Factors Associated With Clinician Treatment Recommendations for Patients With a New Diagnosis of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)

Comparing recommendations for patients with clear signs of OUD versus those with lower likelihood of OUD

Retrospective Medical Chart Review, 2012-2017

520 Veteran Health Administration patients

New opioid-related diagnosis on health record

Patients categorized as having “high” or “lower” likelihood of OUD

Examined association between baseline demographic and clinical characteristics with recommendations for medication and other treatments for OUD.

- **28.7%** recommended medication treatment
- **52.5%** recommended specialty SUD treatment
- **41.9%** recommended treatment in non-SUD mental health settings

High likelihood of OUD was strongly associated with the clinician recommending medications for OUD.

Lower likelihood of being recommended medication treatment:
- Age 56-75
- Stimulant Use Disorder
- Rural Residence

**Conclusion**: Among patients with a clear diagnosis of OUD, medication treatment is recommended less often than other treatments, suggesting interventions are needed to encourage clinicians to prioritize medication treatment as a first-line treatment, especially for older, rural patients and those with polysubstance use.