

Buprenorphine:

Advances in Substance Abuse Treatment & the Impact on the Criminal Justice System

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Overview

- Background & scientific evidence of buprenorphine treatment
- The Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative
- Buprenorphine and the criminal justice system

Buprenorphine: Background

- Buprenorphine is a partial opioid agonist
 - Low maximal effects of euphoria, respiratory depression
- Advantages of Buprenorphine
 - Reduces cravings, withdrawal symptoms
 - Limited side-effects
 - Less potential for illegal diversion
 - Fewer overdoses (ceiling effect)
 - Proven to be safe and effective
 - Improves retention in treatment



Buprenorphine: Scientific Evidence

- Significantly superior to placebo in treatment retention and in suppression of use. (Ling 1998 and Johnson 1995)
- No significant difference to methadone in:
 - Treatment retention
 - Suppression of heroin use
 - # of cocaine and benzodiazepine positive urines
 - Level of criminal activity (Mattick et al, 2006; *Cochrane Review*)

Buprenorphine: Scientific Evidence

- Overdose deaths fell from 565 to 143 (75%) over 4 years in France (Ling and Smith, 2002)
- Less side effects, milder withdrawal symptoms than methadone (Krantz and Mehler, 2004)
- New patient populations come into treatment (younger, employed, shorter history of use) (Sullivan et al, 2004)

Buprenorphine: Treatment Outcomes & Criminal Justice

- Reduction in:
 - Risk-taking behaviors (Teesson et al, 2006)
 - Criminal behaviors (Teesson et al, 2006)
 - Psychopathology (Teesson et al, 2006)
 - Injection related behaviors (Teesson et al, 2006)
 - > 60% heroin abstinence at 1 year follow up (Teesson et al, 2006)
 - Drug buying/selling & violent crimes at 5 year follow-up (Gossop et al, 2005)

Baltimore's Challenges

- Heroin addiction remains high:
 - Supply falls short of demand despite expansion in treatment over past 10 years
 - ~4,000 methadone treatment slots
 - > 10,000 admissions for heroin treatment in FY 2006
- High rate of violent crime

Baltimore's Opportunities

- Large medical system
 - Opportunity to expand treatment to physician offices, clinics, and CHC's
- Support from local leadership
- High crime rate & drugs are major local concerns

The Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative



Step 1: Patient starts buprenorphine in substance abuse treatment program

Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc: Oversees contracts with treatment programs

Baltimore City Health Department: Supports training for doctors in medical system

Step 2: Patient transitions to medical system

Baltimore Healthcare Access, Inc: Social workers arrange insurance and transfer

Step 3: Patient continues to receive buprenorphine from own doctor

Buprenorphine treatment in substance abuse treatment program now available for someone else



Baltimore's Results to Date

- 543 patients total; 308 currently active
 - 63% remained in treatment for 90+ days
- 91 patients transferred to PCPs
 - 13 dropped out in 236 total months of medical care
 - ~50% continue counseling after transfer
- At least 79% qualify for health insurance
- Training 150 physicians and residents
- Cost-effectiveness, new funding sources established

Remaining Challenges

- Education of local police
- Diversion prevention
 - Market for buprenorphine exists
 - Fake buprenorphine pills sold
- Communication gap among different systems:
 - Substance abuse
 - Medical
 - Mental health
 - Criminal justice

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Outstanding Opportunities

- Treatment coordination with Criminal Justice System
- Buprenorphine Behind Walls:
 - Induction, stabilization, maintenance while in jail
 - Upon release, transfer to substance abuse treatment site and/or medical system as appropriate
 - Continuity of treatment and initiation of medical care ensured post-jail