

Opioid Agonist Therapy Doses Amongst a Sample of People Who Inject Drugs

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I ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS LAND, THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES OF THE FIRST NATIONS. I EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO THE GADIGAL PEOPLE OF THE EORA NATION, WHOSE LAND WE ARE ON TODAY, AND TO THE BOON WURRUNG PEOPLES OF THE KULIN NATION, WHERE MY WORK, THE BURNET, IS LOCATED. I PAY MY RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOVEREIGNTY WAS NEVER CEDED.





Introduction

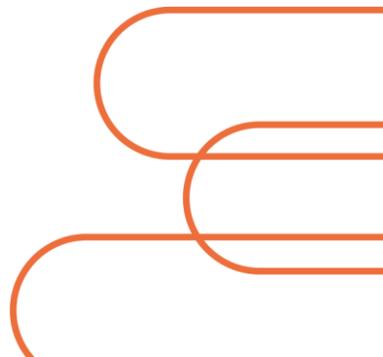
Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) provides the most effective response for people experiencing problems associated with opioid dependence. ¹

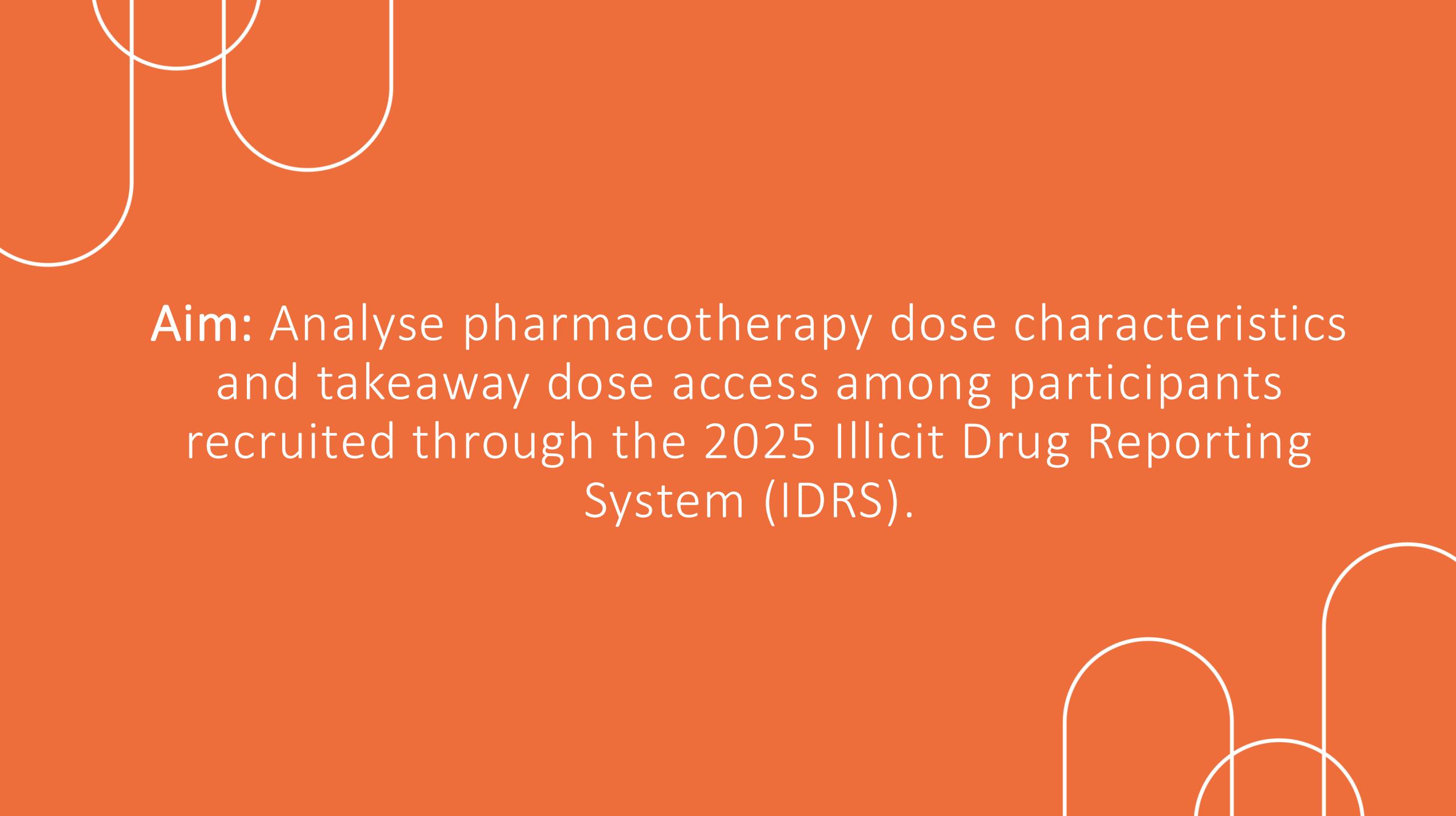
National guidelines recommend **dose ranges** and **takeaway doses**.

