A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of the Opioid Crisis

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the qualitative and quantitative data presented from two different studies

concerning the opioid crisis in the United States.

Opioids are a class of drugs that, when used correctly, can provide relief for health conditions that can cause significant pain and poor quality of life. However, an unfortunate side effect of these opioids is their addictive qualities, which lead to patients abusing these drugs out of physical and psychological dependence. This paper will analyze two studies: one qualitative study and one quantitative study, utilizing the IMRAD format.

This first study is a qualitative study of the experiences of individuals suffering from opioid abuse during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The introduction of this study discusses the subject, of individuals who have been suffering from opioid abuse during the COVID-19 lockdown (Watson et al., 2022). The introduction suggests that individuals have more risk factors for contracting covid symptoms and that these individuals are more likely to undergo riskier behaviors, up to and including an increased risk of overdosing on opioids, during this time (Watson et al., 2022). The introduction then notes how these individuals need long-term and continuous care with a low barrier of entry for treatment (Watson et al., 2022). Finally, the introduction seeks to investigate how these individuals lived their lives during the pandemic (Watson et al., 2022). The method section of this study notes that a convenience sample approach was used and the participants were approached through one of two treatment projects in Chicago, Illinois (Watson et al., 2022). The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, discussing covid-19 and how it has impacted their lives and treatment plan (Watson et al., 2022). The results section suggested that the participant demographic was predominantly male, and African American, with an average age nearing the late fifties, half were unemployed, and with a third of participants were disabled (Watson et al., 2022). The results section overall noted that they only had word-of-mouth knowledge of the pandemic and that the pandemic greatly affected them, stating that it had been difficult obtaining financial or social support, yet it

has motivated them into seeking further treatment (Watson et al., 2022). The Discussion section

of the study suggests that the data would be useful for community health purposes, and suggests

that funds can also be allocated for mental health treatments and social support programs

(Watson et al., 2022). Overall, this study was very good; it managed to capture the struggle of

these patients perfectly, and the discussion was very good at describing the needs of these

patients.

The quantitative study utilized for this paper utilizes a questionnaire meant to distinguish

chronic pain patients who abuse or don't abuse their opioid prescriptions, and . The introduction

provides statistics on patients with chronic pain and notes how opioids are used as a treatment

modality (Coyne et al., 2021). The introduction then mentions how the Food and Drug

Association are trying to curb the worsening opioid abuse epidemic, with one of their strategies

being the Prescription Opioid Misuse and Abuse Questionnaire, a questionnaire that tries to

identify patients who may abuse their opioid prescriptions (Coyne et al., 2021). In the methods

section, participants were recruited from the U.S. military health system and given informed

consent, after which they were given a number of questionnaires, including the Prescription

Opioid Misuse and Abuse Questionnaire, as well as interviewed by mental health experts,

alongside other screening measures (Coyne et al., 2021). On the clinician side, there were urine

drug screenings and data collected from electronic medical records concerning diagnoses and

prescriptions (Coyne et al., 2021). The results section of the study notes that over eight hundred

patients were able to complete the questionnaire of over three thousand screen patients and that

the questionnaire supported data collected from the electronic medical records (Coyne et al.,

2021). Furthermore, the questionnaire was deemed incredibly reliable from retesting (Coyne et

al., 2021). The Discussion section of the study concludes that the questionnaire was both highly

reproducible and valid when compared to the other study measures utilized (Coyne et al., 2021).

However, the discussion section also notes how the questionnaire was inaccurate when it came to

reported and actual prescriptions and dosages, noting how patients may not be exact in their

reporting, unintentionally or otherwise (Coyne et al., 2021). Furthermore, the discussion also

notes that the questionnaire was limited in how patients can be hesitant to reporting on any

illegal behavior, as well as how electronic medical record data is limited to what is currently on

databases (Coyne et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the tool proves to be incredibly valid and reliable

(Coyne et al., 2021). It was a good article, and highlights a potentially useful tool to assist with

identifying potential opioid abusers.

Opioid abuse is an increasingly widespread problem in the United States. For better or for

worse, however, there is a lot of data surrounding the opioid epidemic. Hopefully, with all the

data, this epidemic can come to a halt, and maybe the poor individuals afflicted with this can

condition can recover both physically and mentally.

References

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