

Physician Education and Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Surrounding Opioid Education

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Background/Objective: Many currently practicing physicians have not received adequate training on opioids, opioid use disorder, and medications for opioid use disorder (MOUDs). The primary goal of this study was to determine physician knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding these topics.

Methods: This was done by interviewing four physicians with a set of predetermined questions and allowing them to elaborate where they saw fit. A thematic analysis was then conducted on their transcripts.

Results and Conclusions: The thematic analysis revealed three themes. First, that significant patient and medication complexity leads to physician hesitation to prescribe. Second, that there are inconsistencies in resources offered to patients and providers. Third, for many current providers, continuing medical education (CME) is their only source of opioid and MOUD education. The primary barrier identified in this analysis is finding a balance between providing consistent resources and actions for physicians while tailoring specialty-specific training that best serves patients' needs.

Limitations and Future Directions: The major limitation of this study is the sample size and concentration of physicians to one geographic area. Additionally, the physicians practice at different hospitals, leading to both beneficial and detrimental response variability. The interviews conducted for this study will be used to build a larger study considering what changes can be made to increase the efficacy of opioid CME. The objective is to increase physician participation, engagement, and interest in the topic.