

Long-term opioid therapy relieves chronic pain in only 20 percent of women

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Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

Women, and especially younger women, are much less likely than men to have good relief of chronic, non-cancer pain with long-term opioid use, with only one in five women reporting low levels of pain and high levels of function with chronic opioid therapy in a new study published in *Journal of Women's Health*.

In "[Sex and Age Differences in Global Pain Status Among Patients Using Opioids Long-Term for Chronic Non-cancer Pain](#)", Linda LeResche, ScD and coauthors, University of Washington School of Dentistry and School of Medicine, Seattle, and Kaiser Permanente, Oakland, CA, evaluated global pain status among chronic opioid therapy users. The researchers report that young and middle-aged women are at particularly high risk for unfavorable global pain status, and this population also faces unique risks from opioid use, such as reduced fertility and potential effects of opioids used during pregnancy on the developing fetus.

"Given the high rates of chronic opioid use in women along with evidence of poor relief from pain and concerning risks, particularly in reproductive-aged [women](#), we need more effective and safer options for managing pain in this population," Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health.

More information: The article is available free on the [Journal of Women's Health](#) website until November 8, 2015.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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