benzodiazepines in the past year through self-reporting, 2) see how often benzodiazepines and a type of pain medicine called opioids are used together, and 3) find out what factors lead to frequent use of benzodiazepines.

Key Findings

- People who used benzodiazepines the most often said they used them at least once a week. The medicines most often taken every day or almost every day were Diazepam (a type of benzodiazepine) and Oxycodone (a type of opioid).
- When both benzodiazepines and opioids were used together, people used 1 to 3 of each kind of medicine daily or weekly in the past year. This means they used a total of 2 to 6 medicines together.
- People aged 50 to 65 used these medicines less often compared to those under 50. Also, non-Hispanic Black people used them less than non-Hispanic White people.
- People who took opioids every week or every day associated with also taking benzodiazepines every week or every day.

What does this mean? (Conclusion) future implications

Benzodiazepines are a type of medicine that people with long-term spinal cord injuries often use, most commonly once a week. We found that a small amount of people were taking both benzodiazepines and opioids at the same time. Even though there are warnings about using these medicines together because of its risks, people who used opioids every week or every day were associated with use benzodiazepines that often as well. This shows why it's important to carefully watch how these medicines are used to avoid potential problems.

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