Back on Track | A Naturalistic Experiment Evaluating the Impact of Medicaid Treatment Reimbursement Changes on Opioid Prescribing and Patient Outcomes Among Patients with Low Back Pain

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The study team is examining the impacts of Oregon’s new Medicaid reimbursement guidelines for back pain. These guidelines, which went into full effect in January 2018, limit reimbursement for opioid prescribing and expand coverage for enhanced services, such as physical therapy, massage, and cognitive behavioral therapy. To evaluate these changes to the payor model, this mixed methods study will compare outcomes in Oregon (covered by guidelines) to outcomes in California (not covered by guidelines). The study team will examine opioid prescribing, utilization of services, and self-reported pain, functioning, adverse events, and substance use, in addition to qualitatively exploring the contextual factors in adopting the guidelines.

**Potential Impact**

Back pain is the most common type of pain and the most common reason patients seek medical care. Because of the back pain on vulnerable populations, including those of lower socioeconomic status and racial/ethnic minority groups, the findings from this study have great potential to understand how a different payor model could address opioid prescribing and chronic pain. It has the potential to provide important contextual information to health care systems hoping to improve the quality and effectiveness of back pain treatment.