

# AUA: Many have unused opioids after urologic procedures

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(HealthDay)—Patients undergoing urological procedures use just over

half of their initial prescription of opioids, on average, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the American Urological Association, held from May 18 to 21 in San Francisco.

Kathryn E. Hacker, M.D., Ph.D., from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine in Chapel Hill, and colleagues surveyed 109 patients to assess [postoperative](#) opioid usage, storage, and disposal habits.

Patients were surveyed two weeks after undergoing a urologic [procedure](#) for which they were prescribed opioids postoperatively.

The researchers found that 70 percent of survey respondents had unused opioids from their initial postoperative prescription. On average, 56 percent of the initial prescription of narcotics was used. Approximately 1,200 opioid pills remained unused in the three-month study period. The highest percentage of unused medications (70 percent) was seen for cystectomy, which was the most invasive surgery; the lowest percentage of unused medications was seen for cystoscopy-based procedures (37.5 percent).

"Consistent with observations in other surgical populations, we identified substantial oversupply from standard prescribing practices following urologic procedures," the authors write. "Data-driven postoperative prescribing schedules coupled with education on appropriate disposal provide an opportunity for urologists to take an active role in [opioid](#) stewardship."

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