



# Cystic Fibrosis Research News

**Title:**

Satisfaction and Effectiveness of Opioid Pain Management Among Adults with Cystic Fibrosis: A Mixed Methods Study

**Lay Title:**

Opioid Pain Management Among Adults with CF: Survey Results

**Authors:**

Sarah J. Allgood<sup>1</sup>, Jessica L. Zemlak<sup>1</sup>, Elisabeth Dellon<sup>2</sup>, Siddhartha G. Kapnadak<sup>3</sup>, Jessica Goggin<sup>4</sup>, Noah Lechtzin<sup>5</sup>

**Affiliations:**

<sup>1</sup>Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing;

<sup>2</sup>University of North Carolina School of Medicine;

<sup>3</sup>University of Washington School of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine;

<sup>4</sup>UC San Diego Health;

<sup>5</sup>Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Department of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care

**What was your research question?**

We asked adults with CF who are prescribed opioid medications for pain about their experiences with pain management. We wanted to learn about how well their management plan works, their satisfaction with the pain management plan, and their experiences with pain management in their own words.

**Why is this important?**

Pain is a common symptom in those with CF that negatively impacts quality of life and health outcomes. It is also a highly individual experience with many causes, which makes it difficult to manage. Opioid medications have a role in pain management but they can produce harmful side effects and may be abused. There are currently no guidelines on how best to treat pain in those with CF. This study will help us learn more about the effectiveness of current pain management strategies that include opioids, and how people with CF and pain want their pain managed.

Cystic Fibrosis Research News

[cfresearchnews@gmail.com](mailto:cfresearchnews@gmail.com)



# Cystic Fibrosis Research News

## **What did you do?**

We asked adults with CF and who reported being prescribed opioids for pain management to complete a survey. In the survey, we asked about the types of pain they have, how pain is discussed with their healthcare team, how pain is managed – such as medications, therapies, etc. We also asked about how well pain was managed (effectiveness) and satisfaction with their pain management plan. We also asked open-ended questions that allowed survey respondents to tell us about their experiences with pain management in their own words.

## **What did you find?**

Survey respondents were mostly positive about the effectiveness of and satisfaction with their pain management plans, but had fears of becoming addicted to opioid medications. They also discussed feeling stigmatized as a drug seeker when asking their healthcare team for pain management help. Effective pain management plans often included a combination of medications – both opioid and non-opioid – and therapies; however, therapies such as physical therapy were reported as inefficient and limited in effectiveness. Many shared that they had similar pain relief with non-opioid medications, but couldn't take them due to concerns over risks for organ damage.

## **What does this mean and reasons for caution?**

There are many risks associated with the use of opioids for pain management, but for some people with CF and pain, opioids may be needed. CF providers must work with patients to develop an individualized pain management plan that is safe and effective and that addresses the physical, mental, and psychological factors that contribute to the pain experience. This study was limited by having a small sample (48 participants), most of whom were women with severe CF lung disease. It is possible that responses to pain management plans are experienced differently by those groups not represented in this study.

## **What's next?**

Future research is needed to explore if new modulator therapies have an impact on pain in those with CF. Furthermore, there is a need to develop CF-specific guidelines for pain management.

## **Original manuscript citation in PubMed**

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34257058/>

**Cystic Fibrosis Research News**

[cfresearchnews@gmail.com](mailto:cfresearchnews@gmail.com)