

GABAPENTINOIDS: THE NEXT OPIOID EPIDEMIC?

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CHRONIC PAIN AND THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

- Lower back pain the leading cause of disability/disease in the world
 - Chronic pain...
 - Affects 44% of people in the UK
 - 14% moderate to severe pain
- The popularity of opioids
 - WHO analgesic ladder
 - “Fifth vital sign”
 - Questionable marketing tactics
- Minimal effectiveness compared to placebo in chronic pain

WHO's Pain relief ladder

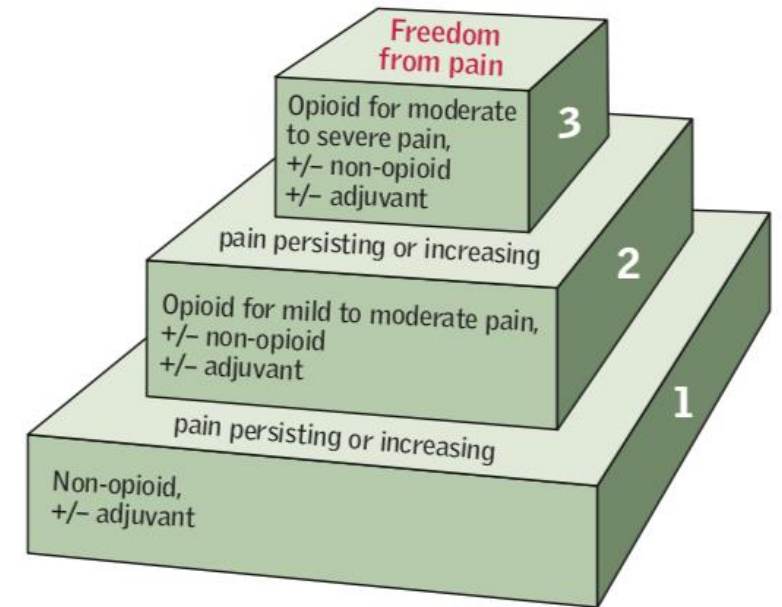


Fig 13.5 World Health Organization pain ladder.

FIGHT



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Today's EO established a commission combating drug addiction crisis. Watch "



YouTube



Donald J. Trump ✓

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@realDonaldTrump

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Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Effective today, my administration officially declared the #OpioidCrisis a NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY under federal law.

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4:11 AM - 8 Aug 2017

12,303 Retweets 63,960 Likes



15K 12K 64K

11:35 AM - 4 Aug 2017

103 Retweets 275 Likes



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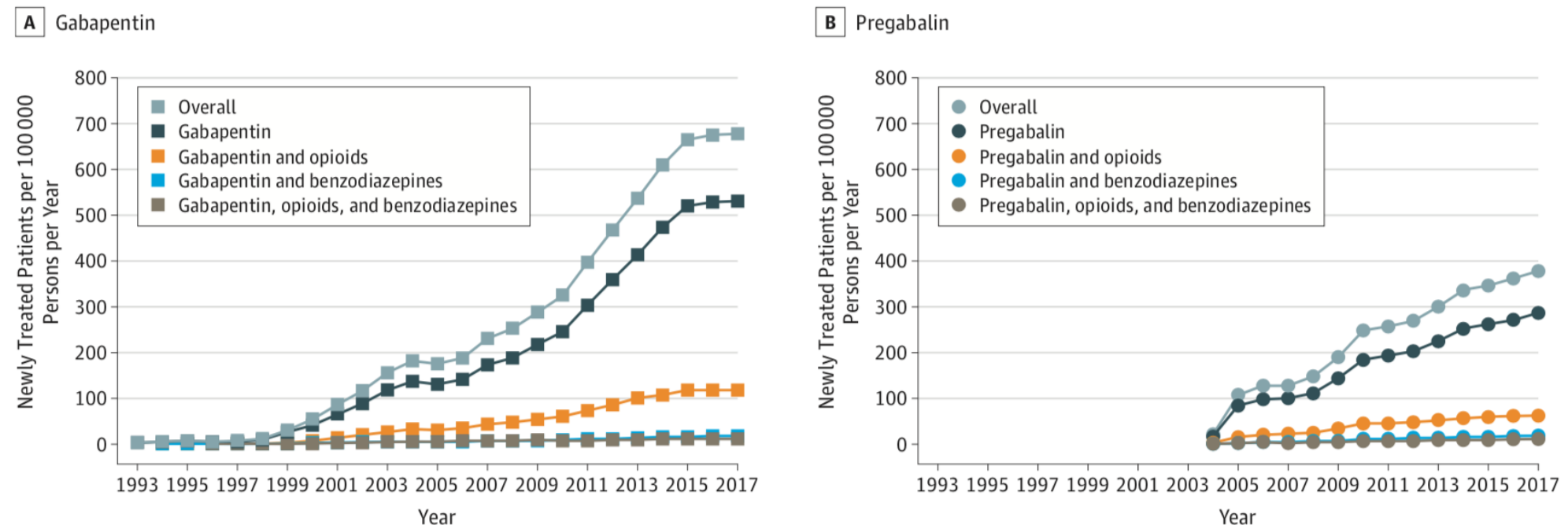


