# Opioid Conversion in Older Adults with Pain

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# Introduction

- Pain prevalence with older adults
- Opioid use with older adults
- Opioid conversions
- Opioid history
- Opioid pharmacokinetics
- Opioid allergies
- Reviewing the literature

# Pain prevalence among older adults

- Pain prevalence among older adults estimates are 25% to 50% of community-dwelling elderly experience chronic pain.
- In long-term care settings, up to 85% of residents may have at least one pain-associated problem.
- Pain affects approximately 100 million American adults each year, resulting in a national cost of $635 billion annually.
- There is broad recognition that painful conditions warrant treatment, yet specific treatment protocols remain inconsistent across the medical community

# Opioid use among older adults with chronic pain

- Management of chronic pain first with nonpharmacologic therapy and nonopioid pharmacologic therapy before initiating opioids.
- Nonopioid pharmacologic therapy may include antidepressants, antiarrhythmics, anticonvulsants, tranquilizers, and regional anesthesia.
- It is recommended that opioids be prescribed at the lowest effective dose, which is approximately **25% to 50%** of the adult recommended starting dose, and then slowly titrated to minimize adverse effects for patients **older than age 70 years.**
- The dosage should be reassessed 1 to 4 weeks after initiation or dose escalation. Immediate-release formulations of opioids should be initiated before extended-release or long-acting opioids are attempted.

# Start low, Go Slow

- Lower doses (25%-50% of typical doses for younger adults) and gradually titrating based on efficacy and tolerability since older adults experience altered pharmacokinetics.

- The **American College of Surgeons Best Practices Guidelines for Acute Pain Management in Trauma Patients (2020)** recommends a decrease in the initial dose of an opioid **by 25% in 60-year-old** patients, and by **50% for 80-year-old** patients.

**TABLE 1. Recommended Equivalent Starting Doses of Opioids for Elderly Patients**

| Opioid | Dose (mg) | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Tramadol | 50 | Every 4-6 h |
| Morphine | 7.5 | Every 4-6 h |
| Codeine | 50 | Every 4-6 h |
| Hydrocodone | 5 | Every 4-6 h |
| Hydromorphone | 1-2 | Every 4-6 h |
| Oxycodone | 5 | Every 4-6 h |
| Fentanyl transdermal | Not recommended for opioid-naive patients | |
| Methadone | Not recommended for opioid-naive patients | |
| Buprenorphine | 5-μg/h patch changed every 7 d | |
| • Long-acting opioid formulations should be avoided in opioid-naive patients | | |
| • Codeine is not recommended due to poor metabolism to morphine in a high percentage of the population | | |

# Co-prescribing of opioids with CNS-active medications

- Co-prescribing of opioids with CNS-active medications is increasing among older adults in the US. Co- prescribing of opioids and opioid potentiators, such as benzodiazepines, Z-drugs and gabapentinoids, among US adults ≥65 years increased from 29.6 per 1,000 people in 2007-2008 to 35.8 per 1,000 people in 2017-2018.

- Veterans Health Administration population found that 77% of veterans who received chronic opioid therapy also received psychotropics.

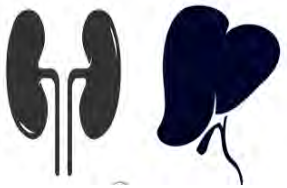
- Concurrent use with **≥2 CNS-active medications** increased the likelihood of **falls/fractures by 18% and ER visits by 21%**

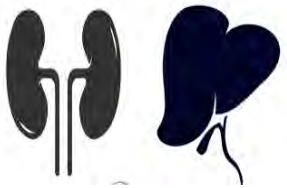
# Any one Travel abroad ?

What's your currency reference to assess how expensive cheap or affordable anything is ?


In world of opioids what is the reference ??

