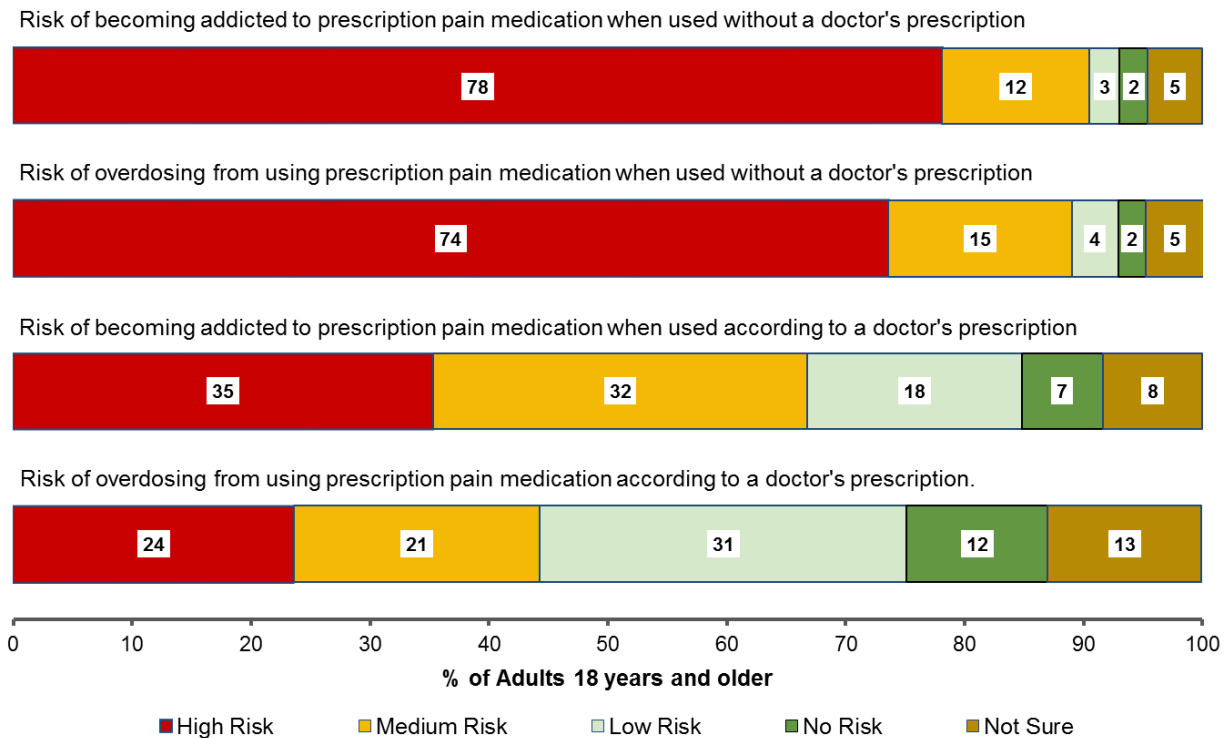


Perceived Risk of Prescription Pain Medication

In 2017, as part of the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), over 950 randomly sampled adult residents of Simcoe Muskoka were asked a series of questions about their perception of the risk of using prescription strength pain medication for both medical and recreational purposes. Prescription pain medications were defined as drugs like Percocet, Tylenol3, Demerol, OxyNEO, Fentanyl, or codeine.

Residents were asked to indicate their perceived risk (high risk, medium risk, low risk or no risk) with four different statements related to the use of prescription pain medication. Becoming addicted to prescription pain medication when used without a doctor's prescription was the statement that was perceived with the highest risk with 78% (95% confidence interval 75%, 81%) of respondents rating the risk as high. Similarly, 74% (70%, 77%) of respondents perceived the risk of overdose as high for those using prescription pain medication without a doctor's prescription. The perceived risk of addiction and overdose were significantly lower for use of prescription pain medication according to a doctor's prescription; however, more than half of respondents still reported high or medium risk of addiction and more than one-third reported high or medium risk of overdose when using prescription pain medication as prescribed. See figure 1 for the complete breakdown of perceived risk.

Risk Perception Related to Prescription Pain Medication, Simcoe Muskoka Adults (18+), 2017



Data Source: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Cycles 25 & 27 (Jan.-Apr. & Sept.-Dec. 2017). Data collected by the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University in Toronto, ON on behalf of the health unit.

Figure 1: Percent of adults (18+) who reported their perceived risk of using prescription pain medication with or without a doctor's prescription, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, 2017.