



## Clinical Care and Critical Issues Caused by Opioids Drugs in Adult Patients

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### ABOUT THE STUDY

Opioids are a class of drugs that occur naturally in the opium poppy plant and act in the brain to produce a variety of effects, including pain relief from many of these drugs. Opioids can be prescription drugs, often called pain relievers or so-called street drugs like heroin. All opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors in nerve cells in the body and brain. Opioid analgesics are generally safe when taken short-term as directed by a doctor, but can be abused because they induce euphoria in addition to pain relief (either taken in higher doses or without a doctor's prescription). An opioid overdose can be reversed with immediate administration of the drug naloxone. Some parts of the country have seen improvements in the form of reduced availability of prescription opioid pain relievers and reduced abuse among adolescents in the country. Over-the-counter drugs or non-prescribed pain reliever drugs are usually enough to make a patient feel better, if they are having any mild headaches or muscle pains.

Opioids are a type of narcotic pain reliever. Improper use can cause serious side effects. For many people with opioid addiction, their problems started with a prescription. Opioid use is not without risks. Regular use of these prescribed drugs increases tolerance and dependence, requiring higher and more frequent doses. It can lead to opioid use disorder. Additionally, opioids limit the ability to breathe when taken in high doses, and misuse can lead to fatal overdoses. There might be changes in the rate of inhalation and exhalation (i.e., either slows down the breathing or even completely stops the breathing), if a person takes any other drugs that are interacted with opioids.

Opioids can also interact with disease and should be used for pain only when necessary, even when alternative pain management options are ineffective.

Once activated, opioid receptors initiate a cascade of chemical reactions that ultimately modulate the transmission of pain signals. Opioids also fire more often neurons that produce dopamine, a neurotransmitter that is involved in how we experience a pleasure. This creates a feeling of euphoria (a feeling of intense happiness). Some opioids are used to stop diarrhea by slowing stomach motility. This is the process by which food moves through the digestive tract through a series of muscle contractions. This increases the time it takes for the food to be absorbed by the body. Opioids are highly addictive primarily because they not only relieve pain but also produce a feeling of euphoria (an intense sense of well-being) that many people find enjoyable. An overdose occurs when taking too much of a drug harms the body. Overdose of opioids can slow and stop breathing. An opioid overdose is not fatal and does not result in death. People with opioid use disorders are more likely to overdose.

Opioids alter brain chemistry and induce drug resistance. This means that patient will need to increase the dose over time to get the same effect. Long-term use of opioids can lead to dependence, and discontinuation of the drug can lead to physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms such as muscle cramps, diarrhea, and anxiety. Dependence is not the same as addiction. Anyone who takes opioids for a long period becomes dependent, but very few experience the obsessive, persistent need for the drug that characterizes addiction.

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