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Study highlights steep rise in cardiac arrests associated with opioid use

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A nationwide US study has shown that the rate of opioid-related cardiac arrests has steeply risen and is now on par with the rate of cardiac arrest from other causes. The research is presented at ESC Congress 2021.

Opioid use disorder, which includes dependence and addiction, affects more than two million people in the US, while opioid overdose is the leading cause of death for those aged 25 to 64 years.

This study examined the trends and outcomes of opioid-related cardiac arrest in 2012 to 2018. The US Nationwide Readmissions Database (NRD) was used to study all hospitalisations for cardiac arrest in active or chronic opioid users compared to cardiac arrests in patients not using opioids.

Of 1,410,475 cardiac arrest hospitalisations, 43,090 (3.1%) occurred in opioid users. The rate of in-hospital mortality in cardiac arrest patients with and without opioid use was 56.7% versus 61.2%, respectively. However, in an analysis adjusted for several factors including liver disease, atrial fibrillation and renal failure, there was no difference in the risk of mortality between cardiac arrest patients with or without opioid abuse (odds ratio 0.96; 95% confidence interval 0.92–1.01; p=0.15). Opioid users had higher rates of alcohol abuse (16.9% vs. 7.1%; p

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