

Administration and Prescribing of Medications for Alcohol Use Disorder During COVID-19

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Introduction

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a decline in total ED visits, alcohol-related ED visits increased to at least 7.1% in 2020
 - Also increase in ED screens for problem drinking.
- An estimated 29.5 million people aged 12 and older were diagnosed with AUD in 2022,
 - Only 2.1% received medications for alcohol use disorder (MAUD).
- The emergency department is often a critical access point that can serve as a setting for MAUD initiation.

Objectives

- To determine whether the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on utilization of medications for alcohol use disorder (MAUD) in the ED setting utilizing national data.

Methods and Materials

- Retrospective study utilizing available data from the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey from 2019-21.
- We considered 2019 the pre-COVID-19 era, and 2020 and 2021 as being the COVID-19 period.
- The primary outcome was the change in proportion of all ED visits where a MAUD (naltrexone, acamprosate, and disulfiram) was administered or prescribed at ED discharge.
- Secondly, we compared the proportion of visits where MAUDs were administered and prescribed between time frames.

Disclosures

- None

Methods and Materials (Cont.)

- Absolute numbers were either normalized using the number of ED visits for that year as the denominator, or the total number of visits where a MAUD was prescribed. Visit characteristics including age, gender, race, and insurance were examined.
- We reported our findings using descriptive statistics, and used the chi-squared difference of proportions tests to compare proportions between time frames. All findings were reported to the 0.05 significance level.

Results

- From 2019-21, there were 47,528 visits (0.01% of all ED visits) where patients were prescribed MAUD at discharge.
- Most visits in which MAUD was prescribed involved patients 25-44 years (17,003, 35.8%), female (31,946, 67.2%), White (35,374, 74.4%), and with Medicaid (25,659, 54.%).
- In 2019, there were 8,394 (0.01%) visits in which MAUD was prescribed at discharge, in 2020 5,067 (0.004%, $p < 0.001$), and in 2021, 34,067 (0.02%, $p < 0.001$).
 - From 2019-21, there was a 100% increase in rate.
 - From 2020-21, there was a 572.3% absolute increase and a 531.5% relative increase in rate. (See Figure 1)

Results (cont.)

- There were 74,265 visits in which MAUD was administered in the ED.
- In 2019, there were 6,368 (0.005%) visits, in 2020 30,857 (0.02%, $p < 0.001$), and in 2021, 37,040 (0.03%, $p < 0.001$).
- From 2019-21, there was a 527% increase, and from 2020-21, there was a 12.78% increase.

Conclusions

- At the onset of the pandemic, there was a decrease in MAUD prescribed discharge, with a sharp increase the following year.
- There was an increase in visits where MAUD was administered in the ED in 2020, followed by a continued increase in 2021.
- The increase in administrations could be the result of increasing alcohol use during COVID-19, lack of access to care during the pandemic, or long term sequelae of AUD.
- The decrease in discharge prescriptions could be the consequence of interruptions in the ED such as staff shortages or the limited options for referring patients.

Future Directions

- Future studies should examine ways to effectively implement MAUD use in the ED to address this public health problem.

References

- 1) CDC. Alcohol and Public Health: Alcohol-Related Disease Impact. [Table], Annual average for United States 2015–2019 alcohol-attributable deaths due to excessive alcohol use, all ages https://nccd.cdc.gov/DPH_ARDI/Default/Report.aspx?T=AAM&P=612EF325-9B55-442B-AE0C-789B06E3A8D5&R=C877B524-834A-47D5-964D-158FE519C894&M=DB4DAAC0-C9B3-4F92-91A5-A5781DA85B68&F=&D=
- 2) Sutariya R, Hamzeh M, Desale S, Mete M, Mazer-Amirshahi M, Nelson LS. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on emergency department alcohol intoxication presentations and positive screens for problem drinking. *Alcohol Alcohol*. 2023 Sep 9;58(5):547-552. doi: 10.1093/alcalc/agad053. PMID: 37553859.

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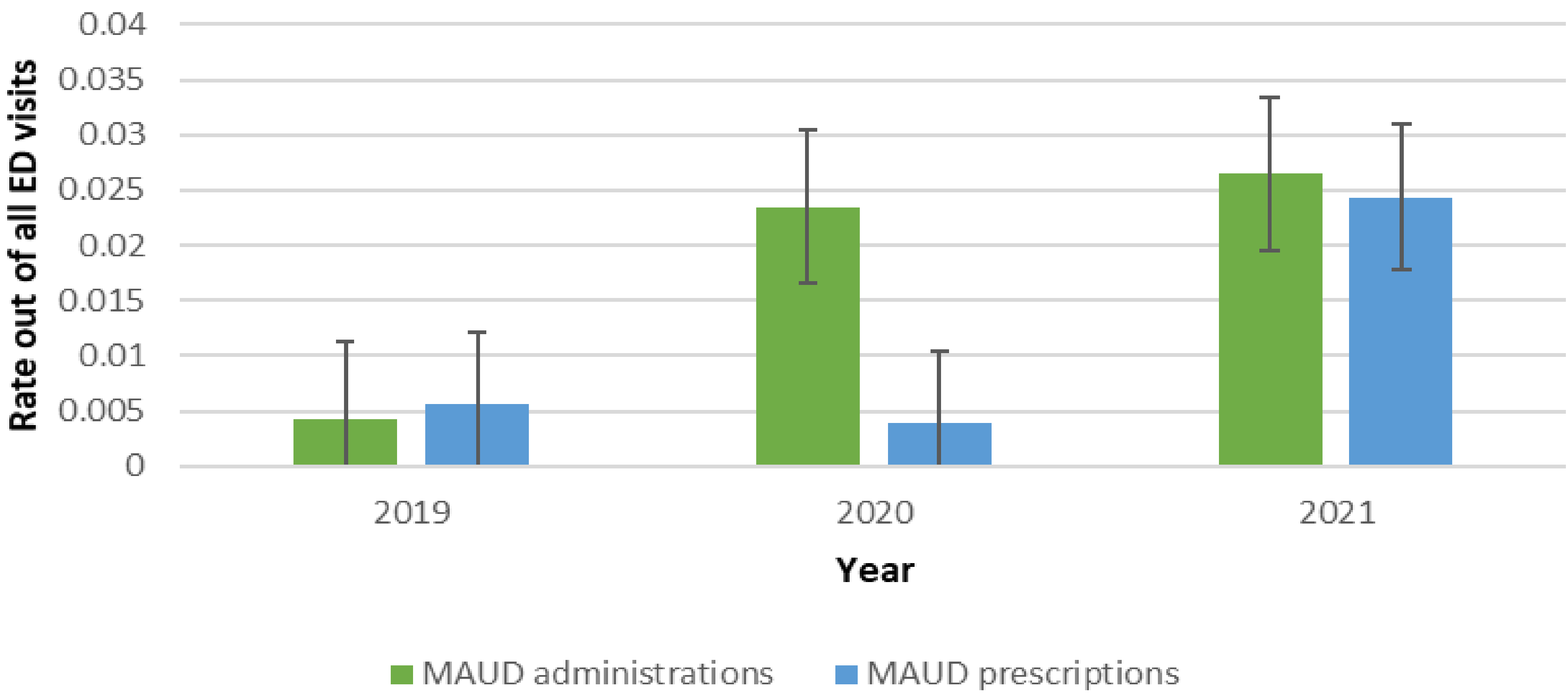


Figure 1: MAUD provision in emergency departments nationwide between 2019 and 2021