

# Unmet needs for help significantly related to problematic use of opioid pain relief medication

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Problematic use of opioid pain relief medication (OPRM) was 2.61 times more likely among people who used OPRMs and reported having unmet needs for help with mental health or use of substances than among those who used OPRMs but reported they did not have these needs. The study "[Significant factors associated with problematic use of opioid pain relief medications among the household population, Canada, 2018](#)", released today in *Health Reports*, broadened the scope of previous research. It used modelling to examine associations between characteristics such as socioeconomic status, health behaviour and psychosocial factors to clarify which are significantly related to problematic OPRM use.

Among the household population aged 15 years or older who used OPRMs within the 12 months prior to the 2018 Canadian Community Health Survey, problematic use was 1.9 times more likely among people reporting fair or poor mental health compared with those having better perceived mental health, after accounting for socioeconomic and other health factors. Problematic use was also 2.25 times more likely among those who were unattached and living with others, compared with those living with a spouse.

This study provides new modelled evidence to show that self-reported experiential factors do warrant consideration, as these are associated with problematic use independent of socioeconomic circumstances and other health factors. A more comprehensive understanding of the circumstances around the ongoing public health emergency from opioid-related harm is needed to inform a strategic response. These results partly address information gaps around problematic use of opioid pain relievers.

## Note to readers

### Related articles:

[Pain relief medication containing opioids, 2018](#)

[Understanding the socioeconomic profile of people who experienced opioid overdoses in British Columbia, 2014 to 2016](#)

[Statistics Canada British Columbia Opioid Overdose Analytical File: Technical Report](#)

[Understanding opioid overdoses in Simcoe Muskoka, Ontario](#)

[Social and economic characteristics of those experiencing hospitalizations due to opioid poisonings](#)



The article "[Significant factors associated with problematic use of opioid pain relief medications among the household population, Canada, 2018](#)" is now available in the December 2021 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 32, no. 12 ([82-003-X](#)).

This issue of *Health Reports* also contains the article, "[Measuring workplace psychosocial factors in the federal government.](#)"

The January 2022 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 33 no. 1 was also released today. It contains the articles "[Why are babies in Canada getting smaller?](#)" and "[Health associations with meeting the Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines for adults: Results from the Canadian Health Measures Survey .](#)"

To enquire about the article "Significant factors associated with problematic use of opioid pain relief medications among the household population, Canada, 2018," contact Gisèle Carrière ([gisele.carriere@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:gisele.carriere@statcan.gc.ca)), Health Analysis Division.

To enquire about the article "Measuring workplace psychosocial factors in the federal government," contact Ann-Renée Blais ([ann-renee.blais@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:ann-renee.blais@statcan.gc.ca)), HR Business Intelligence, Wellness and Transformation Division.

To enquire about the article "Health associations with meeting the Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines for adults: Results from the Canadian Health Measures Survey," contact Rachel Colley ([rachel.colley@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:rachel.colley@statcan.gc.ca)), Health Analysis Division.

To enquire about the article "Why are babies in Canada getting smaller?" contact Sharaz El Adam ([shirazeladam.publichealth@gmail.com](mailto:shirazeladam.publichealth@gmail.com)), School of Population and Public Health, the University of British Columbia.

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