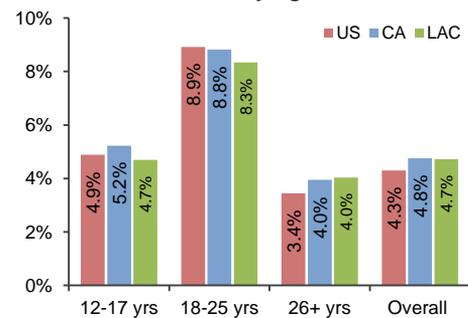


Prescription (Rx) Opioid Misuse/Abuse and Consequences

March 2019

Prevalence

Misuse/Abuse of Rx Opioids (pain medications) in the Past Year by Age, 2012-2014¹



Misuse/abuse of Rx opioids is most common among individuals aged 18-25 years.

1 in 5 started illicit drug use with prescription drugs²



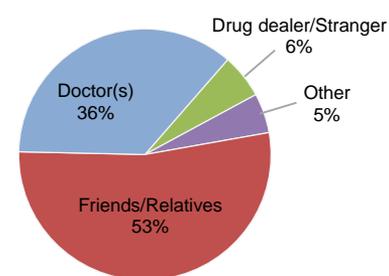
4 in 5 new heroin users had previously misused Rx opioids³



Individuals who misused/abused Rx opioids were more likely to use other illicit drugs⁴⁻⁵.

Rx Opioid Sources

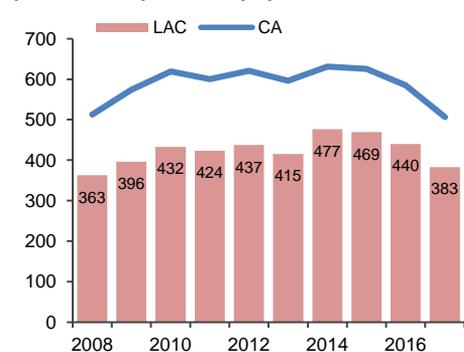
Source of Rx Opioids Among Past Year Misusers/Abusers, 2017⁶



Most misuser/abusers obtained their Rx opioids from a friend or relative.

Prescriptions

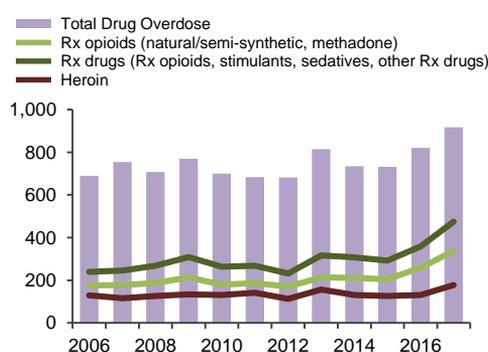
Rate of opioid prescriptions filled at pharmacies per 1,000 population, 2008-2017⁷



At the rate opioid prescriptions were filled, a bottle of could be supplied to over half of all adults in LAC.

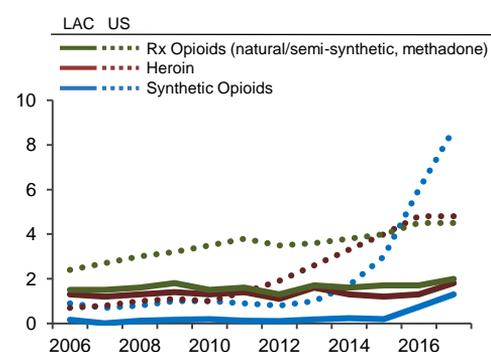
Deaths

Drug Overdose Deaths in LAC, 2006-2017⁸



52% of drug overdose deaths involved Rx drugs, of which 71% involved Rx opioids.

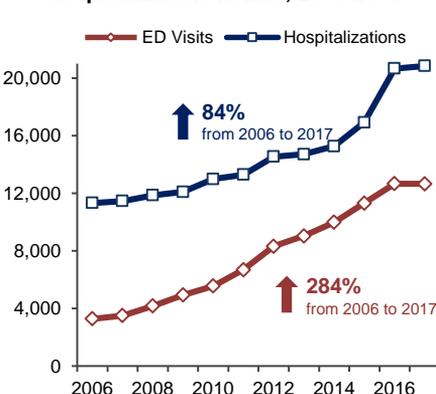
Opioid Death Rates (/100K) by Opioid Type in the LAC and US, 2006-2017⁸



Rates of death due to Rx opioids and heroin remained stable in LAC, and increased for synthetic opioids.

