

BUPRENORPHINE MICRO-DOSING FOR METHADONE-BUPRENORPHINE TRANSFERS

CHRIS TREMONTI^{1,2,3}, JAMES BLOGG^{1,4}, NAZILA JAMSHIDI^{1,3}, NICHOLAS MILES⁵, CHARLOTE ISMAY⁶, SUSAN ANDERSON¹, NICHOLAS BUCKLEY^{1,3}, NICHOLAS LINTZERIS^{7,8}, PAUL HABER^{1,7,8}

¹*Edith Collins Centre (Translational Research in Alcohol Drugs and Toxicology), Drug Health Services, Sydney Local Health District*

²*St. Vincent's Hospital Alcohol & Drug Service*

³*Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney*

⁴*Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network*

⁵*Drug and Alcohol Services Northern Sydney Health District (NSLHD)*

⁶*Hunter New England Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services*

⁷*Drug and Alcohol Services, South East Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD)*

⁸*Discipline of Addiction Medicine, University of Sydney, Australia*

⁹*NSW Drug and Alcohol Clinical Research and Improvement Network, Sydney, Australia*

Presenter's email: chris.tremonti@health.nsw.gov.au

Introduction and Aims: To develop a standardised regimen for transferring patients from methadone to buprenorphine utilising a buprenorphine micro-dose protocol and compare this to current standard of care (SOC).

Design and Methods: A multi-centre prospective, non-randomised open label clinical trial. Eligible participants must be over 18 and prescribed a stable dose of methadone for at least five days. Participants may choose their arm: standardised micro-dose protocol (see table) or SOC as per NSW Health guidelines(1). Primary outcome success, defined as participant on buprenorphine one week post transfer. Secondary outcomes opioid withdrawal, measured as clinical opiate withdrawal scale (COWS) and short opiate withdrawal scale (SOWS), rates of precipitated withdrawal, rates of ambulatory transfers.

Results: 42 participants commenced across six sites.

Micro-dose arm: 34 participants, median methadone dose 87.5mg (IQR: 67.5mg-110mg), 27 successful (79%). COWS 13 or higher in 4 participants (12%); SOWS 13 or higher in 17 participants (50%). Two participants experienced precipitated withdrawal. 16 transfers in ambulatory setting, 15 successful (94%).

SOC arm: 8 participants, median methadone dose 30mg (IQR: 25mg-75mg), 6 successful (75%). No COWS 13 or higher; SOWS 13 or higher in 4 participants (50%). No precipitated withdrawal. 6 transfers in ambulatory setting, 5 successful (83%).

Discussions and Conclusions: This standardised protocol appears to be safe and effective at transferring patients from methadone to buprenorphine, especially in outpatient setting and at higher doses of methadone. Patient preference appears to be micro-dosing. Low rates of precipitated withdrawal. COWS and SOWS scores suggest mild-moderate withdrawal symptoms during transfer.

Standardised protocol for micro-dose transfers

Day	Methadone Dose	Buprenorphine Dose
Day 0	Xmg	0mg
Day 1	Xmg	0.2mg BD

Day 2	Xmg	0.4mg BD
Day 3	Xmg	2mg
Day 4	Xmg	4mg
Day 5	Xmg	8mg
Day 6	½ Xmg	16mg
Day 7	¼ Xmg	16-32mg

Refs

1. NSW Ministry of Health; NSW Clinical Guidelines: Treatment of Opioid Dependence – 2018

Disclosure of Interest: None