# Reference is Oral Morphine






**Methadone**

x10

Oral (Liquid or tablet)

**Morphine (SR,IR)**

x3

IV

Oral (Liquid or tablet)

x20

x4

x1.5

**Dilaudid (Hydromorphone) (IR)**

x5

IV

Oral (Liquid or tablet)

**Oxycodone (SR,IR)**

Oral (Liquid or tablet)

x2 & remove the C

**Fentanyl**

Patch (mcg)

IV (mcg)

**Slide 6: Conversion Table Example**

| Opioid | Route | Equianalgesic Dose (mg) | Conversion Factor |
|---|---|---|---|
| Morphine | Oral | 30 | 1:1 |
| Morphine | IV | 10 | 3:1 |
| Oxycodone | Oral | 20 | 1.5:1 |
| Hydromorphone | Oral | 7.5 | 4:1 |
| Fentanyl (transdermal) | Patch | 0.1 mg IV morphine/hour | 100:1 |

## Slide 6: Conversion Table Example

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# Morphine

- **IV Morphine is 3 times stronger than oral morphine**
- **Example 2 mg IV morphine is equivalent to 6 mg oral morphine**
- **My** Mnemonics is ..... ☺ M for mother which represents trinity in Christianity, so that is how I always remember it is a 3:1 ratio.
- **There are 2 forms of morphine SR (Sustained release) and IR (immediate release).**

# History of Morphine

## 1. Discovery and Early Use

- **Origins**: Morphine is derived from the opium poppy (**Papaver somniferum**), a plant that has been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. The use of opium, the raw extract from poppy plants, dates back to **ancient civilizations**.

- **Isolation of Morphine**:

- First **isolated** in **1804** by a German pharmacist, **Friedrich Sertürner**. He named the compound after **Morpheus**, the Greek god of dreams, due to its ability to induce sleep and relieve pain.

- **Widespread Medical Use**:

- By **1817**, Sertürner had published his findings, and morphine began to be used widely for pain relief, particularly in Europe.

# History of Morphine

## 2. Morphine in the 19th Century

- **Commercial Production:**

- In **1827**, the German pharmaceutical company **Merck** began the commercial production of morphine. It became a cornerstone of pain management and was used extensively for treating soldiers' injuries during conflicts like the **American Civil War** (1861–1865)

- **Introduction of the Hypodermic Needle:**

- Hypodermic **needle** in the **1850s** revolutionized the use of morphine. Doctors could now inject morphine directly into the bloodstream, providing faster and more effective pain relief.

- **"Soldier's Disease":** By the end of the American Civil War, many soldiers who had been treated with morphine for their injuries became addicted.


# Dilaudid (Hydromorphone)

- **IV Diladud is 5 times stronger than oral Dilaudid**
- **Example 1 mg IV Dilaudid is equivalent to 5 mg oral morphine**
- **My** Mnemonics is …… ☺ the other name of Dilaudid is hydromorphone and H for high five, so that is how I always remember it is a 5:1 ratio.
- **There is no extended or sustained release Dilaudid so it is a short acting IR (immediate release) medication for breakthrough pain.**

# History of Dilaudid

## 1. Origins and Early Development (1920s)

- **Discovery:** Hydromorphone first synthesized in **1924** by Knoll, a German pharmaceutical company. It was derived from **morphine**.

- **Commercial Introduction:** In **1926**, the drug was introduced under the brand name **Dilaudid**, which is derived from “di-hydromorphinone.” Its name reflects its chemical relationship to morphine, and it quickly became a popular pain-relief medication in Europe and the U.S.

# Oxycodone

- **Oral Oxycodone is 1.5 times stronger than oral morphine**
- **Example 10 mg Oxycodone is equivalent to 15 mg of oral morphine**
- **No** Mnemonics ☹
- **There are 2 forms of oxycodone SR (Sustained release) and IR (immediate release).**

# History of Oxycodone

## 1. Early Development (Early 1900s)

**Origins**: Oxycodone was first developed in **1916** in Germany. Chemists Martin Freund and Edmund Speyer at the University of Frankfurt.

**Purpose**: Goal was to create a less addictive and more effective alternative to **morphine** and **heroin**.

## 2. Adoption in the U.S. (1930s-1950s)

**Introduction in the U.S.**: Oxycodone entered U.S. market in **1930s**, initially in combination with other drugs such as **aspirin** or **acetaminophen**. One common brand at the time was **Percodan** (oxycodone combined with aspirin).

