

# Noncancer pain patients commonly use benzodiazepines

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(HealthDay)—Chronic noncancer pain (CNCP) patients who use benzodiazepines (BZDs) daily frequently have multiple comorbid mental health conditions and higher rates of emergency health care use, according to a study published in the February issue of *Pain Medicine*.

Suzanne Nielsen, Ph.D., from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre in Sydney, and colleagues used a national sample of 1,220 CNCP patients prescribed long-term opioids. The authors sought to determine baseline data on BZD use patterns as well as ties to comorbidities and health service utilization.

The researchers found that one-third of participants reported BZD use in the past month, while 17 percent reported daily BZD use. Greater [pain](#) severity; being prescribed "higher-risk" (>200 mg oral morphine equivalent) doses of opioids; using antidepressant and/or antipsychotic medications; substance use; and greater [mental health](#) comorbidity were all associated with BZD use. BZD use was independently associated with greater past-month use of emergency health care, after controlling for other factors.

"The high prevalence of BZD use is inconsistent with guidelines for the management of CNCP or chronic [mental health conditions](#)," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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