

Real-World Dispensing of Buprenorphine from Mar 2019 to Mar 2021 in California

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Background

- 20% increase in opioid overdoses deaths observed in California since Covid-19
- Buprenorphine is the first-line medication for individuals with moderate to severe opioid use disorder (OUD), among three FDA approved drugs buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone
- The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic might bring challenges and barriers to treatment for OUD patients and the filling of buprenorphine.

Objectives

This study examined the real-world dispensing of buprenorphine before and after the pandemic

- Prepandemic period: 03/19/2019-03/18/2020
- Pandemic period: 03/19/2020-12/18/2021

Methods

California's Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES)

-CURES: State-operated database that collects information on Schedule II-V prescription drugs dispensed by outpatient pharmacies in California.

-Buprenorphine: Controlled schedule III drug

- Measurement:
- Number of prescriptions per patient/prescriber
 - Mean days of supply per prescription
 - Mean daily dosage per prescription

Statistical analysis

- Joinpoint Trend Analysis
- Interrupted time-series analysis
- Stata SE 17; significance at the 0.05 level.

Results

1,643,646 prescriptions from 174,969 patients

- ✓ 63.27% Males; 6.63% 65 years of age or older
- ✓ 11.85% Cash; 32.00% Medicaid; 22.62% Medicare; 26.91% Commercial Insurance

