

Dual receipt of opioids tied to increased risk for OD death

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(HealthDay)—For veterans enrolled in the U.S. Department of Veterans

Affairs (VA) and Medicare Part D, receipt of opioids from both VA and Part D is associated with an increased likelihood of death from prescription opioid overdose, according to a study published online March 12 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Patience Moyo, Ph.D., from the Brown University School of Public Health in Providence, Rhode Island, and colleagues examined the correlation between dual-system opioid prescribing and death from prescription opioid overdose. Cases and controls were identified from veterans enrolled in both VA and Part D who filled at least one opioid prescription. A total of 215 case patients who died of prescription opioid overdose were matched to 833 living control patients. The source of opioid prescriptions within six months of the index date was categorized as VA only, Part D only, or dual use (VA and Part D).

The researchers found that 28 and 14 percent of case and control patients, respectively, received dual opioid prescriptions. Compared with those who received opioids from VA only or from Part D only, dual users had significantly higher odds of death from prescription opioid overdose (odds ratios, 3.53 and 1.83, respectively).

"These results emphasize the relevance of identifying this vulnerable group of veterans and the importance of care coordination across providers and health care systems to increase the safety of [opioid](#) prescribing both inside and outside VA," the authors write.

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