

Project NEAT: RCT comparing quitline support plus vaporised nicotine products or nicotine replacement therapy following discharge from residential withdrawal services

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Introduction: Tobacco smoking is highly prevalent amongst alcohol and/or other drug (AOD) treatment service users. Whilst providing tobacco cessation support during AOD treatment can produce short-term abstinence, most relapse to smoking post-discharge. New ways of thinking about how to address smoking in this population are needed.

Method: A two-arm, single blinded, parallel group randomised trial with a 6-month post-intervention follow-up (or 9-months post-discharge) was conducted between September 2020 – April 2023. Adult smokers accessing AOD residential withdrawal services from one of six participating sites who wanted to quit in next 30 days were eligible for participation. All participants were connected to Quitline call-back counselling services during inpatient stay, then on discharge given a take home pack that included a 12-week supply of either combination NRT (cNRT) or vaporised nicotine product (VNP).

Results: N = 363, male (57%), mean age 44 years. Self-reported 7-month continuous abstinence at the 9-month follow-up was reported by 10.61% (19/179) of participants in the VNP group compared to 9.78% (18/184) of cNRT participants (RR 1.09, CrI 0.50-1.88). The Bayes factor was 0.93, indicating little evidence for treatment effect.

Discussions and Conclusions: Provision of cNRT or VNP combined with Quitline behavioural counselling support are equally effective in supporting people who smoke and are accessing AOD treatment to sustain long-term abstinence post-discharge.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *This work was supported by a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Project Grant (APP1160245).*