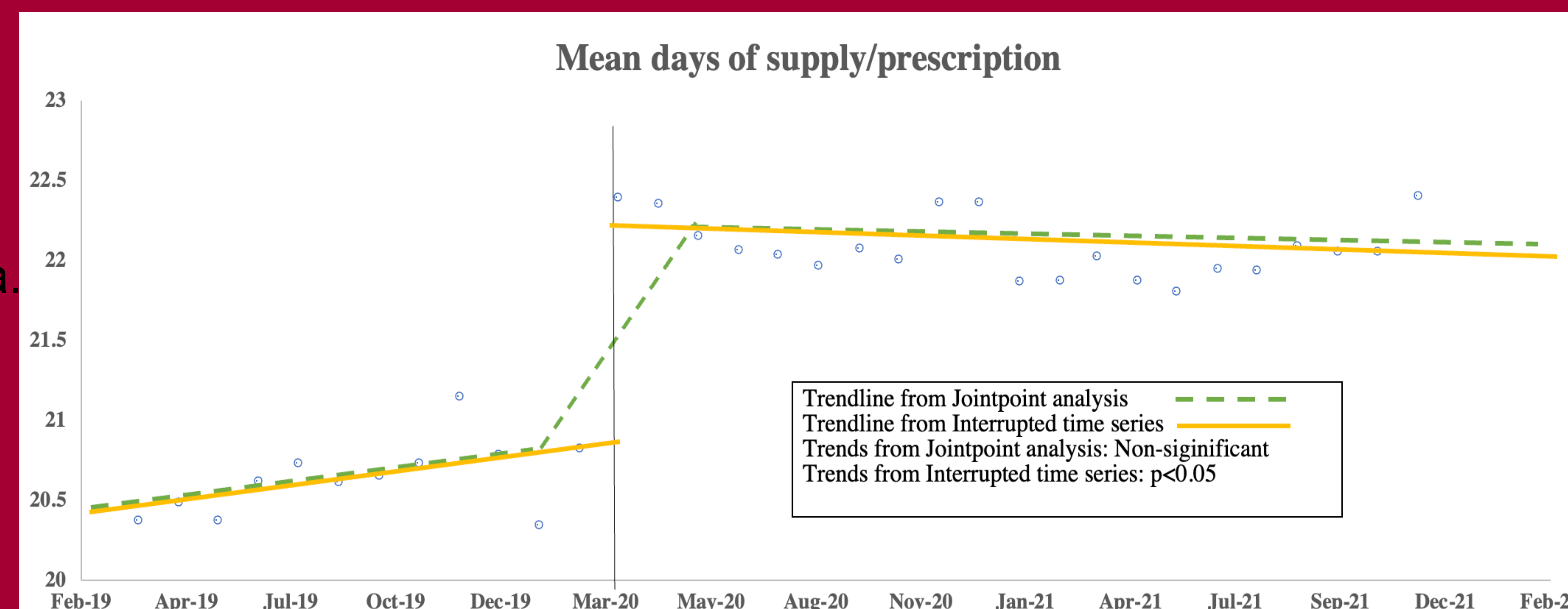
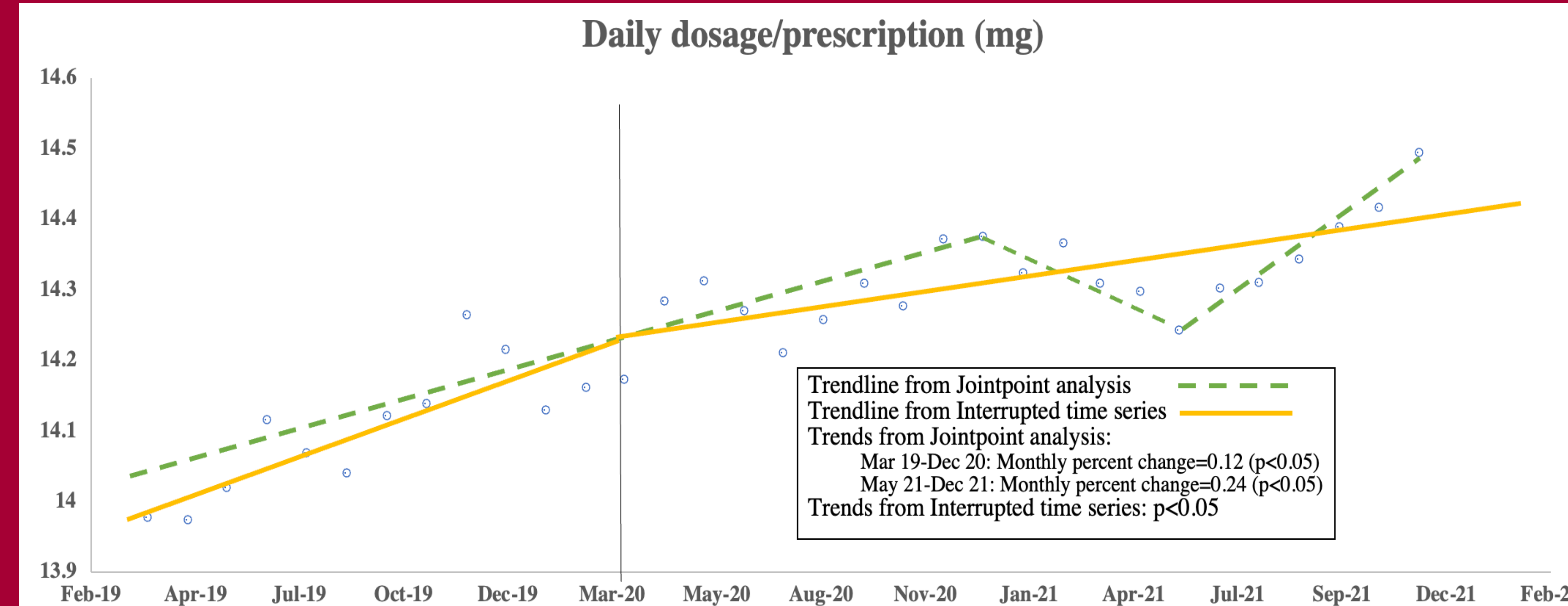


Table 1. Prescriptions based outcome

	Pre-pandemic	Post-pandemic
Number of prescriptions	640,839	1,002,807
Number of patients	92,730	128,531
Prescriptions per person(n, SD)	6.91 (7.19)	7.80 (9.66)
Number of prescribers	8,166	11,734
Prescriptions per prescriber (n, SD)	78.48 (240.43)	85.46 (286.45)
High-dose(≥ 16 mg/day) (n,%)	327,817(51.15)	529,157(52.77)

Conclusions

Fewer patients (per month) came to fill buprenorphine medications, but they get longer supply and higher doses.

Limitation

- Failure to identify cancer patients
- Lack of other socio-economic status information

References

- CDC's WONDER (Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research)
- Bruneau J, Ahamad K, Goyer M-È, et al. Management of opioid use disorders: a national clinical practice guideline. CMAJ. 2018;190(9):E247-E257.

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