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Opioid Prescribing After Dental Procedures: Trends from 2018 to 2023

Alexandria, VA, USA – A study evaluating opioid prescribing patterns among dentists using MarketScan commercial and Medicaid claims data from 2018 to 2023. was presented at the 104th General Session of the IADR, which was held in conjunction with the 55th Annual Meeting of the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research and the 50th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Dental Research on March 25-28, 2026 in San Diego, CA, USA.

Although the number of prescribed opioid tablets has declined in recent years, routine opioid prescribing after dental procedures remains common. This study evaluated opioid prescribing patterns among dentists using MarketScan commercial and Medicaid claims data from 2018 to 2023.

Deidentified MarketScan data was provided by Merative. Queries across three databases (Medicaid, Commercial-Medical, and Commercial-Dental) identified patients who (1) underwent impacted third molar extraction, (2) filled an opioid prescription within seven days of extraction, and (3) received an additional opioid prescription within one year. Limited demographic data were available. Descriptive and comparative statistics were used to evaluate differences by insurance type and temporal trends.

Investigators concluded that despite a decline in postoperative opioid prescribing, routine use remains prevalent, with many patients still exposed to opioids and a substantial proportion filling an additional prescription within a year, potentially increasing the risk of prolonged use or addiction. Enhanced patient communication, adherence to evidence-based prescribing guidelines, and promotion of non-opioid pain management strategies are needed to reduce unnecessary opioid exposure.

The abstract, “Opioid Prescribing After Dental Procedures: Trends from 2018 to 2023” was presented by Cecile A. Feldman-Zohn of Rutgers School of Dental Medicine, Newark, NJ, USA during the “Dental anxiety, fear and pain” Poster Session that took place on Friday, March 27, 2026 at 3:45 p.m. PDT (UTC-7).

About IADR/AADOCR

The International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to drive dental, oral, and craniofacial research for health and well-being worldwide. IADR represents the individual scientists, clinician-

scientists, dental professionals, and students based in academic, government, non-profit, and private-sector institutions who share our mission. The American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) is the largest division of IADR. Learn more at www.iadr.org.