# History of Oyxodone

## 3. OxyContin and the Opioid Epidemic (1990s-Present)

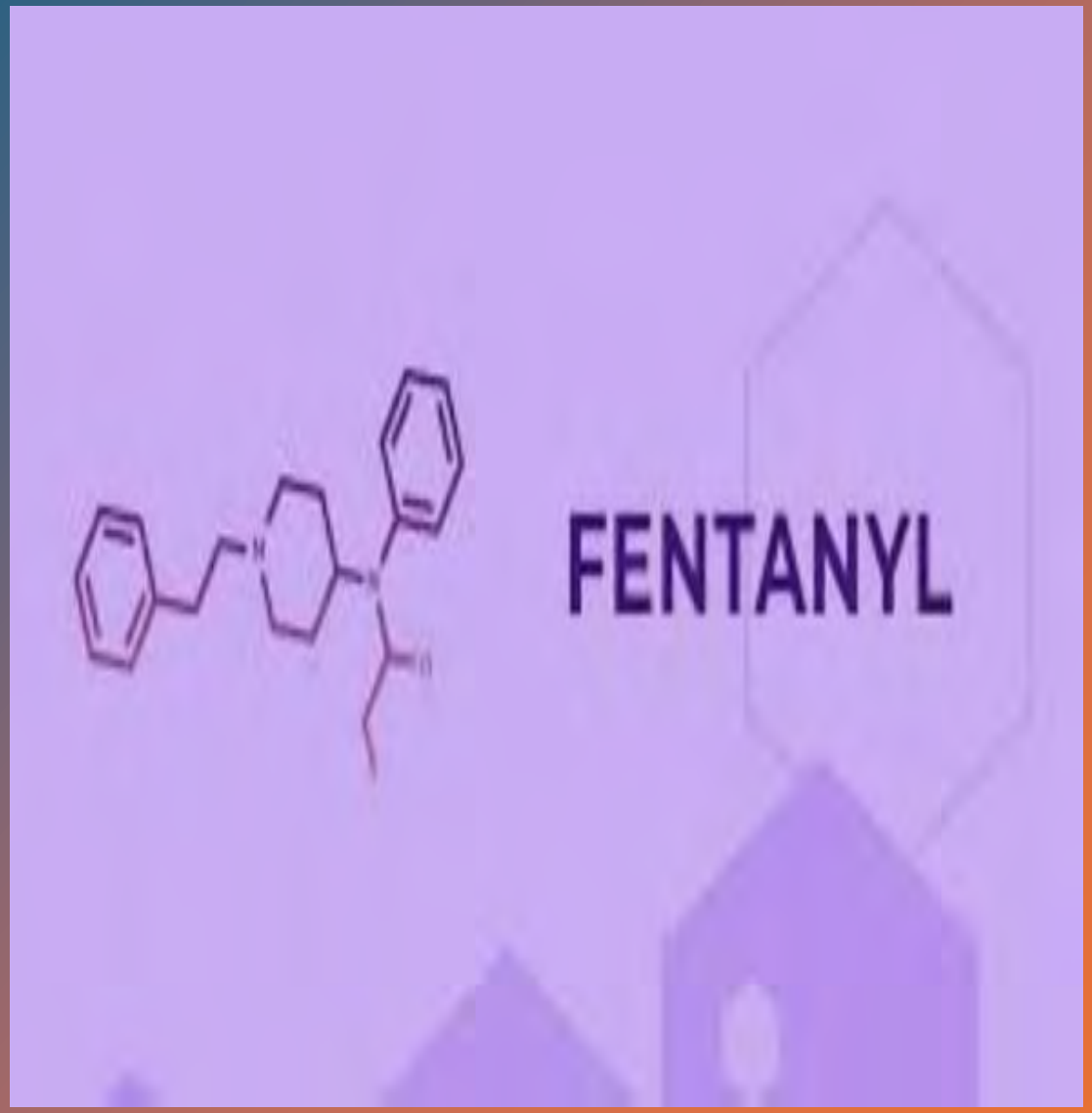
### OxyContin:

- In **1996**, Purdue Pharma introduced **OxyContin**, a time-released formulation of oxycodone. OxyContin was promoted as being less addictive because of its slow-release mechanism.

### Rise in Prescriptions:

- Throughout late 1990s and early 2000s, prescriptions for OxyContin soared. The medical community shifted toward more liberal opioid prescribing for chronic pain, and OxyContin was seen as a safer option.

