

# Prescription drug monitoring programs offer multiple benefits

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(HealthDay)—Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs), frequently utilized by emergency medicine physicians and designed to help identify patients who "doctor shop" for prescriptions, are used to guide clinical decisions and opioid prescribing, as well as to facilitate discussions and provide patient education. The findings were published in the June issue of *Pain Medicine*.

Robert J. Smith, from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and colleagues conducted and transcribed semi-structured interviews with 61 [emergency medicine](#) physicians to examine use of PDMPs.

The researchers observed variation in patterns and frequency of PDMP

access. For a given patient encounter, when deciding to use PDMPs, providers relied on structural characteristics of the PDMP, such as usability, and on their clinical gestalt impression. The information in PDMPs was used to change [clinical decisions](#) and guide opioid prescribing patterns. Alternative uses for the databases were described by physicians, including improving their capacity to facilitate discussions relating to addiction and provide patient education.

"PDMPs are used for multiple purposes, including identifying [opioid misuse](#) and enhancing provider-patient communication. Given variation in practice, standards may help direct indication and manner of physician use," the authors write. "Steps to minimize administrative barriers to PDMP access are warranted."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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