

Appendix 6: Sensitivity analyses of opioids versus placebo

Characteristic	Pain relief					Function				
	No. of studies	No of patients	SMD	95% CI	I ² , %	No. of studies	No of patients	SMD	95% CI	I ² , %
All studies with appropriate data available for meta-analysis	28	3741	-0.60	-0.69 to -0.50	48.2	20	3221	-0.31	-0.41 to -0.22	36.3
Type of opioid, etc., administered										
Codeine + acetaminophen	1	40	-1.03	-1.69 to -0.37	NA					
Controlled-release codeine	2	126	-0.74	-1.10 to -0.38	0.0	2	126	-0.92	-1.55 to -0.29	64.6
Tramadol	9	1378	-0.57	-0.70 to -0.44	27.1	6	1122	-0.30	-0.45 to -0.16	30.8
Tramadol + acetaminophen	3	921	-0.57	-0.89 to -0.24	87.8	4	1248	-0.27	-0.38 to -0.15	0.0
Controlled-release oxycodone	4	391	-0.66	-0.87 to -0.45	3.7	3	307	-0.34	-0.57 to -0.12	0.0
IR oxycodone + acetaminophen	1	73	-0.73	-1.21 to -0.26	NA					
Long-acting morphine	7	476	-0.51	-0.76 to -0.26	37.6	5	418	-0.21	-0.44 to 0.02*	21.0
Type of pain diagnosed										
Neuropathic	10	886	-0.59	-0.77 to -0.40	42.4	5	554	-0.26	-0.43 to -0.09	0.0
Nociceptive	17	2566	-0.62	-0.75 to -0.50	51.0	12	2240	-0.34	-0.47 to -0.20	55.8
Fibromyalgia	2	382	-0.41	-0.61 to -0.21	0.0	2	382	-0.33	-0.54 to -0.13	0.0
Mixed neuropathic and nociceptive	1	45	-0.33	-0.92 to 0.26*	NA	1	45	-0.35	-0.94 to 0.24*	NA
Study's methodological quality										
High (score of 3-5)	25	3592	-0.60	-0.71 to -0.50	51.1	18	3114	-0.33	-0.42 to -0.23	39.1
Low (score of 1 or 2)	3	149	-0.51	-0.92 to -0.09	24.6	2	107	-0.04	-0.42 to 0.34*	0.0
Alternative split:										
High (score of 4 or 5)	20	2952	-0.60	-0.71 to -0.49	48.0	15	2586	-0.32	-0.43 to -0.20	46.9
Low (score of 1-3)	8	789	-0.61	-0.83 to -0.38	50.6	5	635	-0.33	-0.48 to -0.17	0.0
Study design										
Parallel groups	19	3157	-0.57	-0.70 to -0.45	61.2	13	2741	-0.30	-0.38 to -0.22	7.0
Crossover	9	584	-0.67	-0.83 to -0.50	0.0	7	480	-0.37	-0.69 to -0.06	64.4

Note: SMD = standardized mean differences, CI = confidence interval, I² is a test of heterogeneity (higher values mean more heterogeneous), NA = not applicable (only 1 study), IR = immediate-release.

*Statistically nonsignificant result.