GABAPENTINOIDS – PREGABALIN & GABAPENTIN

- Inhibit voltage-dependent calcium channels
- Indications:
 - Pregabalin:
 - Neuropathic pain
 - Focal seizures
 - Gabapentin:
 - Neuropathic pain
 - Focal seizures
 - Menopausal symptoms in breast cancer
 - MS symptoms
- In non-neuropathic pain:
 - Minimal improvement compared to placebo
 - Less efficacious than other analgesics
 - No efficacy as an adjunct to opioids

INCREASED GABAPENTINOID USE

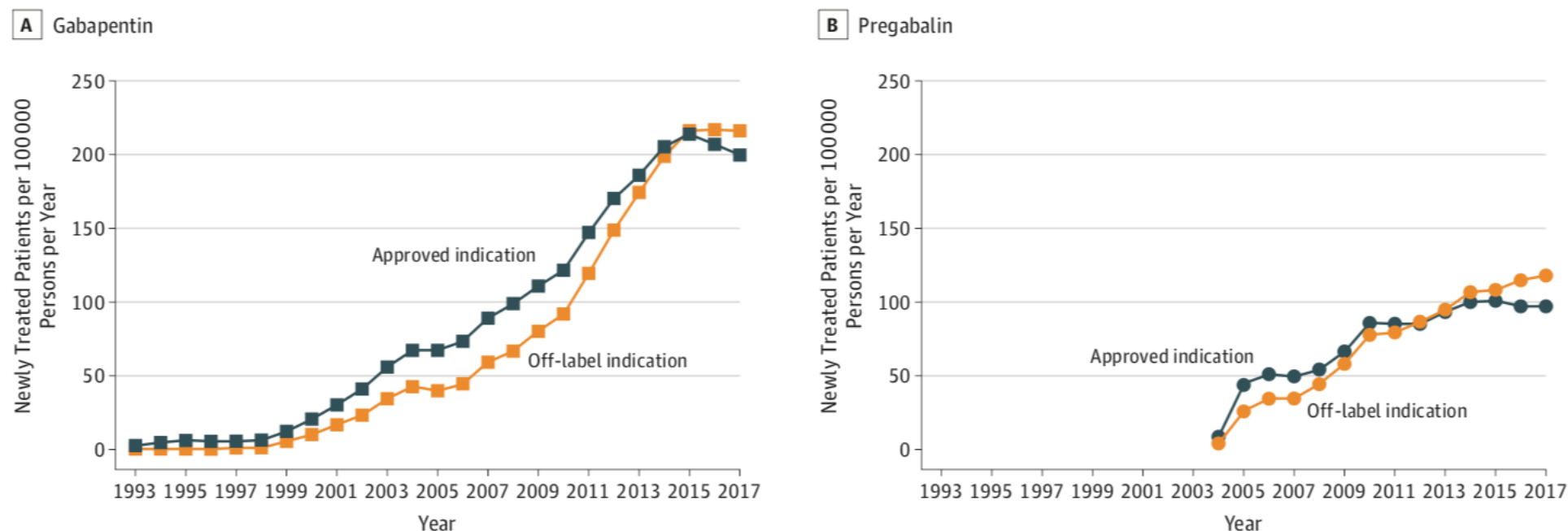
Figure 1. New Users of Gabapentin and Pregabalin in the UK Primary Care System From 1993 to 2017



Rates of new users of gabapentin (A) and pregabalin (B) in the UK primary care system documented in the UK Clinical Practice Research Datalink from 1993 to 2017. Gabapentin and pregabalin were licensed in the United Kingdom in 1993 and 2004, respectively.

OFF-LABEL USE

Figure 2. New Users With a Gabapentin and Pregabalin Indication in the UK Primary Care System From 1993 to 2017



Rates of new users with an identified gabapentin (A) and pregabalin (B) indication documented in the UK Clinical Practice Research Datalink from 1993 to 2017. Approved gabapentinoid indications in the United Kingdom include epilepsy, neuropathic pain, migraines (gabapentin), and generalized anxiety disorder (pregabalin). Off-label indications were defined as nonneuropathic pain, migraines (pregabalin), generalized anxiety disorder (gabapentin), fibromyalgia, substance withdrawal, and others (eg, psychiatric disease, tremor, restless legs syndrome). Patients for whom a prescription indication could not be identified were not included.

