

# Easy Integration of an Opioid-Reduction Pain Management Protocol in a Small Private Hand Surgery Practice

Authors: Orrin I. Franko and Andrew J. Stein

**Background:** Recent media and scientific reports have highlighted the current opioid crises and focused attention of physician prescribing habits. Prior studies, mostly from large, integrated medical centers have demonstrated the feasibility of reducing opioid prescriptions for hand surgery patients. This study reports the experience of transitioning to an opioid reduction pain management protocol in a two-person private practice.

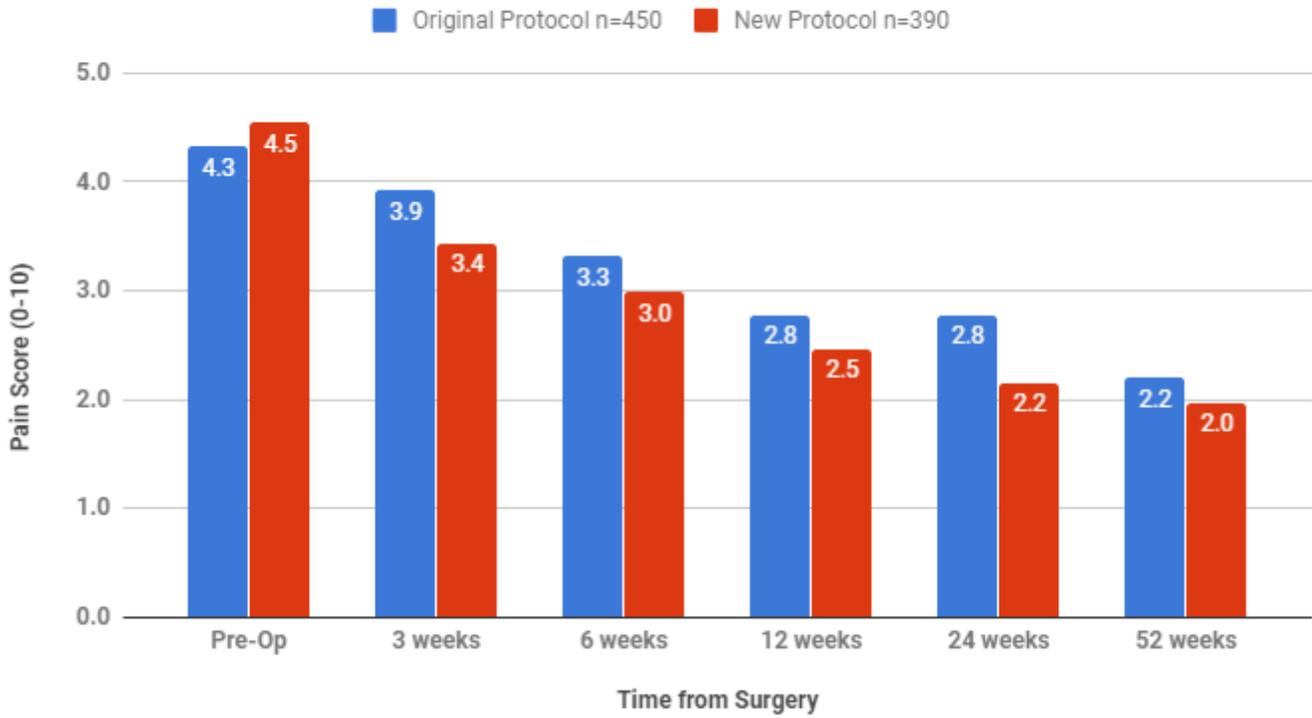
**Methodology:** In July 2017 a two-person orthopedic hand surgery practice transitioned to an opioid reduction pain management protocol utilize lean and low-overhead tools to reduce staff and provider burden. This included the institution of automated emails to provide patients with pain management handouts, recommendations to view pre-operative videos on pain and discomfort, and reducing the default prescriptions given for routine operative procedures. Patients were surveyed pre- and post-operatively as to their pain on a 10-point Likert scale at 3, 6, 12, 24, and 52-weeks.

**Results:** There were 450 patients enrolled in the traditional pain management group and 390 patients enrolled in the opioid reduction protocol. Baseline pain scores were comparable between the groups at 4.3 and 4.5, respectively ( $p=0.18$ ). Post-operative subjectively reported pain scores were lower in the opioid reduction protocol at all time points, and met statistical significance at 3 weeks and 24 weeks ( $p<0.05$ ) and a statistical trend at 6 and 12 weeks ( $p<0.01$ ). Further sub-analysis of minor procedures revealed no change at any time point, and sub-analysis of fractures demonstrated improved pain control at all time points (Figure 2). The new protocol reduced the number opioid prescriptions, reduced the number of refill prescriptions, and resulted in improved pain control. Staff burden with the new protocol was reduced.

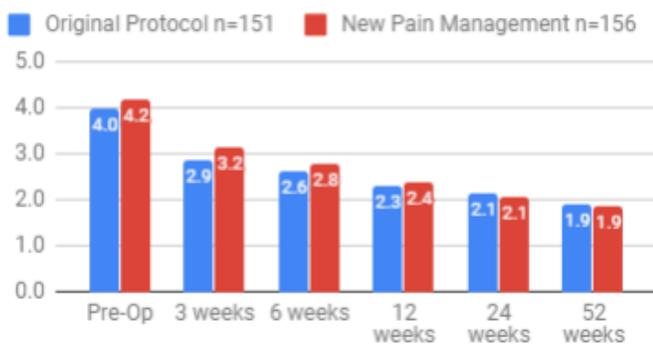
## Conclusion:

- Instituting an opioid reduction protocol in a small hand surgery practice can be simple and effective
- Patients experienced better pain control with the new protocol that had a greater effect for fractures as compared to minor procedures
- Staff burden, prescriptions and refill requests were reduced using the new protocol

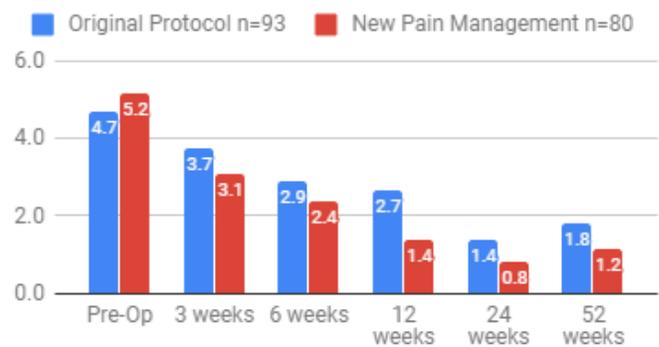
## Pain Experience Before vs. After July 2017 Pain Management Protocol



### Minor Procedures



### Fractures



\*A subsequent analysis incorporating automated email review requests in conjunction with handing out review card requests further increased the rate of online review responses as shown below at month 16.

