Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs

Henry Siegler

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

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Abstract

Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) are systems that collect and distribute information on controlled substances and are accessible to healthcare providers and authorities. In this paper, the impact of implementing an operational PDMP in a state on the state’s overall opioid overdose death rate is estimated. Using data from 2000 to 2020 from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, this study evaluates the effectiveness of PDMPs in regulating the distribution of opioids, which is theorized to lead to lower levels of opioid misuse and diversion, and as a result, lower levels of opioid overdoses. To create panel data for each state-year pair, I collected opioid overdose death rate data from the CDC Wonder Database, along with data on the implementation of PDMPs in each state and other relevant covariates. A panel data regression model with state and year fixed effects is employed, and I estimate that states with operational PDMPs experience an average annual decrease of 1.063 opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 people. Previous research on this topic has shown mixed findings. However, this study uses a different set of covariates compared to previous studies over a more extended period and employs the date when the PDMPs became operational, rather than when legislation for PDMPs was established in each state. The results are similar in magnitude to those studies that have found PDMPs to reduce opioid overdoses.