# OxyContin and the Opioid Epidemic (1990s-Present)


# Fentanyl

- Fentnayl is 100 times stronger than morphine. Remember that it is in mcg.
- 1000mcg = 1mg
- Example 1 (PATCH): 100 mcg/h fentanyl patch → 0.1mg/h→ x100→10mg/hr → patch over 24 hours, so 24x10→240mg oral morphine.
- Not a Mnemonic but a fast and easy way to convert is by x2 and removing C. Example 100 mcg fentanyl patch → 200 mg oral morphine.
- Example 2 (IV): 100 mcg IV fentanyl → 0.1mg IV →x100→10 mg IV morphine which is 30 mg oral morphine.

# History of Fentnayl

## 1. Development and Early Use (1960s)

- **Discovery:** Fentanyl was first synthesized in **1960** by **Dr. Paul Janssen**, the founder of Janssen Pharmaceutica, a Belgian pharmaceutical company.

- **Medical Use:** By modifying the molecular structure of certain synthetic opioids, Janssen created fentanyl, a drug **100 times more potent than morphine**. Fentanyl was initially used for pain management, particularly in surgical settings, where its rapid onset and powerful effects were ideal for anesthesia.

# History of Fentnayl

## 2. Commercialization and Medical Applications (1970s-1990s)

- **Anesthetic Use:** Fentanyl became widely adopted as a surgical anesthetic under the brand name **Sublimaze**.

- **Introduction of Duragesic Patch:** In **1990**, Janssen introduced the **Duragesic patch**, a transdermal system that slowly releases fentanyl over time for patients suffering from chronic pain.

- **Lozenges and Lollipops:** Fentanyl lollipop approved for severe, breakthrough cancer pain in the 1990s. These innovations expanded fentanyl's use beyond surgery, making it an important tool in palliative care.


# The Opioid Crisis and Fentanyl's Role (2010s-Present)

# Methadone

- Methadone conversion to morphine is challenging due to methadone's non-linear pharmacokinetics and the fact that its potency increases with higher doses.

## Variable Potency:

- Methadone is estimated to be **approximately 3 to 10 times more potent** than oral morphine when given orally, depending on the dose.

| *Daily oral morphine equivalent* | *Conversion ratio of oral morphine: oral methadone* |
|---|---|
| <100 mg | 3:1 |
| 100–300 mg | 5:1 |
| 301–600 mg | 10:1 |
| 601–800 mg | 12:1 |
| 801–1000 mg | 15:1 |
| Over 1000 mg | 20:1[a] |

# History of Methadone

## 1. Origins and Development

- **World War II**:

- Methadone was first synthesized in **Germany** in the late 1930s. During **World War II**, due to shortages of morphine and other opioids, German scientists, led by chemists **Max Bockmühl** and **Gustav Ehrhart** at the pharmaceutical company **IG Farben**, developed a synthetic opioid to serve as an alternative painkiller.

- **Introduction to the United States**:

- After the war, the formula for methadone was brought to the United States as part of post-war reparations.
- In 1947, the drug was introduced in the U.S. under the name **Dolophine** (a name that some believe was derived from the Latin word “dolor,” meaning pain).

# History of Methadone

- **Opioid Addiction Crisis:**

- By the 1960s, the U.S. was facing a growing heroin addiction crisis. During this time, methadone was explored as a potential treatment for heroin dependency.

- **Pioneering Research:** **Drs. Vincent Dole** and **Marie Nyswander** at **Rockefeller University** in New York were among the first to advocate for methadone as a treatment for heroin addiction. This discovery led to the establishment of methadone **maintenance therapy** (MMT) in the mid-1960s.
- **Widespread Adoption:** Methadone maintenance programs (MMT) began to proliferate in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

