

# Origins of the Opioid Crisis and its Enduring Impacts

Alpert et al. (QJE 2022)

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February 20, 2024



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# Why Do We Care?

- Policy: Can PDMPs have long-term effects on overdoses; do effects come from the structure of the PDMP or the firm's marketing response?
- Economics: How do firms respond to heterogeneous standards?



# Data

- NVSS Multiple Cause of Death mortality (1983-2017)
- ARCOS drug transactions and deliveries (1997-2017)
- Medicaid State Drug Utilization (1996-2005)
- Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (1996-2016)
- National Survey of Drug Use and Health (2004-2013)

# Methodology and Research Design

- DiD, exog. variation in OxyContin marketing due to triplicate programs

# Contribution

- Non-Triplicate State
- $\implies$  More OxyContin marketing
- $\implies$  More doctors prescribing OxyContin
- $\implies$  More OxyContin marketing
- ...
- $\implies$  45% more opioid deaths from 1996 to 2017
- “The introduction of OxyContin explains 79% of the rise in the overdose death rate since 1996.”

# Things I Liked

- Highly robust results (DiD published in 2022)
- Mechanism investigation is important - policy “worked”

# Concerns

- Triplicate states could have population-wide endogenous “preferences away from being addicted to opioids”

# Extension

- Intensive margin: how did marketing to the highest prescribers affect local overdose?