Guidelines were **last updated in 2014**. ¹

State and Territory **policies vary considerably**. ¹

There exists **limited data on dosing patterns**; understanding patterns and variations in demographics can **better inform guidelines** and **improve equity in access**.





Aim: Analyse pharmacotherapy dose characteristics and takeaway dose access among participants recruited through the 2025 Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS).



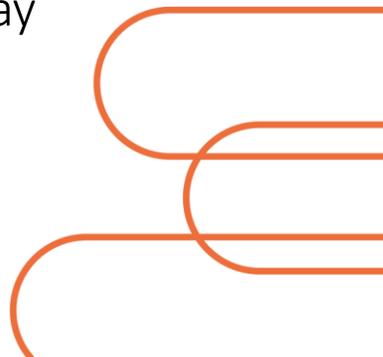
Method

Data Source: Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) 2025.

Participants: 865 people over 18 years of age who regularly inject drugs, recruited from capital cities in each state and territory.

Analysis:

- **Descriptive statistics** to examine dose among those who reported methadone, oral buprenorphine and LAIB preparations.
- **Linear regression** to assess the association between methadone dose, age, gender, and state/territory of residence.
- **Logistic regression** to assess the association between methadone takeaway dose, age, gender and state/territory of residence.



Pharmacotherapy type, dose characteristics and takeaway doses

OAT type	n	Last dose (mean mg)	SD	Last dose (median mg)	IQR
Methadone	162	66.5	36.4	60	40-90
Buprenorphine	12	18.7	11.7	16	8-32
Buprenorphine - naloxone	34	19.1	12.8	16	10-24
LAIB weekly	6	40.3	43.7	27	21-32
LAIB monthly	57	116.6	64.7	96	87-150