# Full Agonist versus Partial Agonist

## FULL AGONISTS:

- MORPHINE
- METHADONE
- FENTANYL
- MEPERIDINE
- CODEINE
- HYDROCODONE
- OXYCODONE
- also...
- HEROIN

## COMMON PARTIAL AGONISTS:

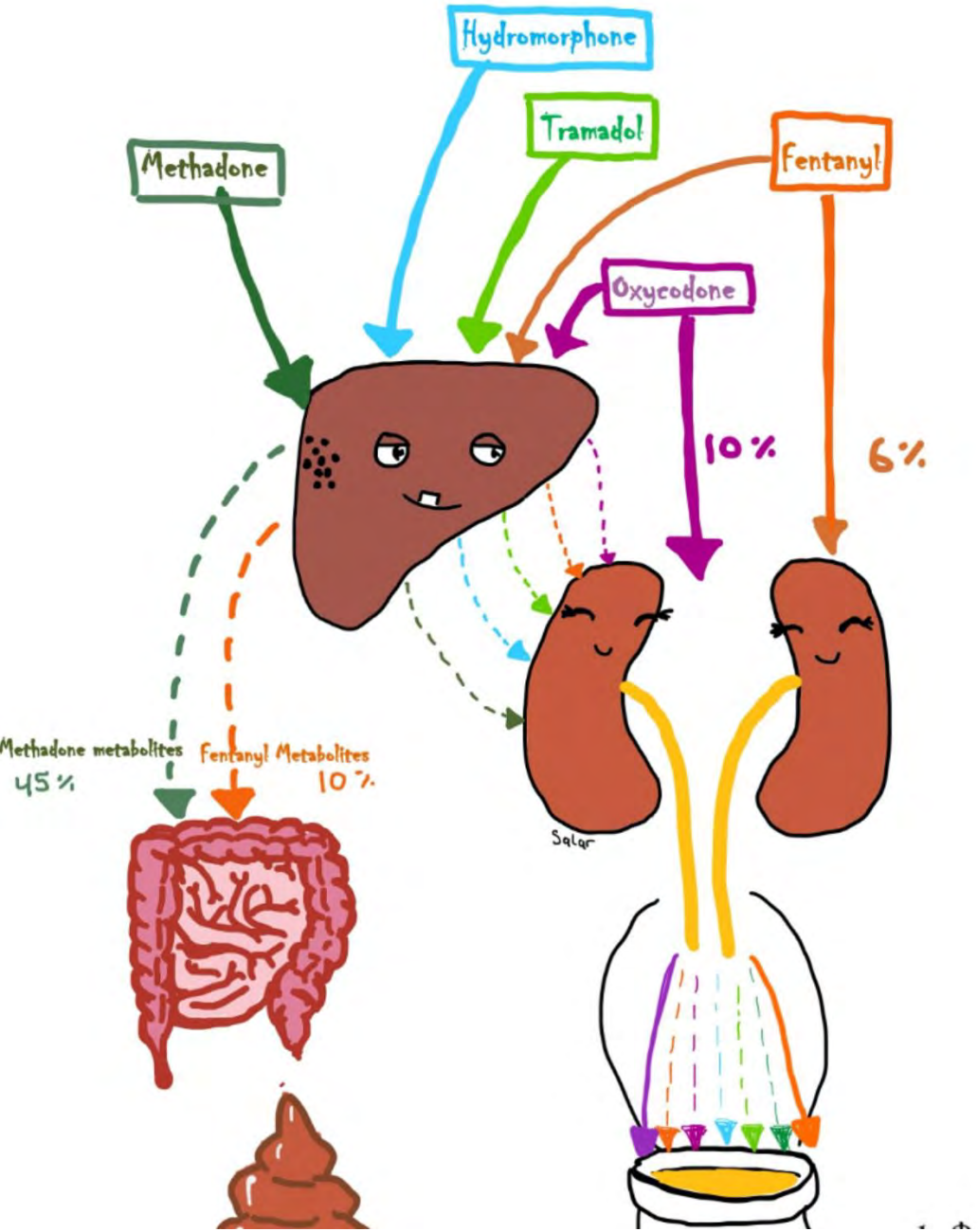
MIXED AGONIST-ANTAGONISTS

- BUPRENORPHINE → PARTIAL AGONIST at MU; ANTAGONIST at KAPPA
- BUTORPHANOL → PARTIAL AGONIST at KAPPA; ANTAGONIST at MU
- PENTAZOCINE → PARTIAL AGONIST at MU & KAPPA

→ MODERATE PAIN

- TRAMADOL → PARTIAL AGONIST at MU → MODERATE to SEVERE PAINS (e.g. after surgery)

*1




Carbonara GM. Opioids in patients with renal or hepatic dysfunction. ]Accessed December 2, 2017.

