

Plain Language Summary

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Article Title: An observational study on the prevalence and pattern of opioid use in 25,479 patients with spine and radicular pain.

Low back pain is a hard to deal with and often a problem with many people. Fixing this pain can be very difficult for many people but options exist. Some options come with larger risks than others, but sometimes the larger risks just work better so it is okay to take a chance and choose them. In this case, the use of a strong medication called an “opioid” was compared with a much more common and less dangerous medication called an “NSAID.” The opioid medication is known to be a much stronger pain killer, but has many risks such as addiction, breathing difficulties and even death. NSAID’s, on the other hand, are not as strong of a drug, but also have less risk of these bad side effects. When it comes to low back pain that lasts for over a year these two drugs are choices for a doctor, but which one is better?

In the article I read, the two drugs did their job about the same. Both helped make the back pain less in many patients, but there was no clear winner. The doctor must also consider that Opioid drugs are very risky to give to patients and NSAID’s are not as risky. For this reason the less dangerous drug should be the one doctors give patients to help with their long lasting back pain. This means that the NSAID is the better choice of the two drugs.

For more information about NSAID use in back pain, go to:

<http://www.spine-health.com/treatment/pain-medication/nsaids-non-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs>

or

http://www.penmedicine.org/health_info/lowbackpain/000399.html

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