

Options Study: Exploring Patients' Experiences with Depot Buprenorphine and their Motivations to Discontinue

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Introduction and Aims: *Depot buprenorphine (DB) has been a game-changer as an opioid dependency treatment. It has been met with excitement by clinicians and other healthcare workers in this field, and patients' perceptions of this treatment tends to show a high level of interest. We investigate what it is like to receive depot buprenorphine, how patients navigate the unique challenges that come with it, and the various reasons why someone might discontinue this treatment.*

Design and Methods: *40 semi-structure, open-ended interviews were conducted with people who were currently on DB or had discontinued or in the process of discontinuing recruited from range of drug and alcohol clinics in NSW, QLD, VIC, SA, ACT, and WA.*

Key Findings: *There were 5 broad themes in the data: desire to use opioids again, feeling 'cured' and 'back to normal', misaligned perceptions of treatment, being forced to start depot buprenorphine, and experiencing a poor reaction to the injection.*

Discussions and Conclusions: *Participants decided to discontinue DB for a range of inter-related reasons that overlapped in dynamic ways. Their experiences underscore the need for a support clinical environment, establishing greater empathy and understanding for the complex needs of those receiving treatment for opioid dependency, and that DB should be viewed as another treatment avenue rather than first-line option.*

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *This project received no external funding. There are no potential conflicts of interest to disclose.*