

Opioid Agonist Therapy Indicators for Ontario Health

Technical Appendix

Background

Opioid agonist therapy (OAT) using methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone (commonly referred to by its brand name of Suboxone) is the first line treatment for opioid use disorder. The ODPRN has developed indicators of prevalent and incident OAT use in Ontario. These indicators can be used to monitor the response to the ongoing opioid crisis and inform and evaluate drug policy and clinical practice.

Indicators

Number and rate of individuals who were dispensed a prescription for OAT

For a given quarter, the rate is defined as:

$$\frac{\text{\# of individuals dispensed at least one OAT prescription}}{\text{Ontario Population}} \times 1000$$

Number and rate of individuals who were newly dispensed a prescription for OAT

For a given quarter, the rate is defined as:

$$\frac{\text{\# of individuals newly dispensed at least one OAT prescription}}{\text{Ontario Population}} \times 1000$$

- **Note:** “Newly dispensed” was defined as having not received an OAT prescription in the previous year.

Data Sources

Narcotics Monitoring System (NMS)

The NMS collects data on prescriptions for narcotics, controlled substances and other monitored drugs dispensed from community pharmacies in Ontario. The NMS captures prescriptions from all prescriber types and irrespective of whether the prescription is paid for under a publicly funded drug program, through private insurance, or by cash.

Registered Persons Database (RPDB)

The RPDB provides basic demographic information (age, sex, location of residence, date of birth, and date of death for deceased individuals) for those issued an Ontario health insurance number. The RPDB also indicates the time periods for which an individual was eligible to receive publicly funded health insurance benefits and the best known postal code for each registrant on July 1st of each year.

Postal Code Conversion File (PCCF)

The PCCF database will use postal codes to derive other census geographic identifiers, such as dissemination/enumeration area, census division, longitude/latitude, urban/rural flag and neighbourhood income quintile.

Druglist (DIN)

The DIN file contains a near exhaustive list of drug identification numbers used in Canada from 1990 forward. Contains information on drug and product names (generic and trade names), subclass information, PCG codes, Drug strength, Route of Administration, first and last dispensing dates from ODB.

Ontario Marginalization Index

The Ontario Marginalization Index is a Census based index developed to quantify the degree of marginalization occurring across the province of Ontario. It is comprised of 4 major dimensions thought to underlie the construct of marginalization: residential instability, material deprivation, dependency and ethnic diversity.

These datasets were linked using unique encoded identifiers and analyzed at ICES.

Acknowledgements

This study was conducted by the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network (ODPRN), a province-wide network of researchers who respond to policymakers' needs for relevant research to guide and inform their decisions, using the administrative claims databases housed at ICES. The ODPRN is funded by grants from the Ontario Ministry of Health. This study was supported by ICES, which is funded by an annual grant from the Ontario Ministry of Health. Parts of this material are based on data and information compiled and provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health. We thank IQVIA Solutions Canada Inc. for use of their Drug Information File. We thank the Toronto Community Health Profiles Partnership for providing access to the Ontario Marginalization Index. We acknowledge use of the Postal Code Conversion File adapted from Statistics Canada, Postal Code Conversion File, 2016. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. The analyses, conclusions, opinions and statements expressed herein are solely those of the authors and do not reflect those of the funding or data sources; no endorsement is intended or should be inferred.

Suggested Citation

Ontario Drug Policy Research Network. Opioid Agonist Therapy Indicators for Ontario Health. Toronto, ON; Updated March 2022. Available from: <https://odprn.ca/indicators-of-opioid-agonist-therapy-use-in-ontario/>.