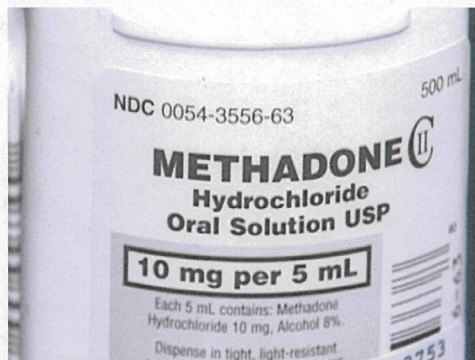


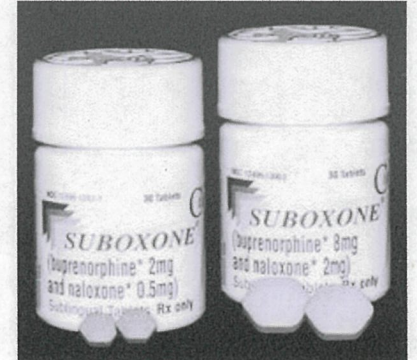
OPIOID SUBSTITUTION TREATMENT METHADONE OR SUBOXONE?

After a placement at Community Alcohol and Drug Services, I wondered why clients were choosing Methadone over Suboxone in their treatment of opioid addiction. A literature review looked at the question, found many advantages for the Suboxone option. "Does Buprenorphine/Naloxone (Suboxone) have better outcomes for opiate dependent clients than Methadone in the maintenance treatment of opiate addiction?"



Desired Outcome of Opioid Substitution Treatment

To decrease death rates and use of illicit drugs, reduce the risk of infectious diseases like HIV and hepatitis, stop intravenous injecting and remove the need for criminal activity.



Methadone Findings

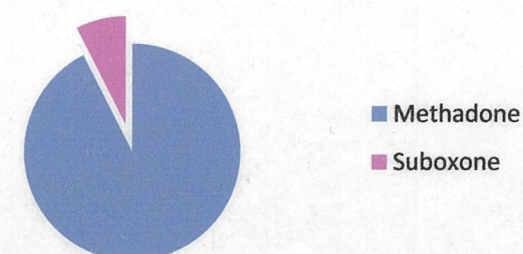
- Methadone is a synthetic opioid.
- Given in liquid form.
- It is a full agonist at the μ opiate receptor with a long half-life.
- Still causes persistent intoxication to a degree.
- Contributes significantly to opiate related deaths.
- Daily dosing is required and must be consumed at pharmacy until client is stable, then takeaway doses possible once or twice a week.
- Long history, therefore stigmatised.
- After 3 months treatment, best retention.
- Risk of respiratory depression.
- Withdrawal symptoms worse and can last weeks or months.
- Induction death rates higher.

Suboxone Findings

- Suboxone (a combination of Buprenorphine and Naloxone) is a semisynthetic opioid.
- Given in sublingual tablet form.
- It is a partial agonist at the μ opiate receptor with a long half-life.
- It produces a better blockade effect at the opiate receptor, thereby minimising any reward that would be gained from illicit opiate use taken in addition to the prescribed buprenorphine.
- Once client is stable, dosing can be twice or thrice weekly.
- No stigma, as relatively unknown.
- Naloxone element prevents inappropriate use by grinding it and injecting it.
- After 6 months treatment, best retention.
- Lower risk of respiratory depression.
- Milder withdrawal symptoms up to 21 days.

Out of 400 clients currently on opioid substitution treatment, approximately 370 are prescribed methadone, while only around 30 are prescribed Suboxone.

Opioid Substitute



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