



# In Motion

Highlighting Articles Advancing Pain Research in Canada and the World

## Featured article:

Bilevicius, E., Sommer, J. L., Asmundson, G. J. G., & El-Gabalawy, R. (2018). **Posttraumatic stress disorder and chronic pain are associated with opioid use disorder: Results from a 2012-2013 American nationally representative survey.** *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 188, 119-125. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2018.04.005>

## Key insights from the study:

- **PTSD and Chronic Pain Link:** The study shows a strong connection between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and chronic pain conditions on the risk of developing opioid use disorder (OUD).
- **Types of Pain Conditions:** Musculoskeletal and nerve pain conditions are more significantly linked to OUD when combined with PTSD, compared to digestive pain conditions.
- **Clinical Implications:** These findings suggest the importance of careful screening and management of opioids among individuals with co-occurring PTSD and chronic pain.

## What happened?

Researchers analyzed data from the 2012-2013 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, which included 36,309 US participants. The study focused on individuals with PTSD and chronic pain conditions to determine their likelihood of developing opioid use disorder. The types of chronic pain were categorized into musculoskeletal, digestive, and nerve pain. The researchers used multiple logistic regressions to assess the independent and combined effects of PTSD and chronic pain on OUD.

## Why is it important?

This study highlights the higher risk of opioid use disorder among individuals who suffer from both PTSD and chronic pain conditions. For example, people with both PTSD and musculoskeletal or nerve pain are more likely to misuse opioids. Understanding these risks can help healthcare providers better identify and support at-risk patients. The findings also underscore the need for care approaches that address both mental health including addiction and chronic pain.

## What now?

The study suggests that healthcare providers should carefully monitor opioid use in patients with PTSD and chronic pain. Comprehensive treatment plans that address both PTSD and pain management are essential. Future research should focus on understanding why these conditions often occur together and finding targeted treatments to reduce opioid misuse in this vulnerable population. Ensuring careful opioid prescribing and considering non-opioid pain treatments can help mitigate the risks.

