

4 reasons

to change opioid prescribing practices

6-10%
of surgical patients become
new persistent opioid users
(a significant surgical complication)

NO



correlation

between probability of refill
and amount of opioid prescribed

Greater than
70%
of prescribed
opioids go unused



NO



correlation

between patient satisfaction
and amount of opioids prescribed

Q: How likely is persistent opioid use after surgery?

- Approximately 6–10% of opioid naïve (before surgery) patients continue to use opioids more than three months after surgery.^{7,8,9}
- Many patients continue to use their opioids for reasons other than surgical pain.^{7,9}
- New persistent opioid use after surgery is an underappreciated surgical complication that warrants increased attention.^{7,8,9}

Q: Will patients request more prescription refills if initially prescribed fewer opioids?

- The probability of a patient refilling a postoperative opioid prescription was not correlated with their initial prescription amount.¹⁰
- Prescribers could prescribe smaller opioid prescriptions without influencing the probability of a refill request.¹⁰
- Implementation of evidence-based prescribing guidelines reduced postlaparoscopic cholecystectomy opioid prescribing by 63% without increasing the need for medication refills.³

Q: Why are prescribers being asked to change their opioid prescribing practices?

- Postoperative opioid prescribing varies significantly.¹
- Greater than 70% of prescribed pills went unused by patients.^{1,2}
- Patients who were prescribed fewer opioids reported using fewer opioids with no change in pain scores.³
- Evidence-based opioid prescribing guidelines for the perioperative period are needed to enable tailored prescribing and reduce the excess of opioid pills within patients' communities.⁴
- Prescription size was the strongest predictor of patient consumption.⁵

Q: Will patient satisfaction scores be impacted by prescribing fewer opioids?

- No correlation was found between HCAHPS pain measures and postoperative opioid prescribing.⁶
- Prescribers can feel empowered to reduce their initial opioid prescription without impacting patient satisfaction.⁶