

Introduction

Welcome to the NIDA International Program E-Learning Series!

The Web guide you are about to enter is part of a planned series of Web-based resources that support the mission of the NIDA International Program, which is to foster international cooperative research and the exchange of scientific information by drug abuse researchers around the globe. NIDA seeks to accomplish this mission by

- Promoting international research activities
- Supporting research training and exchange opportunities globally
- Communicating and disseminating science-based information on drug abuse
- Supporting international research collaboration.

NIDA provides this research guide as a Web-based resource for the international community, NIDA grantees, and others to develop their knowledge and understanding of U.S. methadone maintenance research, learn best practices in methadone treatment and program design and implementation, and have access to approved treatment protocols.

The use of Web-based E-learning resources offers the NIDA International Program the opportunity to establish a global learning community in which the exchange of information, ideas, and methods for drug abuse research can be moved forward through the creative use of time and technology. The use of E-learning allows NIDA to support research capacity building by providing consistent learning opportunities, expanding professional development opportunities for Fellows through electronic media, and facilitating scientific exchange among countries by providing electronic-based discussions and resource tools.

The Origin and Purpose of the Methadone Research Web Guide

The Methadone Research Web Guide is an updated and modified version of the NIDA publication titled “Methadone Maintenance Treatment: Translating Research into Policy,” which was published in 1995 in support of the International Scientists and Technical Exchange Program (INVEST). The research has been updated to include key findings related to methadone treatment of opioid addiction in the United States during the past 40 years. Additional sections have been added to detail the expansive history of methadone maintenance as a treatment modality in the United States and to provide links to resources addressing methadone treatment program implementation considerations.

The purpose of the Web guide is to give a basic overview of research supporting approval of methadone maintenance as a viable opioid treatment therapy in the United States. It is designed to answer the most frequently posed questions by the international community regarding the path of research inquiry used by the United States, which could be used by other countries to support approval of methadone as a treatment therapy. As a user of this Web-based resource tool, you will receive

- A straightforward informational resource on the seminal research findings regarding the discovery, testing, and implementation of methadone treatment
- A sample of an assessment instrument for diagnosing and evaluating patient appropriateness for methadone treatment
- Links to informational resources on the clinical and regulatory requirements that guide the implementation of methadone treatment programs in various countries identified as examples of different approaches.

How To Use the Methadone Research Web Guide

This Web guide is to be used as a quick reference for frequently asked questions about the outcomes of research on methadone maintenance treatment. Within the guide, you will find a series of questions and responses regarding the history, supportive research, assessment strategies, and program implementation considerations for methadone maintenance treatment.

The Web guide is organized in the following manner:

Part A: Questions and Answers Regarding the History and Evolution of Methadone Treatment of Opioid Addiction in the United States

This section provides information on the first observance of opioid addiction and the emergence of methadone maintenance as a treatment modality. It also details the evolution of methadone treatment regulations and practices since its introduction in the United States.

Part B: 20 Questions and Answers Regarding Methadone Maintenance Treatment Research

This section provides a series of frequently asked questions regarding research that led to the adoption of methadone maintenance for treatment of opioid addiction in the United States. The answer to each question contains a highlight of the relevant research and a list of supporting research citations.

Part C: Questions and Answers Regarding Assessing the Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Methadone Maintenance Treatment

This section provides answers to questions related to the assessment of patients for opioid addiction treatment, how to determine the patient's progress while in treatment, and when to withdraw patients from treatment. It also provides a link to a sample clinical assessment instrument, diagnostic guidelines, and research criteria.

Part D: Critical Questions and Links to Information Regarding Clinical and Regulatory Requirements for Implementing Methadone Maintenance Programs: Examples of Approaches

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions about the requirements for starting, sustaining, and monitoring the operation of methadone maintenance treatment facilities. This information is provided as a frame of reference for possible considerations for implementing methadone maintenance programs, using examples from other countries.

The *Table of Contents* provides easy reference to each section of the guide. Each section contains a question, the answer to the question, research highlights, and references. Some sections contain links to additional resources. You can start from the beginning or proceed to specific sections.