Impact of Family History of Substance Abuse on Admission Opioid Dose, Depressive Symptoms, and Pain Catastrophizing in Patients with Chronic Pain

Elizabeth L. Pestka, MS, PMHCNS-BC, AGN-BC,* Julia Craner, PhD, LP,† Michele Evans, MS, PMHCNS-BC,* Virginia Nash, DNP, PMHCNS-BC,* Njoki Kimondo, MA, BSN, RN,* Deborah Pestka, PharmD,‡ Larissa Loukianova, MD, PhD,* and Jeannie Sperry, PhD, LP*

ABSTRACT:
The objectives of this study were to examine association between a family history of substance abuse and admission morphine equivalent dose, depression and pain catastrophizing screening scores, as well as reported personal history of substance use. The retrospective research was completed in an interdisciplinary three-week pain rehabilitation center. The subject cohort included admissions from January through December 2014 with 351 datasets for family history of substance abuse and oral morphine equivalency and 341 for depression, pain catastrophizing and use of substances. Outcome measures included admission self-reported data on family history of substance abuse and past and current substance use, admission morphine equivalency dose, and scores on the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale and the Pain Catastrophizing Scale. One hundred forty-seven patients were using opioid medications on admission and those with a positive family history had an oral morphine equivalency (M = 92.12, SD = 95.32) compared to a negative history (M = 80.34, SD = 64.86); the difference was not statistically significant, t(120.01) = .87, p = .39. Patients with a positive family history reported higher levels of both depression, t (327.40) = 3.15, p = .002 and pain catastrophizing, t (338) = 2.76, p = .01. Those with a positive family history endorsed greater frequency of past alcohol use $\chi^2(1, N = 326) = 6.67, p = 0.1$ and marijuana use $\chi^2(1, N = 341) = 4.23, p = .04$ and past $\chi^2(1, N = 329) = 9.90, p = .002$ and current tobacco use.
A number of factors have been identified that determine patients who may be a risk for opioid-use disorders when opioids are prescribed, including a family history of substance abuse, which is the focus of this article. Heritability estimates of nicotine, alcohol, and drug dependence are in the range of 50% to 60% (Merikangas et al., 1998; Pickens et al., 2001). The Opioid Risk Tool, developed by Webster and Webster (2005), is widely used as a screening tool for potential opioid abuse in patients beginning opioid therapy for pain management. This tool identifies the following risk factors: current age between 16 and 45, family history of substance abuse; personal history of substance abuse; history of preadolescent sexual abuse; and psychological disease, including attention deficit disorder (ADD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and depression. A recent study by Meier et al. (2016), with a sample of 1,037 individuals from New Zealand followed prospectively from birth to 38 years (95% retention rate), concluded that the most significant factors for persistent substance dependence in adulthood were adolescent frequent tobacco and cannabis use, childhood conduct disorder, early exposure to substances, and family history of substance dependence. Additional articles published on opioid misuse have included family history of substance abuse as a predictor for problems with these medications (Kahan, Srivastava, Wilson, Gourlay, & Midmer, 2006; Michna et al., 2004; Skala et. al., 2013; Turk, Swanson, & Gatchel, 2008). Furthermore, recently developed national guidelines recommend assessing family history as part of pre-treatment to prescribing opioids (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Despite numerous recommendations, an informative family history assessment is frequently not utilized when prescribing opioid pain medication. A survey conducted by the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation (2016) found that of individuals (N = 1,028) who were prescribed pain medications in the previous year, 46% reported that prescribers did not ask about their past personal or family history of substance use problems.

This article presents a study completed in a Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Center Program where systematic assessment for a family history of substance abuse is part of routine clinical care. In this study, substance abuse is defined as reported problems with alcohol, drugs, or prescription medications that caused health, relationship, job, or legal issues (Pestka et al., 2016). The objectives of the study were to examine association between a family history of substance abuse and morphine equivalency dose on admission to the program, depression (i.e., persistent feeling of sadness, and loss of interest in activities) (Radloff, 1977), and pain catastrophizing (i.e., a set of exaggerated and ruminating negative cognitions and emotions during actual or perceived painful stimulation) (Sullivan, Bishop, & Pivik, 1995) screening scores, and reported personal history of substance use problems. No research was found in the literature that has examined these associations in persons with CNCP conditions.
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