

Title:	The influence of opioid analgesia on functional work ability
Issue/Rationale:	Opioid prescriptions for chronic pain appear to have been increasing in number over the past decades. However, opioids carry the risk of dependency and other side effects when used long-term. Recent evidence also suggests opioids may actually render some patients more sensitive to pain. For these reasons, a reduction in narcotic use is frequently seen as a positive outcome from rehabilitation or chronic pain programs. Notably, despite widespread use there is minimal research on the effectiveness of opioids for improving function or return-to-work outcomes in patients with chronic non-malignant pain.
Objectives:	To conduct a descriptive study on the use of opioids in injured workers to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends in rates of use and associated costs. • Characteristics of workers prescribed these medications. • The association between opioid prescriptions and sustained return to work.
Anticipated Results/Impact:	No previous work has been done examining opioid analgesia in injured workers. This study will provide pioneering epidemiological observations in this area.
Keywords:	Opioids
Investigators:	Douglas Gross, U of A
From-to-Dates:	2006 - 2007
Budget:	\$10,300
Funding Agency:	Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta