

How do socio-political values pervade the way 'opioid addiction' is conceived and treated through Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST) services?

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Introduction/Issues: OST services aim to address 'opioid dependence' through the regular dosage of substitute opioid receptor agonists, such as methadone and buprenorphine. It is proposed that political developments have allowed for various interests and values to compete at these services under the guise of being objective (scientific) procedures.

Method/Approach: The day-to-day happenings of an OST service are being assessed to consider how 'addiction' is conceived, and how this process is informed by socio-political values. Service staff are being observed during meetings. Here, service policies, protocols, and responsibilities will be discussed amongst staff. The service itself is also being observed; its layout, and what-happens-where is noted. Furthermore, interviews are taking place with service staff, service users, community pharmacists, and policy makers. The interviewee's role within the service, their perspective on opioid use, and how both are informed by texts is considered. Key texts (guidelines, pamphlets, and forms) are being analysed to understand how they guide action at the service. The researcher is assessing how the service works, and the attitudes that determine this. The study will incorporate accounts and experiences of 'opioid addiction' from those who are marginalised.

Key Findings: This PhD project is still in progress; findings thus far come from reviewing literature and early-stage data. The poster will focus on how the methodology and theoretical focus of the project was developed.

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