

Tearing Down Barriers to Care - Evaluation of a Home Telehealth Alcohol Withdrawal Service

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Introduction: Clean Slate Clinic is a social enterprise with a mission to remove stigma, geographical and financial barriers to accessing alcohol and other drug treatments. It has done this by developing a model of home alcohol and other drug withdrawal and recovery delivered entirely through telehealth.

Method: The University of Sydney have evaluated the model's adoptability, acceptability and effectiveness (primary objectives).

81 participants were screened for a prospective 28-day observational study conducted over a 12-month period. 50 people completed detox. Exclusion criteria included history of seizures, complex co-morbidities, suicide or family violence risk, lack of support person or secure housing. Outcomes were retrieved from clinic documentation and questionnaires.

Key Findings: Participants who completed the 3-month follow-up questionnaire were highly satisfied (n=7) with the service. At 1-month post detox 84% (42) of clients were "Meeting Alcohol Goals", 14% (7) had "Reduced Alcohol Dependence" and 2% (1) had relapsed. The mean number of standard drinks consumed weekly decreased from 76 at baseline to 5 at 1-month post-detox, 19 at 3 months and 24 at 6 months. Kessler Psychological Distress (K10) scores ranged from 24.61 (high psychological distress) at baseline to 16 (moderate psychological distress) at 1-month post-detox and 15.71 at 3-months post-detox. There were no adverse events reported.

Discussions and Conclusions: The telehealth model of service delivery has been evaluated as highly adoptable and acceptable. Results indicate that the Clean Slate Clinic is a feasible model for enabling participants to achieve their goals (84%), substantially reducing alcohol intake and reducing psychological distress.

Implications for Practice or Policy: A telehealth model of service delivery for substance withdrawal and recovery has the potential to substantially improve access to services and offer a sustainable solution for regional & remote areas.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

This study was funded through Coordinare, Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network, and Northern Sydney Health Network. This funding covered the clinical costs of service delivery and the costs of the external evaluation. The Clean Slate Clinic provided funds for the project management and administrative costs, as well as the costs of delivering promotional activities and webinars.