

2016 to 2019 saw drop in patients receiving opioids, benzodiazepines

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From 2016 to 2019, there was a decline in the percentage of patients

receiving concurrent opioid and benzodiazepine prescriptions, according to a research letter published online June 7 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Kun Zhang, Ph.D., from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and colleagues examined trends in receipt of concurrent opioid and benzodiazepine prescriptions from 2016 to 2019 among adults aged 18 years and older.

The researchers found that from 2016 to 2019, there were decreases in the numbers of [patients](#) with opioid, benzodiazepine, or concurrent prescriptions, with relative changes of 22.5, 13.5, and 41.8 percent, respectively. Across all subgroups examined, and especially among younger adults, patients with concurrent prescriptions declined. At the state level, the percentage of patients receiving concurrent prescriptions varied from 6.8 percent in Washington, D.C., to 15.2 percent in Arkansas in 2016. Across all states, there was a decline in this percentage to 2019. The relative change from 2016 to 2019 varied from –52.0 to –6.9 percent in Mississippi and New Hampshire, respectively.

"Receiving concurrent opioids and benzodiazepines remains common despite known risks," the authors write. "These findings highlight the need for continued [public health](#) and clinical actions, including greater adherence to evidence-based prescribing guidelines, more patient education, and alternative pain-management options."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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