

# Methadone linked to initial QTc prolongation in chronic pain

June 26 2015

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(HealthDay)—For patients with chronic pain, methadone is associated with a small, but nonsignificant, initial increase in QTc, which does not persist, according to a study published in the June issue of *Pain Medicine*.

Samuel Grodofsky, M.D., from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and colleagues conducted a [prospective cohort study](#) in a [chronic pain](#) clinic involving 82 patients receiving methadone and 102 receiving non-methadone opioid therapy. Automated QTc calculations from 12-lead electrocardiograms were analyzed at baseline and during the subsequent six months.

The researchers found that there was no overall higher frequency of QTc

>470 milliseconds in the methadone group (6 percent for methadone group versus 5 percent for controls;  $P = 0.722$ ). Furthermore, the methadone group had no increase in the incidence of QTc >60 milliseconds from baseline (4 and 4 percent, respectively;  $P = 0.94$ ). Patients in the methadone group exhibited an increase in QTc compared with controls in the first month after initiating methadone (5 versus 0 percent;  $P = 0.073$ ), but the difference did not persist at three and six months.

"We believe larger scale studies to further characterize the safety profile of low-dose [methadone](#) are warranted," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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Citation: Methadone linked to initial QTc prolongation in chronic pain (2015, June 26) retrieved 20 March 2024 from

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