

Post-release experiences of people released on long-acting injectable buprenorphine and methadone

The Release Study

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Acknowledgement of country

- I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we meet today; the Ngunnawal people;
- As well as the custodians of the lands on which the Release Study was conducted across NSW;
- I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend these respects to Aboriginal people here today.

The Release Study



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- Study participants

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1. Prospective eMR extraction

- Timeframe: April 2023- June 2024
- Population: people on OAT referred from public + private prisons to 23 participating services
- Data sources: site-level register of all prison referrals linked to NSW MDS + ATOP + iDose

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2a. Post release survey

- Timeframe: Nov 2022- Nov 2023
- Population: People in custody on OAT expected to be released within 6 weeks
- Data source: telephone survey 12 weeks post release

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2b. Qualitative study

- Timeframe: Feb- Nov 2023
- Population: Survey participants reporting ceasing or switching treatment post release
- Data source: telephone interview

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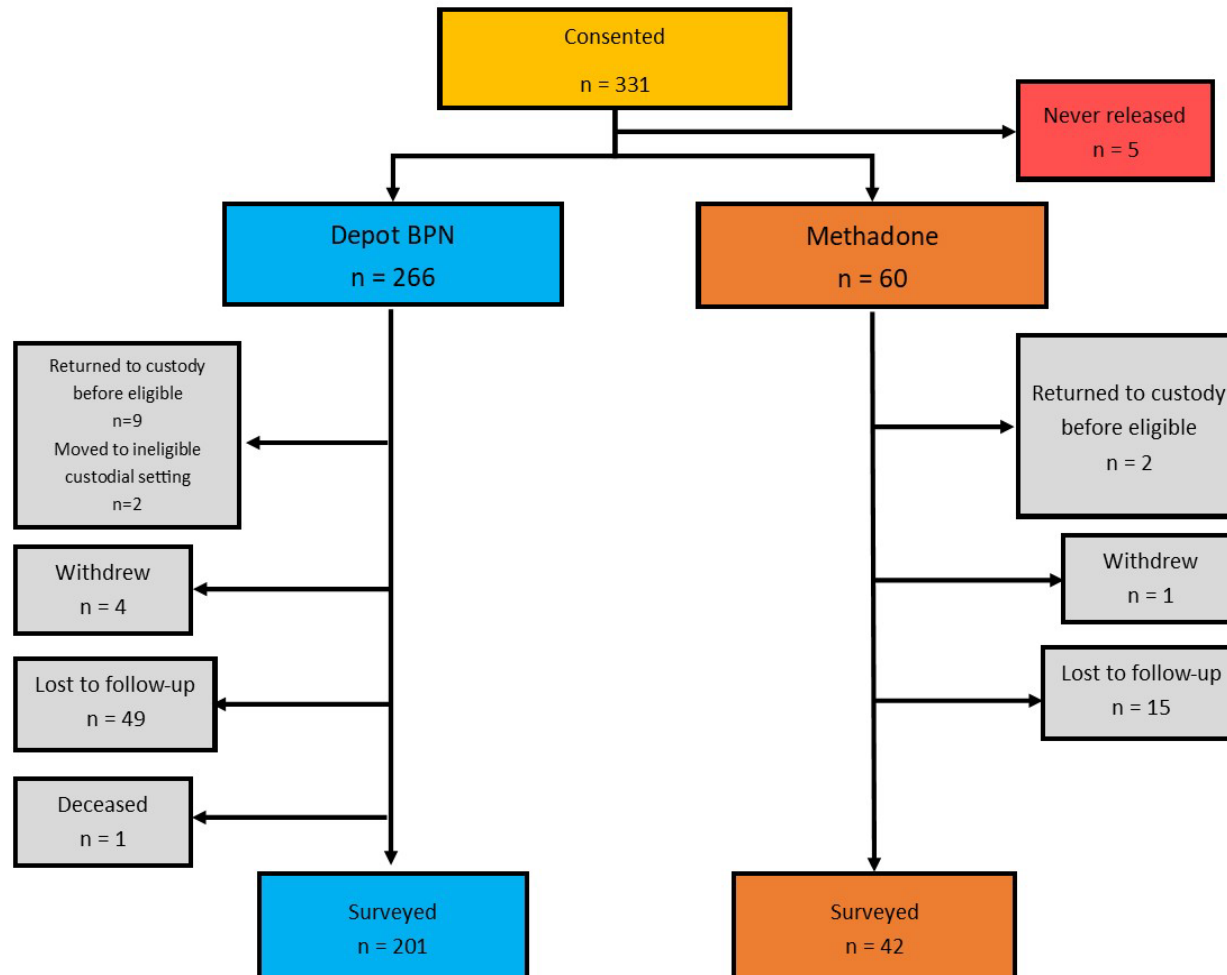
3. OAT provider consultation

- Timeframe: Jan- Mar 2024
- Population: OAT providers across 21 participating services
- Data source: focus groups

Methods

- Non-representative convenience sample (Nov 2022- Nov 2023)
- People in custody on OAT consented within 6 weeks of release across nine NSW correctional centres by JHFMHN clinicians
- Surveyed by phone 12-week post-release by HNELHD and SLHD researchers

