

Validating the pharmacist review summary as an outcome measurement tool in opioid dependence treatment: A secondary analysis of the EPIC-MATOD trial

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Introduction: Monitoring treatment outcomes is an important component of opioid agonist treatment (OAT) care. However, there are no validated brief outcome monitoring tools designed for community pharmacy settings, where much of OAT is delivered. This study aimed to validate a pharmacist-administered review summary, developed by the Enhancing Pharmacist Involvement in Care-Medication Assisted Treatment of Opioid Dependence (EPIC-MATOD) project, against the Australian Treatment Outcomes Profile (ATOP) among people receiving OAT in community pharmacies.

Methods: A secondary analysis of data from the EPIC-MATOD pilot, a multisite, type 2 hybrid implementation-effectiveness trial in Victoria, Australia. Thirty-five patients had data from a pharmacist-administered review summary matched to data from a researcher-administered ATOP assessment. Pearson's correlation assessed convergent validity across four domains: substance use, psychological health, physical health, and quality of life. ATOP substance use data were converted into a single composite variable, with illicit drug use days excluding cannabis selected for the primary analysis.

Results: Significant, directionally appropriate correlations were identified across all four domains (substance use: $r=-0.75$, $p<0.001$; physical health: $r=0.68$, $p<0.001$; psychological health: $r=0.46$, $p=0.005$; quality of life: $r=0.38$, $p=0.024$). Sensitivity analyses excluding outliers produced comparable results.

Discussion and Conclusions: Findings suggest that the pharmacist review summary is a practical tool with preliminary evidence of validity for monitoring OAT outcomes in community pharmacy settings. Stronger correlations for substance use and physical health indicate more robust alignment with the ATOP, while weaker mental health and quality-of-life correlations may reflect greater subjectivity and variability in self-reporting.

Implications on communities, practice, policy, and/or First Nations communities: The current study demonstrates the validity of the pharmacist review summary in a real-world treatment context. Expanded pharmacist involvement in OAT monitoring has the potential to improve access, continuity of care, and outcome measurement, particularly for communities facing barriers to specialist or prescriber appointments.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: The EPIC MATOD implementation study was supported by the Victorian Government through an Alcohol and Drug Research Innovation Agenda (ADRIA) Research Grant. SN is the recipient of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Research Fellowships (#1163961, #2025894).