

DENTISTS & THE OPIOID CRISIS

SIZE OF THE PROBLEM



- In 2018, over 67,000 deaths were attributed to drug overdose in the United States.
 - Of those, over 46,000 involved opioid usage.
 - **Nearly 40% of these opioid-related deaths were related to prescription opioids alone.**¹

OPIOIDS + DENTISTS

- Dental professionals commonly prescribe opioids for pain management, including:
 - Invasive surgical procedures
 - Acute oral infections
- Adolescents exposed to opioids have a **33% higher risk** of later life opioid abuse, compared to those without such exposure.²

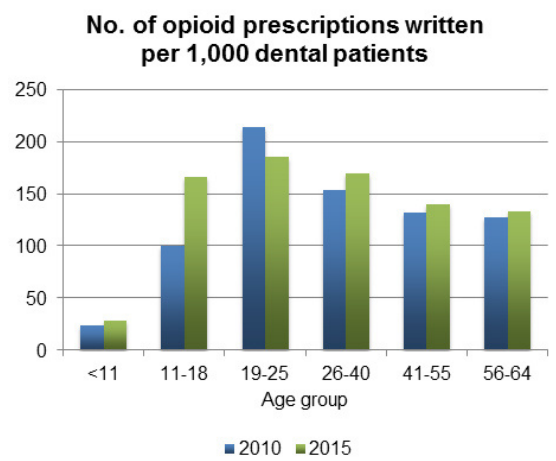


Figure 1. Number of prescriptions per 1,000 dental patients (CITE6). Note: Does not include ER dental-related visits

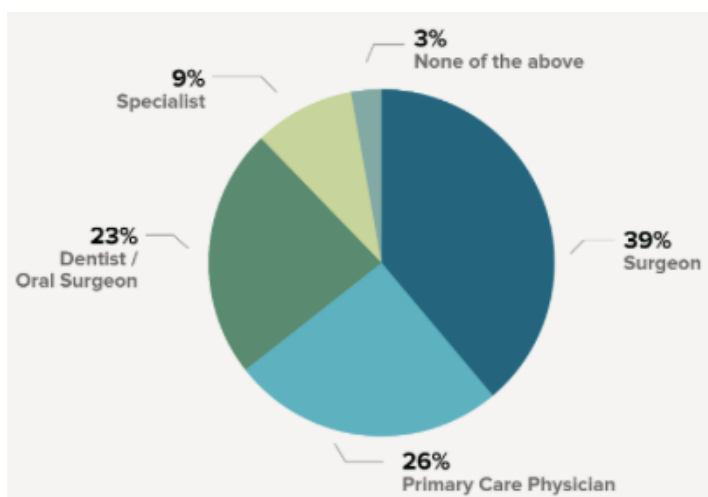


Figure 2. Opioid prescription frequency by medical professional type

AT A GLANCE

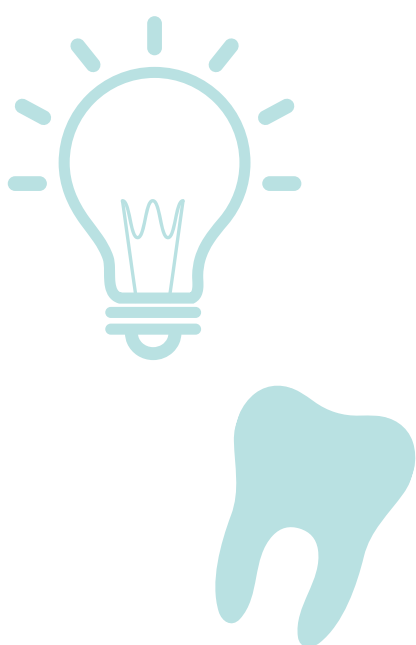
- In the United States, **22.3%** of prescriptions for opioids are **ordered by dentists.**³
- Uniquely an American phenomenon, opioid prescription rates for Dentists in England are **less than 1%.**⁴

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

- Studies have documented the effectiveness of:
 - Adhering to **strict prescribing guidelines**
 - Early and adequate **opioid usage counseling**
 - **Follow-Up** intervention
 - See: The National Institute of Drug Abuse guidelines and procedures for counseling patients prescribed at <https://www.dentalcare.com/en-us/professional-education/ce-courses/ce560/pre-procedural-counseling-for-opioid-use-abuse-and-disposal>



BEST PRACTICES



- Reduce the number and frequency of opioid prescriptions, when possible by **recommending potential alternative over the counter pain treatments.**
 - Ex: A combination of ibuprofen & acetaminophen.⁵
- Adhere to **strict prescribing guidelines** with procedures that mandate opioid prescriptions.⁴
- Create **pain-management counseling and follow-ups** for those requiring an opioid prescription.
- **Educate** patients on community resources, programs, and products that support Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).
- Utilize **prescription drug monitoring programs** to access data, carefully review, and enter ordered prescriptions into the database.⁶

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