

Opioid dispensing after spinal cord injury in Queensland

Pain after a spinal cord injury (SCI) is common, and some studies show a high use of opioids for people with SCI in America and Canada. Less is known about opioid use after SCI in Australia. We aimed to understand how opioids are used in the 2-years after a SCI for people in Queensland.

Cohort

298 people with SCI



Cause of SCI

60% Traumatic SCI
40% Non-traumatic SCI

Level of SCI

60% Paraplegia
40% Tetraplegia



Gender

66% Male
34% Female

Age

37% 18-44yrs
47% 45-74yrs
15% 75+yrs



Living area

58% Urban
25% Regional
17% Remote

Key messages



Just over half of the people were dispensed opioids after their SCI



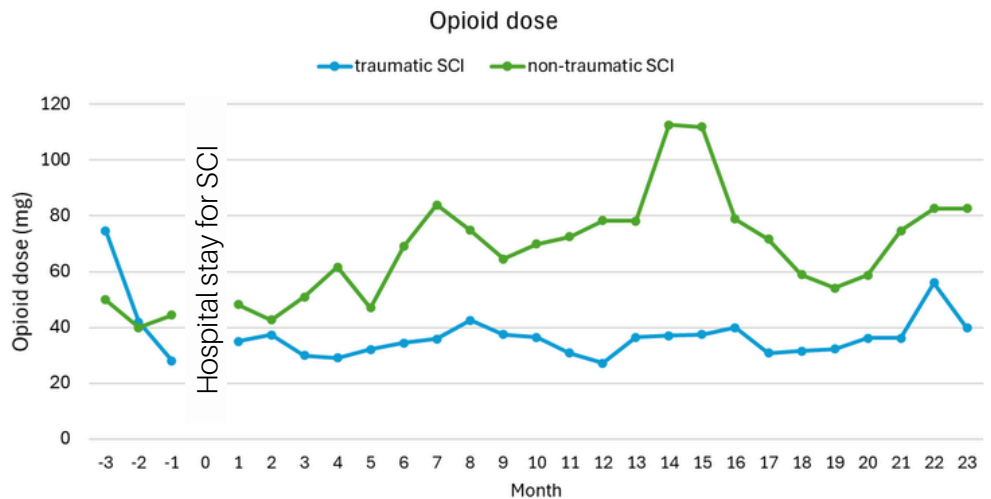
Nearly 1 in 3 were dispensed opioids for long periods (3+ mths)



Those who used opioids before their SCI were 4 times more likely to use opioids after their SCI

Opioid dose

- The doses of opioids were higher for those with a non-traumatic SCI (see graph on right)
- Around 1 in 7 people had high doses of opioids



What does it mean?

- It was good that opioids were not a problem for many people with SCI
- For those who did use opioids after their SCI, they often used opioids for long durations and at high doses
- Better, more holistic ways of managing pain that don't rely on opioids are needed for people with SCI

More information

This Infographic summarises a published study. You can scan the QR code to read the full study, or contact me if you have questions about this research.



Scan and read the article



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