Abstracts

Epidemiology of substance abuse and overdose

A MIXED METHODS COMPARISON OF A NATIONAL VS. STATE OPIOID OVERDOSE SURVEILLANCE DEFINITION
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Statement of Purpose In 2018, federal opioid epidemic funding doubled to $7.4 billion. National case definitions have been created to expand state-level surveillance efforts; we analyzed a CDC surveillance definition (Opioid V.1) to determine whether or not a state definition (NC DETECT) should be expanded to include additional ICD-10-CM codes and/or chief complaint keywords.

Methods/Approach Two clinically-trained independent reviewers retrospectively reviewed North Carolina (NC) ED visits to identify false positives generated by components of the Opioid V.1 definition not currently included in the NC DETECT definition. False positives were defined as any visit where available evidence, including triage notes and disposition diagnosis codes, supported an alternative explanation for patient presentation that reviewers deemed more likely than an opioid overdose. Following individual assessment, reviewers met to reconcile disagreements.

Results From 1/01/2018–7/31/2018, 2,296 ED visits were identified by Opioid V.1 but not NC DETECT criteria. Reviewers initially disagreed on 312 observations (13.6%); reconciliation led to 100% agreement. False positive rates ranged from 2.6%–41.4% for codes/keywords uniquely identifying at least 10 visits. Based on uniquely identifying 10+ visits and a false positive rate ≤10.0%, 4 of 16 (25.0%) ICD-10-CM codes evaluated were identified for NC DETECT definition inclusion. Only 2 of 25 (8%) keywords evaluated, ‘OD’ and ‘overdose’, met inclusion criteria.

Conclusions A detailed comparison of the CDC Opioid V.1 and NC DETECT opioid overdose case definitions showed significant variability in accuracy of keywords/diagnosis codes used in the federal surveillance definition.

Motor vehicle injuries and policy

THE ENFORCEMENT OF TEXTING WHILE DRIVING LAWS: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF POLICE
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Statement of Purpose While virtually all states have passed testing while driving (TWD) legislation, there is evidence that these laws may be difficult for police to enforce. Thus, a national survey of police was conducted to determine if barriers to cellphone law enforcement exist.

Methods/Approach A web-based survey was developed using Qualtrics software. The survey was assessed for content validity, pilot-tested, and verified for test-retest reliability prior to its release. Police departments from all 50 states were randomly selected and sent an electronic link to the survey via their department’s email or social media pages beginning in mid-November 2019. Frequencies and percentages of responses were assessed.

Results Despite its recent release, several officers (N=27) from numerous states (N=9) have responded. Among respondents, 85% (N=23) claimed that TWD is a serious threat to road user safety. Several officers (44%) report that they issue citations for TWD less than they issue speeding tickets. Nearly 48% reported that TWD citations are difficult to adjudicate (N=13). The largest barriers to enforcement are: narrowly focused laws (56%), laws which permit drivers to engage in some behaviors but not others (85%; e.g. driver is not permitted to text, but allowed to dial a phone number). Many officers (70%) felt drivers do not understand current distracted driving laws. The officers felt that making laws applicable to all licensed drivers (96%), a primary offense (93%), eliminating legal loop holes which permit some behaviors but not others (83%), and making one general law that eliminates any type of hand-held cell phone use could improve TWD enforcement (89%).

Conclusions Numerous barriers to TWD enforcement exist among police. Current legislation could be improved to facilitate enforcement.

Mental health consequences of violence

VARIABLE TRAJECTORIES OF POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS SYMPTOMS AMONG VIOLENTLY INJURED YOUTH
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Statement of Purpose It is common for posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) to decline after a traumatic event; symptom distribution to areas most in need. Findings from this analysis show the importance of this type of investigation and may prove helpful for further state or national evaluations.