



# Substance Use Prevalence and Associated Factors in Patients in the Chronic Pain Outpatient Clinic



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## Introduction

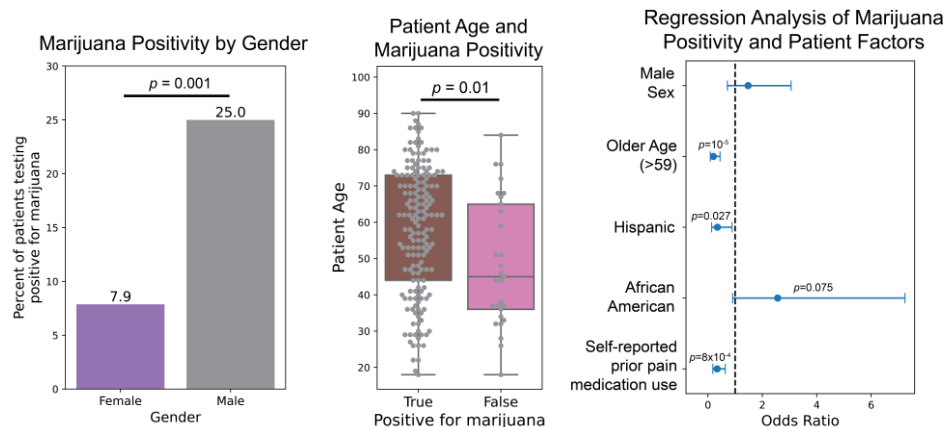
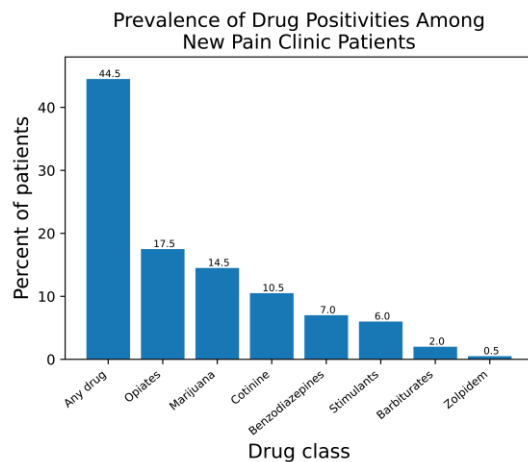
Substance use disorder (SUD) is a worsening epidemic in the United States with increasing mortality from illicit and prescribed substances. In 2020, about 69,000 Americans died from opioid overdose and greater than 1.2 million Americans were afflicted with Opioid Use Disorder<sup>1</sup>, motivating an investigation of substance use in chronic pain outpatients.

## Materials and Methods

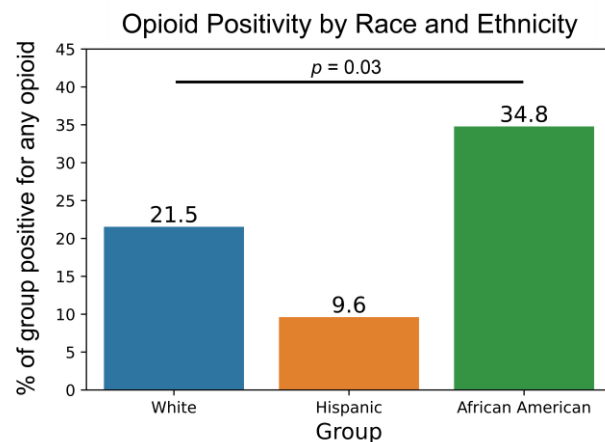
In this study, we retrospectively reviewed new patient drug screens at our academic center's outpatient office from February 2022 to July 2024. De-identified results of routine urine and saliva tests and demographic data were recorded.

## Results

**44.5% of patients tested positive for at least one drug, with opioids and marijuana most frequent (17.5% and 14.5%, respectively).**

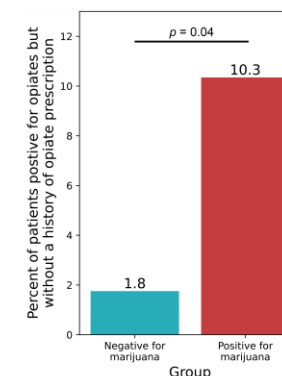


**Marijuana positivity is significantly higher among male clinic patients and is negatively associated with age >59 years (OR=0.53)**



**Race and ethnicity were significantly associated with opioid use, with 34.8% of Black patients, 21.5% of White patients, and 9.6% of Hispanic patients testing positive**

## Marijuana Positivity and Positivity for Non-Prescribed Opioids



**Positivity for marijuana is significantly associated with testing positive for opioids without a history of opioid prescription**

## Discussion

- Nearly half of our clinic patients tested positive for at least one drug class, most frequently opioids and marijuana
- Illicit opioid use was more common in marijuana-positive patients, potentially relating to opioid-marijuana cross-sensitization and behavioral disinhibition.<sup>2</sup>
- There were higher rates of opiate positivity in African Americans when compared to Caucasians and Hispanics, which could partially explain how Black Americans account for the highest opioid overdose deaths in New York
- Chronic pain clinics can detect SUD risk factors, making it imperative to incorporate culturally competent educational strategies to effectively prevent these outcomes and support vulnerable groups.

## References

- Ahmad, F. B., Rossen, L. M., & Sutton, P. (2021). Provisional drug overdose death counts. National center for health statistics, 12.
- Olsson, M., Wall, M. M., Liu, S. M., & Blanco, C. (2018). Cannabis use and risk of prescription opioid use disorder in the United States. American Journal of Psychiatry, 175(1), 47-53.