

# Opioid use often persists in workers' compensation claimants

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(HealthDay)—Many patients in a workers' compensation cohort have

persistent opioid use, according to a study published online Oct. 26 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Nathan N. O'Hara, M.H.A., from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, and colleagues conducted a [retrospective cohort study](#) using workers' compensation claims data from Jan. 1, 2008, to Dec. 31, 2016, from the Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Co. Data were included for 9,596 workers' compensation claimants injured during the study years who filled at least one opioid prescription.

The researchers found that 28.6 percent of the participants filled an [opioid prescription](#) more than 90 days from their date of injury.

Persistent opioid use was significantly associated with age 60 years or older (odds ratio, 1.92), crush injuries (odds ratio, 1.55), strain and sprain injuries (odds ratio, 1.54), annual income >\$60,000 (odds ratio, 1.31), and concomitant diagnoses for chronic joint pain (odds ratio, 1.98). Workers with medical-only claims were significantly less likely to have persistent [opioid](#) use at 90 days postinjury compared with workers whose claims were designated as permanent partial disability (odds ratio, 0.17).

"To curb the [opioid epidemic](#) and prevent the untimely deaths of scores of Americans, policies to support alternative pain management therapies that minimize [opioid therapy](#) should be investigated, particularly for high-risk patients identified in this study with nonspecific diagnoses such as strain or sprain injuries," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed ties to Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Co., which funded the study.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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