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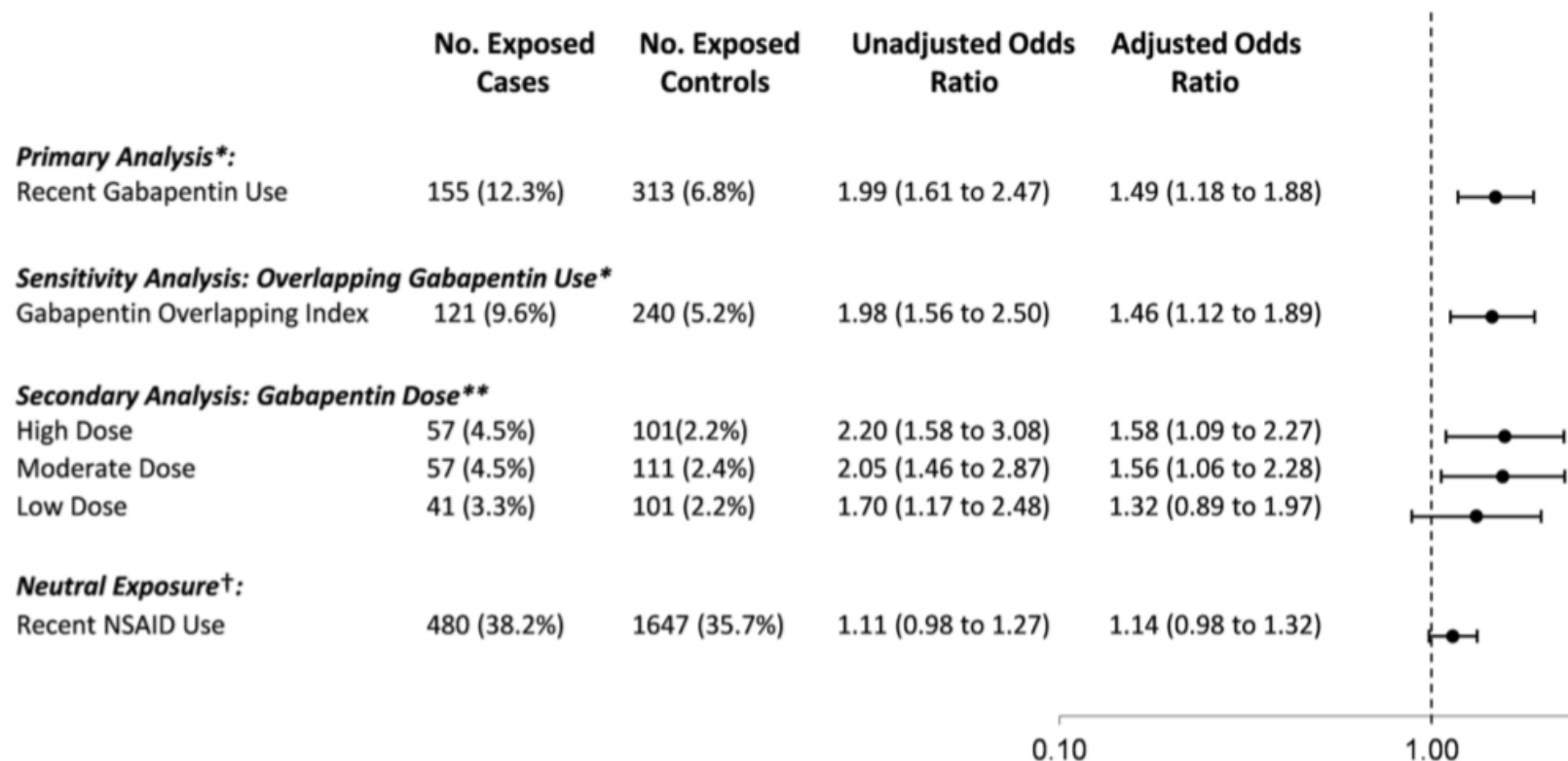
- Euphoria second most common “side effect” of pregabalin
- 9.2% of patients on opioid-substitute therapy positive for pregabalin
 - 73.6% of these not having a recent prescription [1]
- 17.7% of opioid-substitute therapy patients positive for pregabalin
 - 85.5% not having a recent prescription [2]
- Both pregabalin and gabapentin reclassified as class C drugs in 2019

[1] McNamara et al., *Ir Med J* 2015;108:309–10

[2] Sason et al., *Drug Alcohol Depend* 2018;189:8–11

ADVERSE EFFECTS

- 190 deaths in the UK attributed to gabapentinoids (2017)
 - 2,208 deaths in 2018 attributed to opiates
- Increased risk of opioid overdose
 - Additive respiratory failure
 - Increased bioavailability
- Prescribe gabapentinoids to decrease opioid harm
 - Inadvertently increasing opioid harms






BOTH OPIOIDS AND GABAPENTINOIDS...

- Increasingly prescribed due to social pressures
 - Frequently used off-licence
- Carry concerns regarding recreational abuse
- Have been embroiled in pharmaceutical malpractice

DO WE FACE ANOTHER EPIDEMIC?





Another “crisis?”... probably not

Another failure of modern medicine... yes!!

THE MEDICINE MINDSET

- Pressure to prescribe
 - Patients feel more satisfied when they leave with a prescription
 - Patients are more likely to receive a prescription when they expect one
- Complex patients
 - Comorbidities
 - Unrealistic expectations
 - Difficult to motivate
- Systemic pressures



Thank you!