Table 1

## Opioid Recommendations in Patients With Renal Insufficiency

| Medication | Recommendation and Special Concerns |
|---|---|
| Fentanyl | Safe for use in patients with renal insufficiency. The metabolites are inactive. The parent compound may accumulate in renal insufficiency, but it does not appear to cause adverse effects |
| Methadone | Safe for use in patients with renal insufficiency, but should be prescribed only by clinicians with previous experience. The dose may need to be reduced in patients with severe renal failure. There are no active metabolites formed, and a negligible amount of plasma accumulation has been found in renal failure |
| Hydromorphone | Use with caution in patients with renal insufficiency. Hydromorphone's metabolite can cause central nervous system toxicity due to accumulation. Do not use in patients whose glomerular filtration rate is <30 mL/min |
| Oxycodone | Use with caution in patients with renal insufficiency. Oxymorphone, the active metabolite, can accumulate and lead to sedation and central nervous system toxicity |
| Morphine | Use with caution in patients with renal insufficiency. Doses must be adjusted as appropriate because the metabolite is a more potent analgesic that can accumulate and cause more sedation |
| Meperidine & codeine | Neither is recommended because of toxicity from metabolites |

Table 2

## Opioid Recommendations in Patients With Hepatic Insufficiency

| Medication | Recommendation and Special Concerns |
|---|---|
| Fentanyl | Safe for use in patients with hepatic insufficiency. The pharmacokinetics of fentanyl are not affected in patients with cirrhosis |
| Hydromorphone & oxycodone | Caution in patients with hepatic insufficiency. The dose should be reduced to one-third to one-half of the usual amount because of decreased elimination and reduced conversion to metabolites. Avoid use in severe cirrhosis |
| Morphine | Caution in patients with hepatic insufficiency. Owing to decreased clearance, increased half-life, and oral bioavailability, the dose and frequency of administration should be decreased |
| Codeine | Not recommended for use in patients with hepatic insufficiency owing to impaired conversion of codeine to morphine in the liver |
| Meperidine | Not recommended for use in patients with hepatic insufficiency owing to accumulation of toxic metabolite, normeperidine, which may cause central nervous system toxicity |
| Methadone | Not recommended for use in patients with severe liver disease because of the risk of accumulation of the parent drug |

# Q.1

Max is a 72-year-old man with hyperparathyroidism, renal failure, and severe osteoporosis. He has been receiving long-term opioid therapy with oxycodone at 10 mg taken orally every 8 hours around the clock for hip pain following fracture and surgery. His creatinine level increased from 1.2 mg/dl to 2.4 mg/dl in 1 week. His daughter reports that he has been very drowsy and irritable recently. His pain control has also been poor. What is the best possible opioid to switch to?

A. Morphine
B. Hydromorphone

C. Codeine
D. Methadone


# ALLERGIES

- **Morphine**, codeine, hydrocodone, **Hydromorphone**, **Oxycodone**, and belong to a class of opioids called **Phenanthrenes.**

- **Fentanyl** belong to a class of opioids called **Phenylpiperidines .**

- **Methadone** belong to a class of opioids called **Phenylheptylamines**.

# Q.2

- Mr. K is a 68-year-old man with lung cancer and metastasis to the spine. He is currently receiving chemotherapy. He had an allergic reaction to morphine in the past that included rash, hives, itching, and some swelling of his tongue. He has back pain that is not resolved by taking ibuprofen. His oncologist has recommended that acetaminophen not be used on a regular basis. What would you recommend for managing his severe pain from bone metastasis?

