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# Pharmacy Student Education Related to Opioids: A Scoping Review Protocol

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## Introduction

Opioid misuse is a major public health concern, with increasing rates of addiction, overdose, and death. As frontline healthcare providers, pharmacists play a critical role in ensuring the safe use of opioids by patients. However, pharmacists may not feel adequately prepared to manage the risks associated with opioids. While pharmacists receive training on the pharmacology and therapeutics of opioid analgesics, they may lack the broader knowledge and skills needed to effectively prevent opioid misuse. To address this issue, the ACPE 2020 Special Committee on Substance Use and Pharmacy Education made curricular recommendations to better prepare students for managing opioids in practice.<sup>1</sup> While some training programs have been reported, there is a need to better understand the current landscape and identify best practices for training future pharmacists.

A preliminary search of PubMed, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and *JBI Evidence Synthesis* was conducted. One systematic review has been conducted on this topic, however it was conducted in 2016.<sup>2</sup> Since that time the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy released a report recommending curricular coverage of opioid-related topics. Additionally, the prior review was a systematic review to determine the effectiveness of educational interventions and may not have included literature that described but did not evaluate interventions. For these reasons, there is a need to further map the literature on this topic. No underway systematic reviews or scoping reviews on the topic were identified.

This review aims to explore and assess the extent of the literature on the current state of opioid-related training and education in pharmacy education and identify areas for further research to improve the preparedness of future pharmacists in managing opioids. This review will examine and map the literature as it relates to the four educational content areas recommended by the ACPE committee.<sup>1</sup>

## Review question

This review seeks to map what is known about educational and training initiatives for student pharmacists. Understanding the types of initiatives, how they are being evaluated, and what is known about their effectiveness will be examined.

## Keywords

Opioids; Pharmacy Education; Scoping Review; Training

## Eligibility criteria

### Participants

Studies that focus on training or education of student pharmacists will be included. Studies that focus on learners that are not student pharmacists will be excluded.

### Concept

Studies that focus on education or training related to opioids will be included. Studies that strictly address education related to the pharmacology or pharmacokinetics of opioid analgesics will not be included.

### Context

Studies conducted in any setting, including educational institutions, conferences, seminars, and online educational programs, will be included. Geographic distribution of studies will be mapped.

### Types of Sources

This scoping review will consider both experimental and quasi-experimental study designs including randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled trials, before and after studies and interrupted time-series studies. In addition, analytical observational studies including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies and analytical cross-sectional studies will be considered for inclusion. This review will also consider descriptive observational study designs including case series, individual case reports and descriptive cross-sectional studies for inclusion. Qualitative studies will also be considered that focus on qualitative data including, but not limited to, designs such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, qualitative description, action research and feminist research. Text and opinion papers will also be considered for inclusion in this scoping review.

## Methods

This scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews.<sup>3</sup>

### Search strategy

The search strategy will aim to locate both published and unpublished studies. An initial limited search of MEDLINE was undertaken to identify articles on the topic. The text words contained in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles, and the index terms used to describe the articles will be used to develop a full search strategy for PubMed, CINAHL, SCOPUS,

and Google Scholar. The search strategy, including all identified keywords and index terms, will be adapted for each included database and/or information source. The reference list of all included sources of evidence will be screened for additional studies.

Studies published in English will be included. Any studies not published in English will be excluded.

### Study/Source of Evidence selection

Following the search, all identified citations will be collated and uploaded into Zotero and duplicates removed. Following a pilot test, titles and abstracts will then be screened by two or more independent reviewers for assessment against the inclusion criteria for the review. Potentially relevant sources will be retrieved in full. The full text of selected citations will be assessed in detail against the inclusion criteria by two or more independent reviewers. Reasons for exclusion of sources of evidence at full text that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer/s. The results of the search and the study inclusion process will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for scoping review (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram.<sup>4</sup>

### Data Extraction

Data will be extracted from papers included in the scoping review by two or more independent reviewers using a data extraction tool developed by the reviewers. The data extracted will include specific details about the learners, the educational or training initiative or intervention, and the setting of the program, the study methods, and the outcomes of the educational or training effort. The draft extraction form will be piloted by the reviewers, with at least three papers being extracted independently by each reviewer and the data compared. While conducting the first three data abstractions, the reviewers will make notes about any needed updates to the extraction form. These will be discussed with the comparison of the extracted data. The extraction form will be updated as needed and the rest of the articles will then be extracted. Any modifications will be detailed in the scoping review.

### Data Analysis and Presentation

Data will be reviewed for categorization into the curricular areas recommended by the ACPE report and a summary table of the literature will be provided in the results. Findings related to each component of the review question will be organized into a table for reporting.

### Funding

No external funding will be utilized to conduct this review.

### Conflicts of interest

Marie Barnard engages in consulting with Venebio Group, LLC. Dorothy Reid has no conflict of interest to report for this project.

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## References

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2. Muzyk AJ, Peedin E, Lipetzky J, Parker H, McEachern MP, Thomas K. Substance use education in US schools of pharmacy: A systematic review of the literature. *Subst Abuse.* 2017;38(4):455-463. doi:10.1080/08897077.2017.1341448
3. Peters MDJ, Marnie C, Tricco AC, et al. Updated methodological guidance for the conduct of scoping reviews. *JBI Evid Synth.* 2020;18(10):2119-2126. doi:10.11124/JBIES-20-00167
4. Tricco AC, Lillie E, Zarin W, et al. PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and Explanation. *Ann Intern Med.* 2018;169(7):467. doi:10.7326/M18-0850

## Appendices

### Appendix I: Search strategy

Example search strategy for PubMed:

```
((pharmac*[Title/Abstract]) AND (opioid[Title/Abstract] OR substance use disorder[Title/Abstract])) AND (student[Title/Abstract] OR curricular*[Title/Abstract])
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