

## **Aberrant opioid use behaviour in advanced cancer**

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### **Abstract**

**Objectives:** To evaluate the presence of aberrant behaviour in a consecutive sample of patients with advanced cancer treated with opioids in a country like Italy, with its peculiar attitudes towards the use opioids. The second objective was to detect the real misuse of opioids in clinical practice.

**Methods:** Prospective observational study in two palliative care units in Italy in a period of 6 months. At admission the Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale, the Memorial Delirium Assessment Scale, Brief Pain Inventory (BPI) and the Hospital Anxiety Depression Scale were measured. For detecting the risk of aberrant opioid use, the Screener and Opioid Assessment for Patients With Pain (SOAPP), the Opioid Risk Tool (ORT), the Cut Down-Annoyed-Guilty-Eye Opener (CAGE) questionnaire adapted to include drug use (CAGE-AID) were used. Aberrant behaviours displayed at follow-up within 1 month were recorded.

**Results:** One-hundred and thirteen patients with advanced cancer were examined. About 35% of patients were SOAPP positive. There was correlation between SOAPP, CAGE-AID and ORT. SOAPP was independently associated with a lower Karnofsky level, pain intensity, poor well-being, BPI pain at the moment. No patient displayed aberrant behaviours, despite having a moderate-high risk.

**Conclusions:** Despite a high percentage of patients showed a high risk of aberrant behaviours, no patient displayed clinical aberrant behaviours after 1 month-follow-up. This does not exempt from continuous monitoring for patients who are at risk.