



## How Compounding and Transdermal Medications May Help with the Opioid Crisis

Traditionally, opioid analgesics (formerly called “narcotics”) were prescribed for patients with terminal illnesses and after surgery. More recently, opioids and preparations containing oxycodone and hydrocodone have been prescribed for multiple conditions, even when other medications may be a better option.



When pain is not adequately controlled, patients may take doses that are higher than prescribed, and the continually seeking relief from pain can result in addiction. Also, access to opioids that have been prescribed for friends or relatives is one of the problems fueling the opioid crisis.

Bucher (Xavier University), Day and Carvalho (Professional Compounding Centers of America) noted that transdermal compounded medications can be customized to include different types of drugs, in various dosage strengths, to meet each patient’s specific needs.<sup>1</sup> Many of the challenges faced when using oral opioid therapy may be overcome by using transdermal medications. Types of pain and the causes differ, so customized medications can be helpful. Medications that are not used primarily to treat pain (like some drugs used to treat depression and epilepsy) can have synergistic properties when combined with other drugs, and this often allows the dosage of individual drugs to be decreased which in turn reduces the potential for side effects.

*If you or someone you know is living with chronic pain, contact our compounding pharmacists to discuss how we can work together with physicians to solve medication problems.*

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