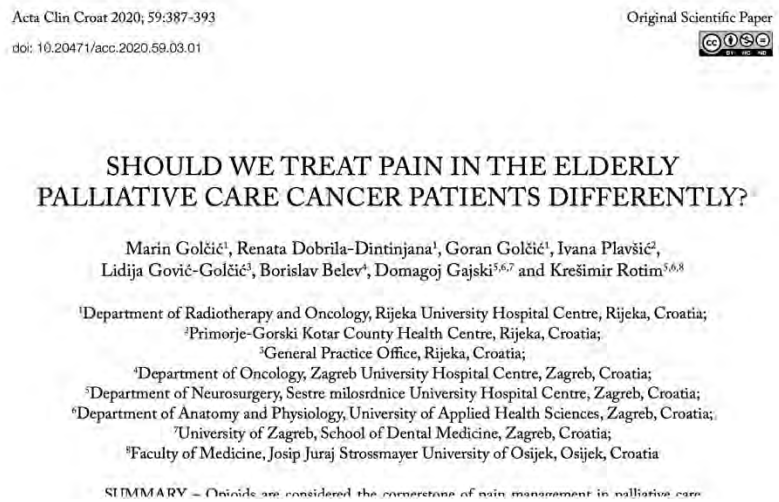
A. Morphine

B. Codeine

C. Oxycodone

D. Fentanyl

# LETS REVIEW THE LITERATURE



Acta Clin Croat 2020; 59:387-393
doi: 10.20471/acc.2020.59.03.01

Original Scientific Paper

SHOULD WE TREAT PAIN IN THE ELDERLY PALLIATIVE CARE CANCER PATIENTS DIFFERENTLY?

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SUMMARY – Opioids are considered the cornerstone of pain management in palliative care

## Methods

- **Study Design**: Prospective observational study conducted in a hospice in Rijeka, Croatia.
- **Population**: The study included 137 patients, aged over 18 years, with a life expectancy of less than three months. Patients were divided by age, using 65 years as the cutoff for "elderly."
- **Exclusion Criteria**: Delirium, inability to consent, or cognitive impairments that precluded accurate pain assessment.
- **Evaluation Tools**: Assessment utilized the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core 15 Palliative (EORTC QLQ-C15-PAL) and the Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS).
- **Analgesic Use**: Doses of opioids were converted to mg/day of oral morphine equivalent (OME) for standardized comparison.

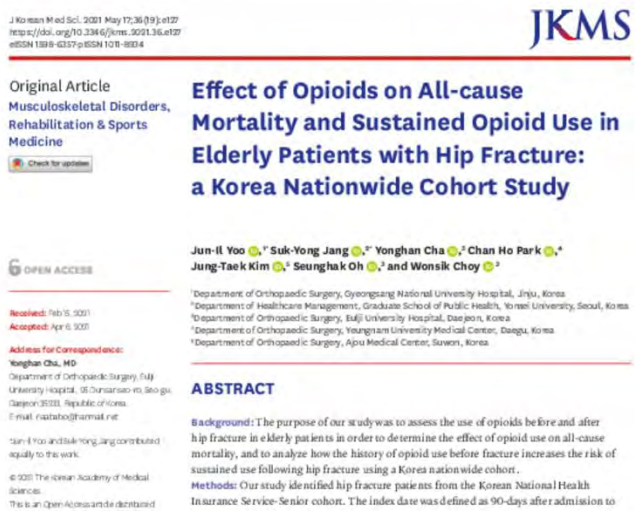
## Results

- **Demographics**: The mean age of participants was 71.8 years, with the most common cancer types being lung, gastrointestinal, and hepatobiliary cancers.
- **Pain Scores**: Younger patients exhibited significantly higher pain scores than older patients (5.14 vs. 3.59, p=0.01).
- **Analgesic Use**:
  - Older patients used opioids less frequently (68.8% vs. 85.7% in younger patients) and at lower doses (mean of 95.42 mg OME vs. 115.19 mg OME on admission).
  - By the last week of care, older patients had a mean daily dose of 109.95 mg OME compared to 165.61 mg for younger patients (p=0.03).
  - Notably, older patients used non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) less frequently, while the use of paracetamol was more common.
- **Survival Rates**: No significant differences in survival between the age groups were found (17.36 days for younger patients vs. 17.58 days for older patients).

## Conclusion

- The findings suggest that elderly cancer patients in palliative care utilize lower doses of opioids and different analgesics without resulting in higher pain levels or shortened survival.
- This indicates that a strategy of starting at lower doses and cautiously titrating opioids may be beneficial, reinforcing the principle of "start low, go slow."

# LETS REVIEW THE LITERATURE



J Korean Med Sci. 2021 May 17;36(19):e127
https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2021.36.e127
eISSN 1598-6357 pISSN 1011-8934

JKMS

Original Article
Musculoskeletal Disorders, Rehabilitation & Sports Medicine

Check for updates

## Effect of Opioids on All-cause Mortality and Sustained Opioid Use in Elderly Patients with Hip Fracture: a Korea Nationwide Cohort Study

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OPEN ACCESS

Received: Feb 15, 2021
Accepted: Apr 6, 2021

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The purpose of our study was to assess the use of opioids before and after hip fracture in elderly patients in order to determine the effect of opioid use on all-cause mortality, and to analyze how the history of opioid use before fracture increases the risk of sustained use following hip fracture using a Korea nationwide cohort.

