

# Continued use low three months after ED opioid prescription for acute pain

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(HealthDay)—Opioid use at three months after an emergency

department visit where opioids were prescribed for acute pain is relatively low and not necessarily tied to opioid misuse, according to a study published in the August issue of *Academic Emergency Medicine*.

Raoul Daoust, M.D., from the University of Montreal, and colleagues assessed the use rate and reasons for consuming opioids three months after being discharged from the emergency department with an [opioid prescription](#) for an [acute pain](#) condition (for no more than two weeks). The study included 524 patients (47 percent women; mean age, 51 years) who were interviewed three months after discharge.

The researchers found that 47 patients (9 percent; 95 percent confidence interval [CI], 7 to 12 percent) reported they had consumed opioids in the previous two weeks. Of those patients, 34 (72 percent) reported continued use for their initial pain, nine patients (19 percent) reported continued use for new unrelated pain, and four (9 percent) reported continued use for another reason (0.8 percent [95 percent CI, 0.3 to 2.0 percent] of the whole cohort). Patients who used opioids during the first two weeks after the [emergency department](#) visit were 3.8 (95 percent CI, 1.2 to 12.7) times more likely to use opioids at three months.

"The rate of long-term [opioid use](#) reported by prescription-filling database studies should not be viewed as a proxy for incidence of opioid misuse," the authors write.

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

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