

# Increasing access to an overdose rescue drug does not reduce perceived risk of opioid use

Peer reviewed: Yes

Type of study: Observational study

Subject of study: People

The US opioid crisis has resulted in most US states implementing laws to expand access to naloxone, a medication that reverses opioid overdose. Some have expressed concern that increasing the availability of a medication to reverse overdose may facilitate opioid use by reducing the risk perceived by those who engage in drug use, or those who *might* engage in drug use. A new study published in the scientific journal *Addiction* has found that naloxone access laws in the US have not reduced perceptions of how dangerous heroin use is in the US population.

This study used data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), which annually surveys almost 70,000 individuals aged 12 and older from across the US. Using data from 2004 to 2016 (during which the number of US states with naloxone access laws increased from 1 to 41), the study measured changes in perceptions of heroin risk as the overdose crisis unfolded and naloxone access laws were implemented. This study found that the expansion of naloxone access has not contributed to reductions in perceived risk that may allow growth in opioid use in the general population, among vulnerable populations, or inequitably across socio-demographics.

-- Ends --

For editors:

**This paper is free to download for one month** from the Wiley Online Library:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/add.15682> or by contacting Jean O'Reilly, Editorial Manager, *Addiction*, [jean@addictionjournal.org](mailto:jean@addictionjournal.org).

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**Addiction** is a monthly international scientific journal publishing peer-reviewed research reports on alcohol, substances, tobacco, and gambling as well as editorials and other debate pieces. Owned by the Society for the Study of Addiction, it has been in continuous publication since 1884.

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