

Some cirrhosis patients given opioid prescriptions at outpatient visits

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(HealthDay)—Almost one in five patients with cirrhosis receive opioid

prescriptions during outpatient visits, according to a study presented at The Liver Meeting, the annual meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, held virtually from Nov. 12 to 15.

Anna Lee, M.D., from University of California in Los Angeles, and colleagues used data from the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (10.1 million ambulatory visits from 2006 to 2016) to assess national [opioid prescription](#) patterns in patients with cirrhosis.

The researchers found that 17 percent of visits were associated with an opioid prescription, the majority of which (91 percent) were for opioid prescription renewals. The most frequently prescribed opioids were oxycodone (35 percent) and hydrocodone (25 percent). Most of the opioid visits were with primary care providers (68 percent), and 29 percent were with gastroenterologists. A documented pain diagnosis was made in 41 percent of visits associated with an opioid prescription, including most commonly musculoskeletal (34 percent) and gastrointestinal (28 percent) pain.

"Since most opioid prescriptions are associated with primary care visits, we should target our [educational efforts](#) about harms toward [primary care providers](#)," Lee said in a statement. "All clinicians can benefit from more education about safe options for managing pain disorders."

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