Study flow chart



- 331 people in custody on OAT consented
- 326 released; 305 eligible for survey
 - 243 (80%) surveyed
 - Mean 97 days post release
- 191 (79%) surveyed in the community
- 83% LAIB; 17% methadone

Results: demographics and incarceration history

Characteristic	LAIB n=201	Methadone n= 42
Age, years, mean (SD)	36 (SD 9)	41 (SD 7)
Male (%)	80	86
Australian born (%)	97	95
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (%)	47	60
Did not complete high school (%)	45	57
Ever homeless (%)	82	83
Incarceration history		
Prior incarceration (%)	91	98
Age first incarcerated (years)	19.5 (SD 6.2)	19.1 (SD 5.4)
Time in custody (months)	106 (SD 81)	141 (SD 98)

Results: injecting, overdose & OAT history

Characteristic	LAIB n=201	Methadone n= 42
Ever injected (%)	85%	95%
Median age first injected (Q1, Q3)	19 (17-23)	18 (14-22)
Ever injected in prison (%)	88%	63%
Last drug injected in prison SBL-BNX	66%	46%
Last drug injected in prison MA	24%	42%
Ever overdosed on opioids (%)	42%	57%
Number of overdoses in the community	3.6 (SD 5)	6.2 (SD 10)
OAT history		
Initiated treatment in custody (%)	131 (65%)	2 (5%)
No prior OAT history (%)	52 (26%)	2 (5%)

Results: past 28-day drug use in the community

Characteristic	LAIB n=201		Methadone n= 42	
	n (%)	# mean days used if used (SD)	n (%)	# mean days used if used (SD)
Alcohol	101 (51%)	7.15 (9)	20 (48%)	8.05 (9)
Cannabis	100 (50%)	17.67 (12)	19 (45%)	19.84 (11)
Methamphetamine	93 (47%)	13.55 (11)	19 (45%)	13.05 (12)
Benzodiazepines	36 (18%)	10.72 (11)	12 (29%)	18.00 (11)
Heroin	42 (21%)	15.02 (11)	11 (26%)	13.73 (13)
Other opioids	21 (11%)	8.19 (9)	3 (7.1%)	5.67 (4)
Cocaine	21 (11%)	4.05 (6)	5 (12%)	2.40 (1)
Tobacco	152 (76%)	27.25 (4)	31 (74%)	26.29 (6)
E-cigarettes	57 (29%)	21.56 (10)	12 (29%)	20.50 (11)

Results: retention post release

	LAIB n=201	Methadone n= 42
Discontinued treatment on release from custody (no OAT received in the community)	32 (16%)	1 (2%)
One dose post release	7 (3.5%)	0 (0%)
Retained in treatment 12 weeks	155 (77%)	38 (90%)
Return to custody < 6 weeks	1 (0.5%)	1 (2%)
Switched treatment and retained	6 (3.0%)	2 (5%)

Results: retention in LAIB* - demographics

	Not retained n=39	Retained n= 161
Age, years, mean (SD)	34 (SD 9)	37 (SD 8)
Male (%)	30 (77%)	129 (80%)
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (%)	17 (44%)	77 (48%)
Did not complete high school (%)	17 (44%)	73 (46%)
Unstable housing since release (%)	5 (13%)	8 (5%)
Sentence length (months)	16 (SD 13)	26 (SD 33)

*Not retained defined ≤ 1 LAIB dose in the community; one participant returned to custody before completing ≥ 2 doses excluded

Results: retention in LAIB* - past 28-day drug use

	Not retained n=39	Retained n= 161
Alcohol	22 (58%)	79 (49%)
Cannabis	23 (61%)	76 (47%)
Methamphetamine	29 (76%)	63 (39%)
Benzodiazepines	12 (32%)	24 (15%)
Heroin	23 (61%)	19 (12%)
Opioids	9 (24%)	12 (8%)
Cocaine	6 (16%)	15 (9%)

*Not retained defined ≤ 1 LAIB dose in the community; one participant returned to custody before completing ≥ 2 doses excluded

Results: retention in LAIB* - services referred to by JH staff

	Not retained n=39	Retained n= 161
Connections	10 (26%)	65 (40%)
Employment / Centrelink	6 (15%)	40 (25%)
Housing support	4 (10%)	32 (20%)
GP	6 (15%)	29 (18%)
Mental health services	4 (10%)	21 (13%)

*Not retained defined ≤ 1 LAIB dose in the community; one participant returned to custody before completing ≥ 2 doses excluded

Results: retention in LAIB* - services accessed post release

	Not retained n=39	Retained n= 161
GP	16 (43%)	89 (56%)
Counselling individual	5 (14%)	49 (31%)
Social worker	5 (14%)	31 (20%)
Community nurse	1 (2.7%)	21 (14%)
Other nurse	1 (2.7%)	10 (6.4%)

*Not retained defined ≤ 1 LAIB dose in the community; one participant returned to custody before completing ≥ 2 doses excluded

Discussion

- Preliminary only; but early descriptive results consistent with eMR data
- Difference in retention at treatment at 3 months
 - Different populations?
 - Different properties of medications?
- A lot more work to be done