Table 1: Last dosage by OAT type, among IDRS participants, 2025

Association between last methadone dose with age, gender and state/territory

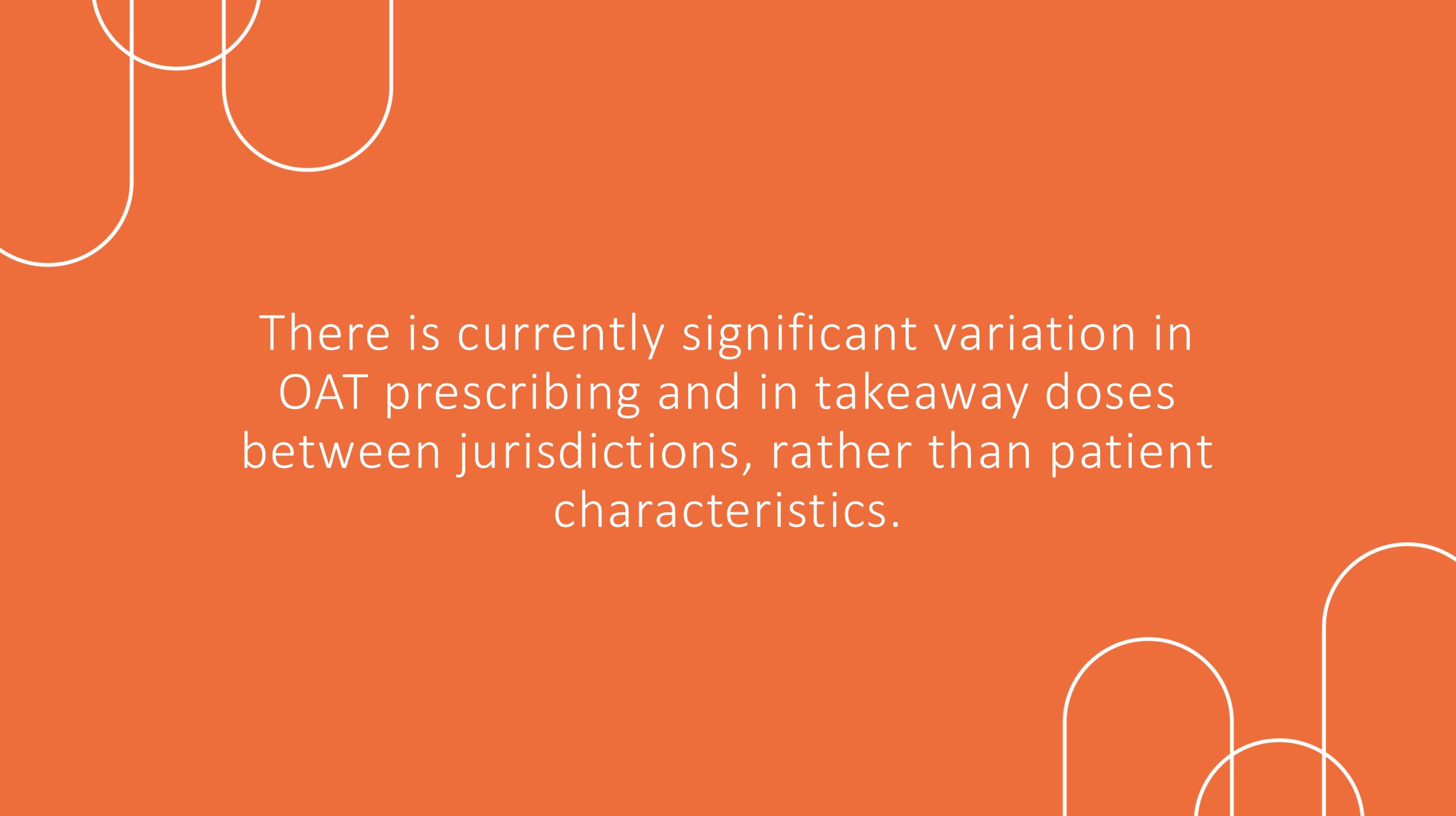
	Last methadone dose - mean (mg)	Coefficient (95% CI)	p
Age			
<30	96.7	Ref	-
30-39	76.3	-29.87 (-79.94-20.21)	0.240
40-49	66.6	-39.01 (-86.07-8.05)	0.104
50+	64.1	-39.24 (-85.74-7.25)	0.097
Gender			
Female	62.2	Ref	-
Male	68.4	6.39 (-6.06-18.84)	0.312
State / territory			
NSW	73.7	Ref	-
ACT	65.2	-10.87 (-28.40-6.67)	0.223
VIC	72.1	-1.36 (-16.82-14.10)	0.863
TAS	82.5	11.56 (-40.24-63.36)	0.660
SA	61.9	-8.65 (-33.49-16.19)	0.493
WA	45.2	-26.16 (-45.66- -6.66)	0.009
QLD	63.2	-10.17 (-36.92-16.57)	0.453

Table 2: Association between last methadone dose and selected variables

Association between methadone takeaway dose receipt with age, gender and state/territory

	% receiving takeaway methadone dose	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	p
Age			
<30	50	Ref	-
30-39	77.78	2.96 (0.26-33.25)	0.379
40-49	68.49	2.17 (0.25-18.88)	0.483
50+	82.08	6.18 (0.70, 54.43)	0.101
Gender			
Female	76.12	Ref	-
Male	76.12	0.72 (0.32-1.61)	0.418
State / territory			
NSW	76.19	Ref	-
ACT	70.97	0.80 (0.27-2.35)	0.68
VIC	90.2	3.44 (1.04-11.39)	0.043
TAS	16.67	0.05 (0.01-0.30)	0.001
SA	92.31	2.85 (0.32-25.64)	0.350
WA	64.29	0.47 (0.16-1.41)	0.18
QLD	87.5	2.37 (0.56-10.00)	0.239

Table 3: Association between last takeaway dose and selected variables

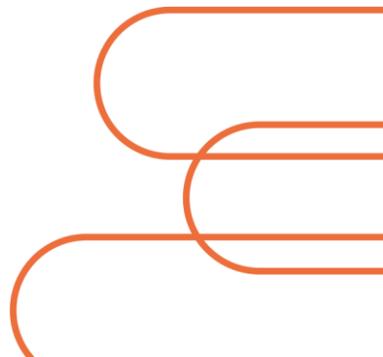


There is currently significant variation in OAT prescribing and in takeaway doses between jurisdictions, rather than patient characteristics.



Conclusion

- Variation between jurisdictions has important implications for **equity in access**.
- Findings warrant **further investigation**.
- Reinforce the need for **updated national guidelines**.

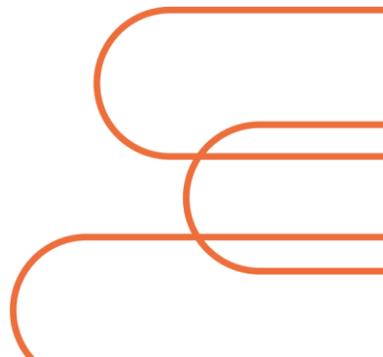




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