

Chronic narcotic use is high among kids with IBD

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Chronic narcotic use is more than twice as prevalent in children with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), compared with children without this disease, according to a new study published in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, the official journal of the American Gastroenterological Association.

"Chronic narcotic use is common in pediatric IBD patients, particularly among those with anxiety and depression," said lead study author Jessie P. Buckley, PhD, MPH, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "Describing the characteristics of [children](#) with IBD using long-term narcotics is important to define the magnitude of this problem in the pediatric population and to identify potential strategies or interventions to reduce narcotic use."

Researchers conducted a large cross-sectional study to compare chronic use of narcotics among children with IBD and children in the [general population](#), and investigate factors associated with narcotic use in the pediatric IBD population. The study included 4,344 IBD children (younger than 18 years old), each matched for age, sex and region with five children without IBD (a total of 21,720 children). The study found that 5.6 percent of IBD children had at least three prescriptions for a narcotic medication during a two-year period, compared with 2.3 percent of children without IBD.

Compared with the general population, chronic narcotic use was significantly higher for pediatric IBD patients with psychological

impairment than those without. Older age, increased health-care utilization, fracture and psychological impairment were also strongly associated with chronic use of narcotics among children with IBD. Increased use of [narcotics](#) with greater health-care utilization indicates that narcotic use may be a marker for severe disease.

Narcotics may be prescribed to patients with IBD, which encompasses Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, for temporary pain relief, such as to treat an acute flare or alleviate pain after surgery. Long-term narcotic use among children with IBD is not recommended because of GI side effects, disease complications and potential for dependency.

More information: Buckley, Jessie P., et al. Prevalence of Chronic Narcotic Use Among Children With Inflammatory Bowel Disease, *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, Volume 13(2): 310-315.e2, [www.cghjournal.org/article/S15... \(14\)01142-2/abstract](http://www.cghjournal.org/article/S15... (14)01142-2/abstract)

Provided by American Gastroenterological Association

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