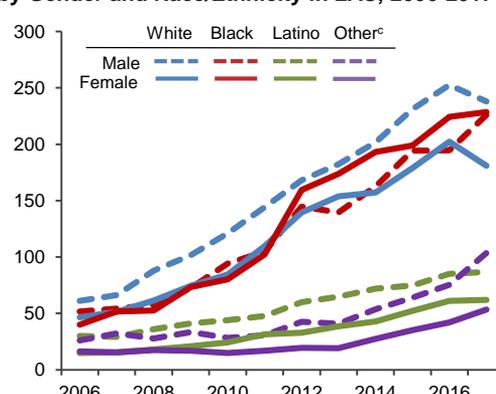
Healthcare Utilization

Opioid (excluding heroin) ED Visits and Hospitalizations in LAC, 2006-2017⁹



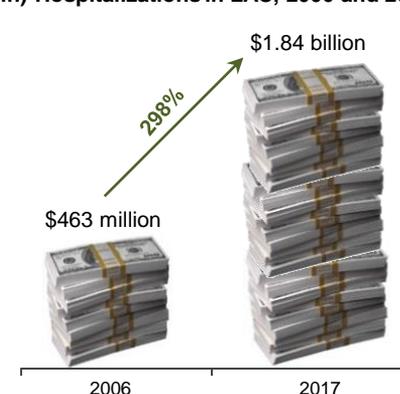
Healthcare utilization among Rx opioid misusers/abusers greatly increased over recent years.

Opioid (excluding heroin) ED Visit Rates (/100K) by Gender and Race/Ethnicity in LAC, 2006-2017⁹



Rx opioid-related ED visit rate increased, particularly among Whites and African Americans for both men and women.

Total Annual Charges for Opioid (excluding heroin) Hospitalizations in LAC, 2006 and 2017⁹

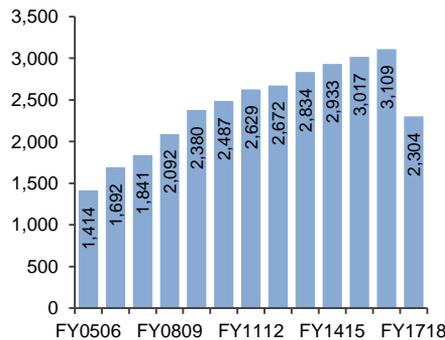


The economic burden (2018 US dollars) of Rx opioid misuse/abuse greatly increased over recent years.

¹ Per 100,000 population. ² Records with any opioid-related (excluding heroin) condition listed as a diagnosis or external cause of injury. ³ Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, other, unknown. ⁴ Per 100,000 population aged 12+

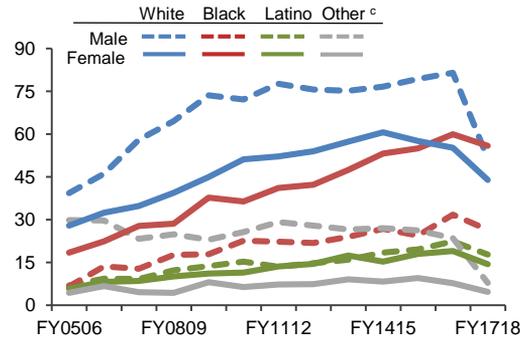
Treatment Admissions

Primary Rx Opioid Admissions in LAC, FY0506-FY1718¹⁰



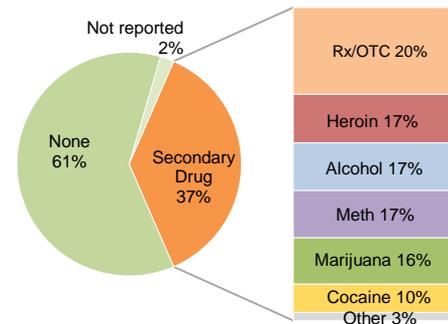
Treatment admissions for a primary Rx opioid problem increased from FY0506 to FY1617.

Rate(/100K) of Primary Rx Opioid Admissions by Gender and Race/Eth. in LAC, FY0506-FY1718¹⁰



Whites had the highest rates of Rx opioid treatment admissions over the last decade. The rate among Black women increased and surpassed that of White women by FY1617.

Secondary Drug Problem Among Primary Rx Opioid Admissions in LAC, FY1718¹⁰



About 37% of Rx opioid patients had a secondary drug problem in FY1718.

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health. <https://www.samhsa.gov/samhsa-data-outcomes-quality/major-data-collections/state-reports-NSDUH/2012-2014-substate-reports>

- The prevalence rate of misusing/ abusing prescription (Rx) opioids (nonmedical use of pain relievers) in the past year in Los Angeles County (LAC) was 4.7% in 2012-2014.

- Misuse/abuse of Rx opioids was most common among individuals aged 18-25 years at 8.3% in 2012 to 2014 in LAC.

- LAC had lower rates of Rx opioid misuse/abuse among youths (4.7%) and young adults (8.3%) compared to California (youth 5.2%, young adults 8.8%) and US (youth 4.9%, young adults 8.9%) averages.

2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Surveys on Drug Use and Health 2013. Results from the 2013 NSDUH: Summary of National Findings.

- About 1 in 5 (20.6%) individuals aged 12 or older who started using illicit drugs in the past year in the US reported that their first drug was Rx opioids.

