DENTAL OPIOID PRESCRIPTION CHARACTERISTICS AND THE RISK OF NEW, LONG-TERM USE

Dentists are the second largest group of opioid prescribers in Ontario and often prescribe to opioid-naïve patients. Characteristics (e.g. dose, duration, formulation) of initial opioid prescriptions can lead to long-term use, however little is known about the effect of these characteristics among dental indications.

786,125 opioid-naïve Ontarians were newly dispensed an opioid prescribed by a dentist between October 2014 and September 2018:

- Codeine (82%) and oxycodone (13%) combination products were the most commonly prescribed.
- An average of 23 tablets and a four days' supply were dispensed.
- The median daily dose dispensed was 30 milligram morphine equivalents (MME).
- The majority of recipients were prescribed a short-acting opioid.

NEW, LONG-TERM USE

New, long-term use occurred among almost 5% of opioid-naïve Ontario residents who were newly dispensed an opioid prescribed by a dentist:

- An initial daily dose above 90 MME was associated with a 20% increase in the odds of long-term use.
- A prescription duration of 15+ days was associated with a > two-fold increase in the odds of long-term use.
- Although rare, receiving a long-acting opioid was associated with an almost eight-fold increase in the odds of long-term use.

OPIOID-RELATED OVERDOSE

Opioid overdose was rare within the first 90 days, occurring among 140 individuals. However, there are some important considerations to be aware of:

- Half of the opioid-related overdoses among this population occurred within 30 days of opioid initiation.
- The rate of opioid overdose was highest among people dispensed more than 50 MME.

For more information, contact info@odprn.ca