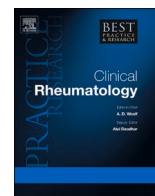


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Problems with “Problems with opioids beyond misuse”

In their article, “Problems with opioids beyond misuse,” Kheirabadi et al. provide a “scoping review [that] aims to identify lesser-known side effects of long-term opioid use,” asserting that “research shows no significant differences in short-term outcomes between opioid and non-opioid users, as well as no long-term opioid benefits (1).” We express concerns with their work, including misrepresentations of evidence and clinical guidance supporting opioid therapy and a failure of a co-author to report relevant conflict of interests (COIs).

The authors claim that “current guidelines discourage management of chronic pain with long term opioids ([1]).” As evidence, they cite the 2016 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain, thereby misrepresenting the current guidance offered by the CDC’s 2022 Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain ([2]). They also assert that opioids create “risk for serious and permanent harms without sufficient evidence for benefits,” acknowledging they emphasized “incorporating predominantly review articles to increase credibility and reliability (1).” In creating a secondary evidence compilation, they have overlooked emerging primary evidence for the effectiveness of long-term opioid therapy (LTOT). A recent cohort study showed, for example, that LTOT offered lasting treatment-related reductions in pain, preservation of performance status, and reduction in overall overdose risk over a course of four years ([3]).

Our greatest concern, however, is the failure of co-author, Daniel Clauw, to disclose COIs relevant to the content of the article (1). In his recorded lectures and prior publications, Clauw has disclosed consulting work and research grants from pharmaceutical companies and paid expert witness testimony against opioid manufacturers in lawsuits in Florida and Oklahoma ([4,5]). We call on Clauw to provide corrected disclosures, and we encourage the authors to revise their depiction of opioid therapy as lacking evidence for benefits.

Declaration of interests

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: Chad Kollas reports a relationship with American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine that includes: travel reimbursement. Chad Kollas reports a relationship with American Medical Association that includes: travel reimbursement. Chad Kollas reports a relationship with The Doctor Patient Forum that includes: board membership. Beverly Schechtman reports a relationship with The Doctor Patient Forum that includes: non-financial support. Carrie Judy reports a relationship with The Doctor Patient Forum that includes: non-financial support. Corresponding author serves as the AAHPM Delegate to the AMA House of Delegates. The corresponding authors also previously served as the AAHPM Secretary and AAHPM’s Board of Directors. The corresponding author currently serves as a member of the AMA Substance Use & Pain Care Task Force and serves as the Chair of the AMA Pain & Palliative Medicine Specialty Section Council. If there are other authors, they declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Chad D. Kollas: Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Beverly Schectman:** Investigation, Writing – review & editing. **Carrie Judy:** Investigation, Writing – review & editing.

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