

## Naloxone effectiveness: A systematic review

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**Purpose:** Opioid abuse and overdose is a public health concern as it relates to increased morbidity and mortality. This systematic review focuses on the application of take-home naloxone programs and its association with decreased mortality among those who abuse opioids. Take-home naloxone programs consist of distributed naloxone kits and corresponding education of overdose recognition. The purpose of this systematic review is to determine if programs that supply take-home naloxone

are effective in preventing fatal overdoses among those who abuse opioids.

**Methods:** A systematic search was conducted in academic search complete, CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsychINFO and SocINDEX. The keywords searched were: “programs”, “take-home kits”, “Narcan”, “Naloxone” and “mortality”. Based upon the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria nine studies were found for inclusion.

**Results:** Study results were then synthesized, qualitatively and within the current research there is overwhelming support of take-home naloxone programs being effective in preventing fatal opioid overdoses. A significant limitation of this systematic

review is the lack of randomized control trials as it is viewed as unethical withholding a known lifesaving medication from an at-risk population.

**Practice Implications:** Based on the most current evidence, there is overwhelming support of take-home naloxone programs associated with decreased mortality among those who abuse opioids. As a result, there is an implication for a practice change that take-home naloxone programs should be more widely implemented throughout communities as a method of decreasing mortality associated with opioid overdoses. It is recommended that further research is done examining the cost-effectiveness of these programs.