Prevalence of Opioid Misuse Risk in Patients With Cancer

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BACKGROUND: Opioid misuse risk may be similar in individuals with chronic cancer and noncancer pain. However, risk screening is not uniformly used for patients with cancer, so its prevalence is unknown.

OBJECTIVES: The primary aim of this study was to estimate the level of risk for opioid misuse among patients with cancer. Secondary aims were to compare opioid misuse risk across cancer types and specialties and to explore psychosocial factors that may contribute to opioid misuse risk.

METHODS: Clinicians were trained to administer the Opioid Risk Tool during ambulatory visits. Data were retrieved from electronic health records and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

FINDINGS: Five percent of patients seen in the cancer center during the data collection period were screened for opioid misuse risk. Of the 226 patients screened, 163 were at low risk, 34 were at moderate risk, and 29 were at high risk for future opioid misuse. The most frequent cancer diagnoses for patients at moderate or high risk were lung (n = 15), breast (n = 16), gastrointestinal (n = 10), and genitourinary (n = 8). Of the 63 patients at moderate or high risk, 50 had a family history of substance misuse, 45 had a personal history of substance misuse, and 29 had a history of psychological disease.

KEYWORDS
pain management; cancer pain; analgesics; opioid; risk factors

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