Effect of Therapeutic Alliance of Clients on Methadone Maintenance Treatment Outcomes

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Abstract

Opioid abuse costs affect the majority of the adult population in our society directly or indirectly. The current prevailing medical treatment for opioid addiction is methadone maintenance treatment (MMT). MMT reduces infectious disease spread, illicit drug use, criminal activity, and overdose potential. MMT is only as effective as the length of time a client remains active and compliant with the program. In previous studies, therapeutic alliance (TA) has been shown to positively influence the effectiveness of substance abuse treatment. However, a gap exists in research in regards to the impact of TA on the effectiveness of MMT outcomes. The theoretical framework of this study is based on therapeutic alliance, which guided an examination on whether therapeutic alliance (as measured by the Session Rating Scale) influenced MMT retention and compliance (drug screens and session attendance). Archival data from 264 clients receiving MMT for opioid dependence were reviewed from a nonprofit community-based agency in Arizona. Logistic regression results revealed that TA did not significantly affect retention or compliance. However, issues were noted such as how the SRS was administered, a lack of understanding by clients regarding scoring the SRS, and unique social desirability demands when clients are in MMT. The finding that TA alone did not significantly affect retention and compliance does not decrease the need to find effective means to improve MMT outcomes. Rather, the findings suggest a critical need to identify and utilize measures more appropriate for clients receiving MMT. In doing so, positive social change may be achieved by assisting clinical staff in developing a strong therapeutic alliance with MMT clients as they focus on problem solving as a joint venture when challenges in the recovery process arise.

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treatment for opioid dependence, regardless of the route of administration (oral or injection). Although methadone has no direct pharmacological effect on non-opioid drugs, when people who are dependent on opioids enter MMT their use of other drugs often declines (Lindesmith, 1997, 1). Reduced criminal activity. Methadone maintenance treatment is an effective treatment for opiate addiction though it has side effects. Weigh the pros and cons based on your situation. Not unlike any other form of medical treatment, methadone maintenance treatment comes with its own set of pros and cons. Whether the pros outweigh the cons or vice versa depends on a person’s own individual treatment needs. For the most part, methadone maintenance treatment has provided a much needed service for people who’ve reached the end of the line when it comes to getting help with breaking an opiate addiction. Methadone Maintenance Treatment. Although they developed from different backgrounds, therapeutic communities and methadone maintenance programs became major treatments of heroin abuse in the 1970s. Research published in the last 5 years demonstrates that therapeutic communities are associated with long-lasting improvements in functioning for the few drug abusers who stay in treatment at least 3 months. A principal limitation of this modality is that few patients remain in treatment long enough to acquire the changed values that produce long-lasting effects. Research on methadone maintenance continues to show that this treatme...