

# Study examines opioid use in patients with rheumatoid arthritis

21 June 2017

---

A new analysis indicates that the use of opioid pain medications in older US rheumatoid arthritis patients peaked in 2010 and is now declining slightly. By 2014, 41% of rheumatoid arthritis patients were regular opioid users.

In the analysis of 2006-2014 Medicare data on 70,929 rheumatoid arthritis patients, the most commonly received opioids were hydrocodone and [propoxyphene](#). Regular opioid use increased slowly, peaked in 2010 and decreased following withdrawal of propoxyphene. Hydrocodone and [tramadol](#) use increased commensurately, and overall opioid use declined only slightly. Factors associated with regular opioid use included younger age, female sex, black race, back pain, fibromyalgia, anxiety, and depression.

The *Arthritis & Rheumatology* findings point to substantial use of opioids in an older rheumatoid arthritis patients despite societal concerns regarding potential over-prescribing and addiction in recent years.

**More information:** Jeffrey R Curtis et al, Changing Trends in Opioid Use among U.S. Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients, *Arthritis & Rheumatology* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/art.40152](https://doi.org/10.1002/art.40152)

Provided by Wiley

APA citation: Study examines opioid use in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (2017, June 21) retrieved 2 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-06-opioid-patients-rheumatoid-arthritis.html>

*This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.*