

Patient satisfaction scores in the ER are not affected by receipt of painkillers

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Factors other than receipt of painkillers – including opiates – in the emergency department appear to be more important to patient satisfaction, as reflected in an analysis of Press Ganey patient surveys to be published online today in *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

"The lack of connection between painkillers and patient satisfaction is frankly the opposite of what we expected to find," said lead study author Tayler Schwartz of Alpert Medical School at Brown University in Providence, R.I. "Our research shows that [emergency](#) physicians can administer painkillers, including opiates, based on clinical and patient factors without concern for the effect on patient satisfaction scores."

Ms. Schwartz and her team analyzed Press Ganey patient satisfaction surveys and electronic medical records for 4,749 patients discharged from two hospitals. Of those patients, 48.5 percent received analgesic medications in the emergency department, and of the patients who received analgesics, 60.9 percent received opiates.

After controlling for different variables, researchers found no relationship between Press Ganey® [emergency department](#) patient satisfaction scores and the receipt of analgesic medications or opiate analgesics. Higher patient satisfaction scores were connected to increasing age and male gender.

In some emergency departments, physician compensation is linked to patient satisfaction scores, which can exert pressure on physicians to

comply with patient requests, even if those requests are medically unreasonable.

"The majority of emergency patients are in pain and emergency physicians face multiple challenges when treating them, including pressure to get high patient satisfaction scores," said Ms. Schwartz. "If emergency physicians believe that prescribing opiates will lead to high Press Ganey® satisfaction scores, they may be conflicted about what and how much to prescribe. Our study shows that while pain relief is a factor in [patient satisfaction](#), it is far from the most important one."

More information: ["Lack of Association between Press Ganey Emergency Department Patient Satisfaction Scores and Emergency Department Administration of Analgesic Medications"](#)

Provided by American College of Emergency Physicians

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