

Sample

2014

Oxycodone Update

Since 2011, bpac^{nz} has produced a series of reports and articles on appropriate use of opioids and has urged prescribers to review their use of oxycodone. This report provides an update on the use of oxycodone over a 12 month period (April 2013 – Mar 2014).

Key messages:¹

- Oxycodone is a strong opioid analgesic that should only be used as a second-line treatment for patients who are not able to tolerate morphine.
- Oxycodone is approximately twice as potent as morphine and 7.5 – 20 times more potent than codeine, i.e. 10 mg of oxycodone is equivalent to 15 – 20 mg of morphine **and** 75 – 200 mg of codeine
- Despite a recent decrease in the number of patients receiving oxycodone, there is still a large number of patients prescribed oxycodone each year in New Zealand
- While most patients are initiated on oxycodone outside general practice, a significant proportion of patients are still being started or continued on oxycodone by general practitioners
- There is evidence that oxycodone has a higher addictive potential than morphine. Some regular users will experience features of dependence.

Please see BPJ 61 (June, 2014) and 62 (July, 2014) for further information on oxycodone

Sample Practice Data

Between April 2013 – March 2014

23 patients registered to your practice received **oxycodone**
34 items of **oxycodone** were dispensed to these patients

22 patients registered to your practice received **morphine**
433 items of **morphine** were dispensed to these patients



If you would like to see your individual prescribing data for oxycodone in the last 12 months please login to my bpac:

www.bpac.org.nz

Oxycodone is second-line to morphine

Oxycodone does not provide more effective pain relief than morphine, is more expensive, and is associated with increasing levels of misuse. Therefore it should only be used in patients who do not tolerate morphine.

Do you know we have an **oxycodone audit** for you to review your prescribing? This is available at www.bpac.org.nz

National Trends

There has been an increase in the number of patients receiving either morphine or oxycodone, with an additional 15,501 patients being dispensed these medicines in 2013 compared to 2009. In 2013, 61,824 patients received either morphine or oxycodone. Since the last oxycodone report in 2011 there has been a shift in the dispensing trends of these medicines. Between Q4–2011 and Q1–2014 there was a 19% decrease in the number of patients dispensed oxycodone while the number dispensed morphine increased by 23% (Figure 1).

In 2011, 30% of all oxycodone was initiated in general practice. Over the last 12 months (Apr 2013 – Mar 2014) 28% of oxycodone had been initiated in general practice (Figure 2).

Of concern, is the fact that **80%** of patients prescribed oxycodone for the first time in 2013 did not have a previous prescription for morphine in the preceding 12 months.

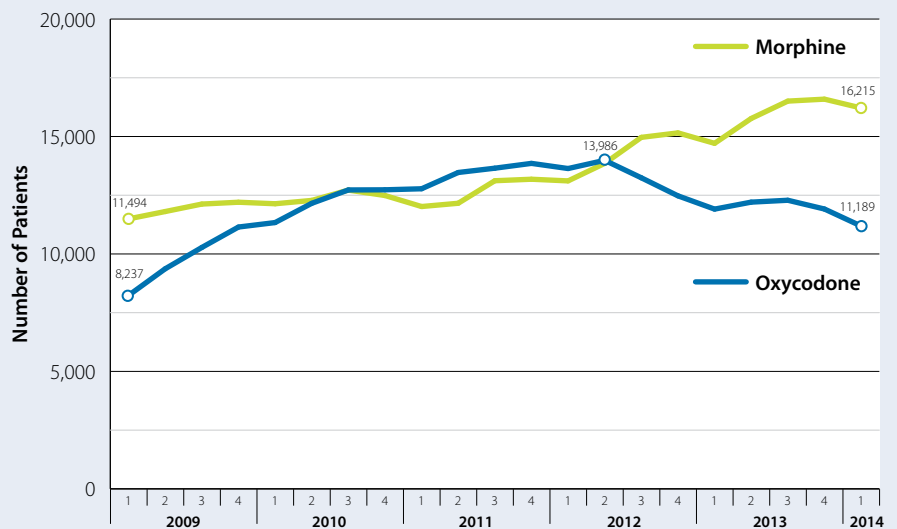


Figure 1. Number of patients dispensed oxycodone and morphine in each quarter for years 2009–2014

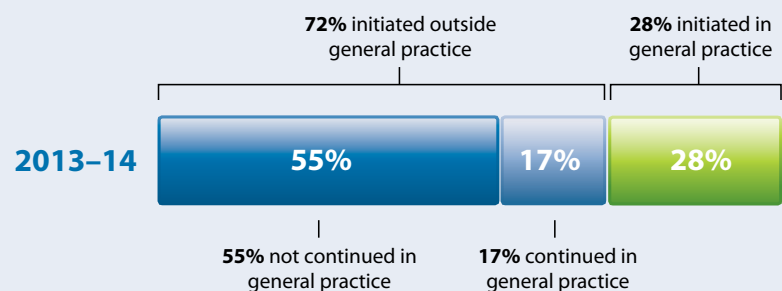


Figure 2. Source of oxycodone prescriptions for patients initiated in 2013/14