

Rate of opioid Rx at discharge from emergency department declining

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From 2017-2018 to 2019-2020, there has been a decrease in opioid

prescribing at discharge from the emergency department, according to a January data brief published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics.

Loredana Santo, M.D., M.P.H., and Susan M. Schappert, from the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland, used data from the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS) to examine recent changes in rates and percentages of opioids prescribed to adults at discharge from the [emergency department](#) by patient and visit characteristics through 2020.

The researchers found that opioids were prescribed at discharge at 36.4 emergency department visits per 1,000 adults in 2019 to 2020 compared with 50.5 emergency department visits in 2017 to 2018. For both men and women, the rate of emergency department visits with an opioid prescribed at discharge was lower in 2019 to 2020 than in 2017 to 2018. There was a decrease observed in the percentage of emergency department visits with an opioid prescribed at discharge from 12.2 to 8.1 percent in 2017-2018 to 2019-2020, respectively. Compared with 2017 to 2018, there was a decrease seen in the percentage of emergency department visits with an opioid prescribed at discharge in 2019 to 2020 for non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic Black patients.

"This report, based on the most recent estimates from NHAMCS on emergency department visits made by [adults](#) with opioids prescribed at [discharge](#), shows a continued decreasing trend in opioid prescription patterns within the emergency department setting," the authors write.

More information: Loredana Santo et al, Opioids Prescribed to Adults at Discharge From Emergency Departments: United States, 2017–2020, (2022). [DOI: 10.15620/cdc:122879](https://doi.org/10.15620/cdc:122879)

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