

“Non Judgemental, Treated With Care and Respect”: First Reporting of Client Experience of Community Pharmacist Depot Buprenorphine Services

Authors:

Hillman JM¹, Moles RJ¹

¹Sydney Pharmacy School, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, AUSTRALIA

Presenting author: joel.hillman@sydney.edu.au

Introduction: Accessibility and environment of opioid agonist therapy (OAT) dosing influence adherence and subjective experience. Pharmacists provide safe and quality injection services, are accessible healthcare providers, and administer most OAT dosing in Australia.

Abstract: This is the first reporting on the experience of OAT clients receiving depot buprenorphine from community pharmacists. Semi-structured qualitative interviews or questionnaires were conducted with individuals receiving depot buprenorphine in NSW. A majority (n=34) received depots from community pharmacists under a statewide implementation pilot. Responses were analysed into themes: 1) stigma, 2) provider interactions, and 3) treatment setting.

Participants reported overall high satisfaction with pharmacist depot services, describing “more private”, “professional and friendly”, and “accommodating” care. Some thought pharmacist injection technique was “less painful”, and pharmacy setting avoided “the stigma of going to the clinic” and “running into old associates”. Some clients contrasted this with “horrendous” experiences of “judgmental, painful, hostile and impersonal” interactions and injections which “hurt and feel rushed” in previous care settings. Some equivocal clients felt care was “much the same as from the doctor”. This research informs OAT provision and demonstrates pharmacists can provide palatable depot services which clients may prefer to previous treatment settings.

Discussions and Conclusions: OAT clients reported high satisfaction with pharmacist depot buprenorphine services. Clients experience stigma and some consider community treatment settings preferable to clinics, wanting to avoid “bad influences”.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *This work was supported by a grant (Q0046/RG907) from the Pharmacy Research Trust NSW.*