

Research Study

Opioid medication use in Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Ontario, Canada



Learn more about the research paper [here](#)

What are opioids?

Opioids are **medications** that are given to people who have **very bad pain**.



Doctors are very careful about **who** they give opioids to and they try to make sure people take them safely.

When people take opioids for a **long time**, it can sometimes be **hard** to **stop taking them**.

Some people might take too much of the medication **on purpose** or **by accident** and can get very sick or die.

Why did we do this research?

Doctors and scientists do not know what happens when people with intellectual and developmental disabilities take opioids.



We wanted to learn how to **help** people with **intellectual** and **developmental disabilities** use opioids safely.



If opioids are **given** to **people** with **intellectual** and **developmental disabilities**, we wanted to know:

1) how much medication they get.



2) if they get sick from taking opioids.

3) How to make opioids safe for them.



What did we do?

We looked at all **adults** with **intellectual** and **developmental disabilities** in **Ontario** who were given an **opioid** from their **doctor**.



We looked at **how many** opioids were given to them and **how often**.



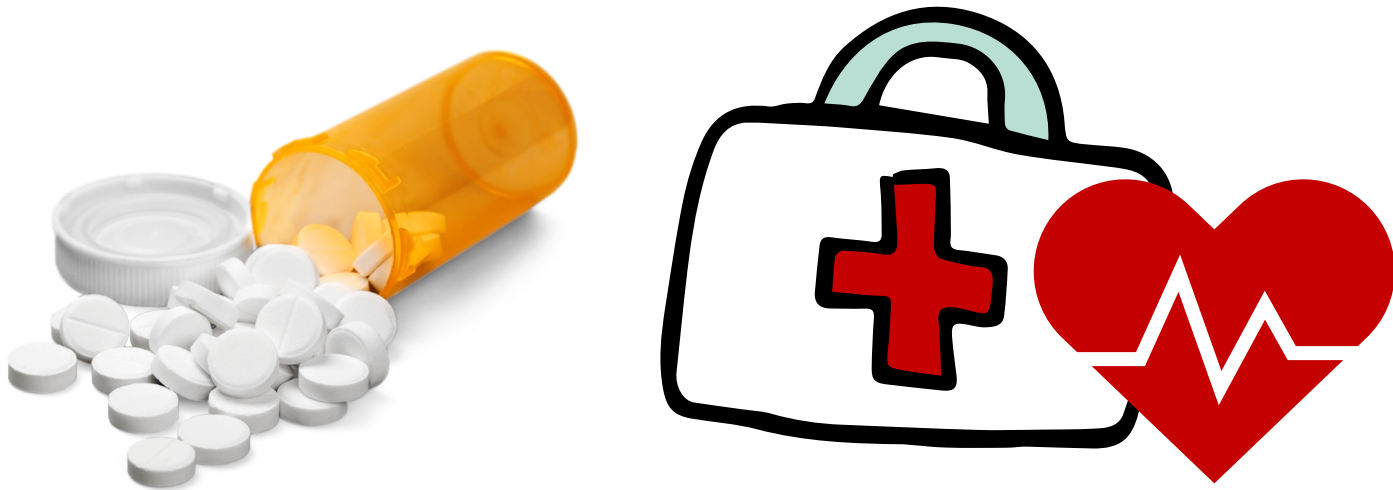
We **compared** this to what happens to **adults without developmental disabilities**.



What did we learn?

Just like people without disabilities, some people with intellectual and developmental disabilities get opioid medications to help them with their pain.

For a very small number of people, they may **take too many opioids** and will need to go to a **hospital emergency room**.



Some people with developmental disabilities are more likely to have problems with **opioid medications**, like:

- young adults
- men
- people with lots of health problems

What does this mean?

Sometimes doctors give people with intellectual and developmental disabilities opioids for **pain**.



These medications can help, but they can also have serious **side effects**.



We need to train doctors so they can tell people with developmental disabilities how to use opioids safely.



We have to make sure that only people who really need opioids take them and that they don't get too used to taking them. This will help them stay safe.

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