Naloxone Use and Knowledge from Patients Treated for Opioid Use Disorder by Telehealth

Scott G. Weiner MD MPH, Emily N. Miller MPH, Barbara Burke MPH, Brian Clear MD



Research Objective

- Guidelines recommend that individuals who are at risk for overdose, including those who are in treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD), have naloxone available.
- In our practice, a large telehealth-only OUD treatment group, it is routine to co-prescribe a nasal naloxone rescue kit along with the first prescription for buprenorphine.
- It is not known the rate at which patients fill their naloxone prescription, their knowledge about naloxone, their use of naloxone, and if not filled why not.
- Understanding why a patient with OUD does not fill their naloxone prescription can inform providers of strategies to increase patient understanding and motivation in having access.



Study Design

- Anonymous survey to ascertain patient experiences with naloxone.
- Survey was open for a one-month period.
- All patients who had access to the program's phone app (n=17,899 individuals, of whom 12,887 were in active treatment) during the study period were invited to complete the anonymous online survey.



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Survey respondents' impressions and experiences with naloxone

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Someone else 20 64.5%	Patient	11	35.5%		
	Someone else	20	64.5%		

Multivariate logistic regression to determine the odds of filling naloxone prescription by patient knowledge of how to use it, adjusted for demographics, excluding patients who reported that already had it.

	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio Confidence Interval	p-value	
Know How to Administer Naloxone				
No	reference			
Yes	2.63	1.35 - 5.00	0.004	
Age				
18 - 49 years old	reference			
50 years old or older	1.25	0.71 - 2.29	0.457	
Ethnicity				
Not Hispanic or Latino	reference			
Hispanic or Latino	1.39	0.65 - 3.36	0.428	
Gender				
Male	reference			
Female	1.56	0.98 - 2.51	0.064	
Race				
White	reference			
Not White	1.82	0.83 - 4.61	0.167	



Principal Findings

- 701 surveys were completed (4% of all patients, 5% of active patients).
- 386 (55%) female.
- 617 (89%) White, 43 (6%) Black, 35 (5%) other; 75 (11%) Hispanic or Latino.
- Primary opioid used prior to treatment:
 - Prescription opioids: 478 (69%)
 - Fentanyl or heroin: 203 (29%)
- Nearly all patients (99%) know what naloxone is, and the majority (86%) know how to administer it. 72% of patients who remembered receiving a prescription filled it. The largest barriers to filling naloxone were:
 - They already had it (37%)
 - Did not think it was needed (37%)
 - Too expensive (23%)
- When filled, the naloxone was used by 30 patients (8%).
- Multivariable analysis: Adjusting for demographics, patients who know how to use naloxone are more likely to fill the prescription (OR 2.6).
 <u>Key Limitations</u>: Low response rate; respondents may not be representative of the overall patient population.



Conclusions

- When prescribed naloxone, patients treated in a telehealth treatment program fill the prescription 72% of the time, and when it is filled, 8% use the naloxone.
- About 14% reported that they did not know how to use it and only about a quarter of patients had taken a naloxone training course.
- Education is needed to teach patients how to administer naloxone and inform those at risk of the benefits of having naloxone on-hand.
- Cost remains a barrier to obtaining naloxone.

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