3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality Data Review. Associations of Nonmedical Pain Reliever Use and Initiation of Heroin Use in the United States. Aug 2013.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/DR006/DR006/nonmedical-pain-reliever-use-2013.htm>

- Among new heroin users in the US, about 4 in 5 (79.5%) reported misusing/abusing Rx opioids before starting their heroin.

4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. National Surveys on Drug Use and Health 2013.

<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/SAMHDA/studies/35509/datasets/1/sdaxml>

- Compared to those who have never misused/abused Rx opioids, those who misused/abused Rx opioids had a greater risk of using other illicit drugs, including marijuana (2.1 times more likely), cocaine (4.5 times more likely), inhalants (5.6 times more likely), and heroin (9 times more likely) during their lifetimes.

5. CDC. New research reveals the trends and risk factors behind America's growing heroin epidemic.

News Release.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0707-heroin-epidemic.html>

- The strongest risk factor for a heroin use disorder is a Rx opioid use disorder. People who abuse or are dependent on Rx opioids are 40 times more likely to abuse or be dependent on heroin.

6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/nsduh/reports-detailed-tables-2017-NSDUH>

- In 2017, among individuals aged 12 or older who misused/abused Rx opioid in the past year, most (53%) had obtained Rx opioids from their friends or relatives; 36% were prescribed Rx opioids from one (35%) or more than one doctor (1%); 6% bought from drug dealer or other stranger, 5% stole from a doctor's office, clinic, hospital, or pharmacy, or by some other way.

7. California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES).

<https://discovery.cdph.ca.gov/CDIC/ODdash/>

- In 2008-2017, over 400 opioid prescriptions were filled per 1,000 residents in LAC each year, which is enough to supply a bottle of opioids to over half of all adults in LAC, though the rate has been steadily declining since 2014.

8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2016 on CDC WONDER Online Database. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10.html>

- In 2017, Rx drugs were involved in about 52% of drug overdose deaths. About 71% of Rx drug overdose deaths involved Rx opioids.

- In the US, the opioid epidemic hit in 3 distinct waves: First with the increases in Rx opioids (natural/ semi-synthetic, and methadone) deaths associated with increased prescribing; second with increases in heroin deaths associated with Rx opioid users who transitioned to heroin; and third with the increases in synthetic opioid deaths associated with increases in illicitly manufactured fentanyl found in heroin, counterfeit pills, and cocaine.

- While rates of death due to natural/semi-synthetic opioids and heroin remained stable in LAC from 2006-2016, sharp increases in synthetic opioid deaths began in 2016 and continued to increase in 2017.

9. Emergency Department and Inpatient Discharge

Data Set. Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. California Dept of Public Health.

- In LAC, the number of hospitalizations with any opioid-related (excluding heroin) diagnosis or external cause of injury (i.e., abuse, dependence, or poisoning) significantly ($p_{trend} < 0.01$) increased by 84% from 2006 to 2017.

- The number of emergency department (ED) visits with any opioid-related (excluding heroin) diagnosis or external cause of injury significantly ($p_{trend} < 0.01$) increased by 284% from 2006 to 2017.

- The rate of opioid-related (excluding heroin) ED visits per 100,000 population increased for all gender-race/ethnicity groups, particularly Whites and African American males and females.

- Hospital charges for all hospitalizations with any opioid-related (excluding heroin) diagnosis or external cause of injury from 2006-2017 totaled to \$10.2 billion. All costs are adjusted for inflation to 2018 US dollars.

- The average hospital charge per opioid-related (excluding heroin) hospitalization more than doubled from \$40,870 in 2006 to \$88,372 in 2017.

- Annual hospital charges for opioid-related (excluding heroin) hospitalizations significantly increased by 298% from \$463 million in 2006 to \$1.84 billion in 2017 ($p_{trend} < 0.01$).

10. Los Angeles County Participant Reporting System. Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

- The number of admissions for individuals aged 12 or older to publicly funded treatment programs reporting Rx opioids as their primary drug problem at admission increased by 120% from FY0506 to FY1617. Decreases in the number of admissions in FY1718 may be due to the launch of the new Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System on July 1, 2017, and the Sage (Substance Use Disorder Information System) on December 1, 2017.

- White men and women had the highest rates (per 100,000 population aged 12 or older) from FY0506-FY1516. The rate among African American women increased over the last decade, and surpassed that of White women by FY1617.

- In FY1718, 37% of admissions for a primary Rx opioid problem also reported having a secondary drug problem. Other Rx or over-the-counter drugs were the most common secondary drug problem, followed by marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, alcohol, cocaine, and other drugs.

For treatment in LAC, call the Substance Abuse Service Helpline (SASH) at 844-804-7500, or visit [Service & Bed Availability Tool](#).

For more information on data or resources regarding prescription opioid and heroin abuse in LAC, see Safe Med LA's [data story](#) or visit www.safemedla.org.

For more information on substance use disorders in LAC, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/>.

For more information regarding this data brief, please contact Tina Kim, Ph.D at tkim@ph.lacounty.gov