Reviewer's report

**Title:** Dose patterns in commercially insured subjects chronically exposed to opioids: a large cohort study in the United States

**Version:** 7  **Date:** 10 April 2010

**Reviewer:** Gary Franklin

**Reviewer's report:**

While the authors have been somewhat responsive to earlier comments, the responses are not sufficient. After responding to earlier comments, they DID find an important early increase in dose in the non-cancer patients. Thus, the conclusion in the text and abstract that the only important dose increases occur after 2 years and primarily in cancer patients is not true. This must be restated completely in both the text and abstract, and placed in more direct context with the VonKorff study. There should be added discussion and reference to how "high dose" has been defined here, and whether that definition is still reasonable in light of the VonKorff study findings. I'm essentially OK with the findings and conclusions regarding intermittent use of opioids. However, it is primarily the continuous use that is of concern. Finally, the authors continue to focus on median doses in parts of the text, and this is just not relevant to the potential for important adverse events.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests