

## **Participant experiences in a pilot study for methamphetamine withdrawal treatment: implications for retention**

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**Introduction:** Poor retention in clinical trials has undermined efforts to evaluate pharmacotherapies for methamphetamine use disorder. No previous studies have examined this issue from the perspective of trial participants. This study seeks to further understand the experiences of people who use methamphetamine who have participated in a clinical trial of lisdexamfetamine for the treatment of acute methamphetamine withdrawal and how these experiences may affect retention.

**Method:** A reflexive thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with eight people on completion of an inpatient clinical trial of lisdexamfetamine for acute methamphetamine withdrawal.

**Results:** Trust in research staff and the institution, interactions with clinicians, acceptability of the treatment and delivery, and perceived medication effectiveness helped foster a more positive trial experience for participants. Aspects which negatively affected participation were the restrictive hospital environment, and the provision of additional medication that was perceived as unnecessary. Participants described pre- and within-trial communication and study procedures which could either enhance or diminish participant experience, depending on the individual. Participants described generally positive experiences during the clinical trial, driven in large part by the perceived efficacy of the treatment and feeling individual expectations were met or exceeded. Furthermore, they considered participation in this research could help others in future clinical trials.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** The experiences of participants in this trial can inform the design of future clinical trials to improve participant experience, and in so doing, increase participant recruitment and retention in similar trials.

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