

# Systematic Approaches to Optimize Opioid Prescribing in Surgical Patients

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**Abstract:** *The opioid crisis has highlighted the urgent need to optimize pain management strategies in surgical settings, prompting a shift towards opioid-sparing therapies. While opioids are crucial for alleviating moderate to severe postoperative pain, their over prescription poses significant risks, including addiction and overdose. This paper examines the feasibility of achieving opioid-free surgical recovery, particularly for minor and minimally invasive procedures, with the goal of extending this practice to more invasive surgeries through enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS) programs. It also considers the cultural factors that influence patient expectations regarding pain management in countries with lower opioid prescribing rates, such as Japan and Germany, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches in the United States. The study advocates for the exclusion of opioids at every stage of the perioperative experience, promoting opioid-free anesthesia and analgesia. A framework for optimizing opioid prescribing practices in surgical contexts is proposed, highlighting the vital roles of acute pain specialists and pharmacists in developing comprehensive pain management strategies. By incorporating multimodal analgesia techniques, including non-opioid medications and alternative therapies, healthcare providers can effectively mitigate the risks associated with opioids while ensuring adequate pain relief*

**Keywords:** Opioid crisis, Pain management, Opioid-free recovery, Enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS), Non-opioid analgesia, Pharmacist involvement