

## When is Opioid Analgesia Appropriate for Cancer Patients at Risk for OUD?

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**Categories:** Anesthesiology, Pain Management, Substance Use and Addiction

**Keywords:** opioid use disorders, opioid analgesia, cancer patients

### How to cite this abstract

Pergolizzi Jr J, Choudhury S, Magnusson P, et al. (August 05, 2021) When is Opioid Analgesia Appropriate for Cancer Patients at Risk for OUD?. Cureus 13(8): a596

## Abstract

### Objective

Cancer pain is prevalent and with cancer patients living longer with “managed disease,” pain control is increasingly important. While cancer patients are not at higher risk than others for OUD, they are frequently prescribed opioids. The aim of our study was to explore how to manage patients with cancer pain with active OUD or at high risk for OUD.

### Methods

This narrative review was based on a literature search using keywords “cancer pain opioid risk,” “cancer pain opioid use disorder,” “cancer pain OUD” and “cancer pain risk of addiction opioids.”

### Results

Cancer pain should be managed, even in those with OUD or at risk for OUD. This demands an individualized approach, exploration of alternative means of pain control (such as nonopioids, combination therapy, other interventions), and may require referrals to other specialists. Risk stratification tools, urine tests, pill counts, and other techniques may be helpful for some patients. All cancer patients considering opioid therapy should be advised of the risks and benefits.

### Conclusion

Cancer pain should be managed, even in those with OUD or at risk for OUD. This demands an individualized approach, exploration of alternative means of pain control (such as nonopioids, combination therapy, other interventions), and may require referrals to other specialists. Risk stratification tools, urine tests, pill counts, and other techniques may be helpful for some patients. All cancer patients considering opioid therapy should be advised of the risks and benefits.

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Published 08/05/2021

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