**Methods:** Our study identified hip fracture patients from the Korean National Health Insurance Service-Senior cohort. The index date was defined as 90-days after admission to

## Methods

- A retrospective observational cohort study was conducted involving patients from the Korean National Health Insurance Service-Senior cohort.
- The study included patients aged 65 years and older with acute hip fractures from 2002 to 2015.
- Patients were categorized into past opioid users, current users, and those who sustained use (opioids used 3-12 months after fracture).
- Generalized estimating equations and multivariable-adjusted Cox proportional hazards models were employed to analyze the outcomes, measuring adjusted rate ratios (aRR) and hazard ratios (HR) for mortality.

## Results

- The cohort comprised 12,927 patients with a mean age of 77 years; 57.12% were past opioid users, while 88.71% reported current use post-fracture.
- No significant difference in mortality rates was observed between current and non-current users of opioids across all measured time frames (30 days to 1 year).
- Among survivors, past opioid use increased the likelihood of sustained opioid usage by 1.52 times (aRR: 1.52, 95% CI: 1.45–1.58; $P < 0.001$).
- The shift in opioid use saw a rapid initial increase following fracture, followed by a decline at three months post-injury.

## Conclusion

- Both current and past opioid use did not correlate with increased all-cause mortality in the elderly population following hip fractures.
- The study indicates that prior opioid use substantially raises the risk of continued opioid consumption post-fracture.
- These findings emphasize the necessity of careful monitoring and management strategies for opioid use within this demographic.

# LETS REVIEW THE LITERATURE

DE GRUYTER Scand J Pain 2020; 20(4): 755–764

Research Article

Amalie H. Simoni*, Lone Nikolajsen, Anne E. Olesen, Christian F. Christiansen, Søren P. Johnsen and Alma B. Pedersen

**The association between initial opioid type and long-term opioid use after hip fracture surgery in elderly opioid-naïve patients**

https://doi.org/10.1515/sjpain-2019-0170
Received December 3, 2019; accepted July 10, 2020; published online August 27, 2020

within three months after surgery. Adjusted odds ratios (aOR) for different opioid types were computed by logistic regression analyses with 95% confidence intervals (CI)

## Methods

- A nationwide population-based cohort study was conducted using data from Danish health registries from 2005 to 2015.
- The study included elderly patients aged ≥65 years who had undergone hip fracture surgery and redeemed at least one opioid prescription within three months post-surgery.
- Long-term opioid use was defined as the redemption of one or more opioid prescriptions each within three different three-month periods after surgery.
- The primary outcomes measured included the type of opioid initially redeemed, long-term opioid use rates, and adjustments through logistic regression analyses yielding adjusted odds ratios (aOR) compared with morphine as the reference.

## Results

- The study cohort comprised 26,790 opioid-naïve patients, with 21% of subjects dying within nine months of surgery.
- Among 21,255 patients who survived, 15% transitioned to long-term opioid use.
- Significant findings indicated that certain opioid types are linked to an increased likelihood of long-term use when compared to morphine:
  - Oxycodone: 14% (aOR 1.76, 95% CI 1.52–2.03)
  - Fentanyl: 29% (aOR 4.37, 95% CI 3.12–6.12)
  - Codeine: 13% (aOR 1.55, 95% CI 1.14–2.09)
  - Tramadol: 13% (aOR 1.56, 95% CI 1.35–1.80)
  - Buprenorphine: 33% (aOR 5.37, 95% CI 4.14–6.94)
  - More than one opioid type: 27% (aOR 3.83, 95% CI 3.31–4.44)
- A noted decrease in the proportion of long-term opioid users was observed from 18% before 2010 to 13% thereafter.

## Conclusion

- The study's findings indicate that certain opioids, especially buprenorphine and fentanyl, are associated with a greater risk of long-term use compared to morphine following hip fracture surgery.
- Healthcare providers should consider these associations when prescribing opioids to elderly postoperative patients, emphasizing careful selection based on potential long-term consequences.
- Additionally, the decreased initiation of long-term opioid use after 2010 suggests improvements in prescribing practices, indicating a trend towards more conscientious opioid management strategies.

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