



A Family Guide to:

Methadone and Buprenorphine Maintenance Treatment



Menahra



مرکز ملی اطلاعات انسداد



دانشگاه علوم پزشکی تهران

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Menahra



مرکز ملی مطالعات اعتیاد



دانشگاه علوم پزشکی تهران

Foreword

Drug use imposes major complications and costs on drug users, their families and the community. According to World Drug Report about 230 million people used illegal drugs at least once during 2011. 27 million of these are problem drug users. Less than one fifth of these 27 million problem drug users who need treatment have used any treatment services during the same year. It is estimated that 200-250 billion US dollars is required for treatment of the population in need of treatment. In most Asian and European countries, opioids are the most common drug of use among treatment-seeking people. Maintenance treatments are among most successful treatment modalities for opioid dependence and its application in the world has had a relatively long history. Methadone maintenance treatment has been used since 1939. However, maintenance treatments are only available in 30% of countries of the world and their availability in the countries of Eastern Mediterranean region is less than 20%.

Valid scientific evidence has proved effectiveness of methadone and buprenorphine maintenance treatments to decrease mortality and morbidity among opioid dependents. The aims and objectives of opioid agonist maintenance therapies are as below:

- To reduce IV drug use and therefore to decrease spread of blood-borne viruses especially HIV
- To reduce heroin and other illegal drugs use among on treatment individuals

- To improve health and quality of life
- To facilitate social reintegration of clients and returning them to productive life
 - To decrease mortality risk attributed to opioid use
 - To decrease involvement in criminal activities

Among regional countries, I. R. of Iran is the sole country which has been able to show feasibility, efficacy and safety of opioid agonist maintenance treatment with extensive implementation of the program in community and prisons. Iranian National Center for Addiction Studies (INCAS) has had a crucial national role in this regard through implementation of first pilot projects on agonist treatments such as methadone, buprenorphine and opium tincture; training of physicians and staff of drug treatment and harm reduction facilities and development of educational guidelines.

Iranian National Center for Addiction Studies (INCAS) has also been a regional knowledge hub during recent years and developed a series of educational booklets on methadone and buprenorphine maintenance treatment. The present booklet is the second volume of this series. The authors have tried to provide evidence-based scientific answers to frequently asked questions of families regarding maintenance treatments. I appreciate the authors' endeavor and hope this booklet be useful to improve treatment outcomes among the clients through raising awareness of families regarding maintenance treatments.

Dr. Saeed Abbas Motevalian
INCAS Director

Preface

Iranian National Centre for Addiction Studies' Knowledge Hub (INCAS KH) is one of three knowledge hubs of "Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association" (MENAHRRA) project which has started its activities with Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of World Health Organization (WHO- EMRO) support since 2007. MENAHRRA's aims are to contribute to the national and regional efforts intended to prevent and improve the quality of life of injecting drug users and advocacy for a conducive environment for implementation and scaling up harm reduction activities such as needle, syringes programs (NSP) and opioid agonist maintenance treatments in the Region. This project entails training, advocacy, capacity building, technical and financial support to develop and initiate harm reduction model programs in the Middle East and North Africa.

Since the program was launched in 2007, Iranian National Centre for Addiction Studies' Knowledge Hub (INCAS KH) has been the host for many tour visits of policy makers and national HIV or drug control program managers of regional countries. Besides, the knowledge hub has held several training workshops for both Iranian and overseas participants on different aspects of harm reduction approach. Providing educational booklets for those involved in the treatment and care of patients as well as patients themselves and their families has been another area of activity of this centre.

This booklet is one of the several booklets provided and its target group

includes families of clients on methadone or buprenorphine maintenance treatments. Through reading the booklet, families will get familiar with maintenance treatments and its mechanism of effectiveness. They will also find useful information regarding appropriate approaches toward their addict patients before initiation of maintenance treatment and during receiving it in this booklet.

Alireza Noroozi
INCAS Knowledge Hub Manager

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Is this book for me?

This book is one of the books from the series of "Introduction to Maintenance Treatment" written for the families of individuals with dependence on illicit drugs who are not in treatment as well as patients undergoing treatment with methadone or buprenorphine. We hope that by perusing this book, families of the substance dependent patients learn and understand the basic principles in dealing with their addict patient before and after entering maintenance treatment with methadone or buprenorphine and are able to act more efficiently towards improvement of their patient. Another book from the same series is available for the clients in maintenance treatment which we recommend to the patients.

What subjects are covered in this book?

This book initially provides a general schema of addiction and maintenance treatment. In the next step, the positive role of the family in treatment of addiction, both before and after entering treatment is discussed. The following section includes providing a list of "Dos and Don'ts" in regards to attitude towards patients in maintenance treatment for addiction. Moreover, special considerations are explained. We believe that reading this book thoroughly will promote the awareness of the families of substance-user. This in turn, will help them have a more effective and helpful role in the course of the treatment of their patients.

SECTION ONE: SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE AND ITS TREATMENT- BASIC CONCEPTS

CHAPTER 1: Basic Concepts in Addiction

Adverse Effects and Consequences of Substance Abuse

The process of addiction starts as early as the first few episodes of substance use. In case the abuse pattern is maintained, the patients will experience fatigue, lack of energy, and memory problems, and changes in their general appearance will gradually occur. As the disease progresses, the affected individual's mental state deteriorates, and it is not infrequent that they end up suffering from depression or any other psychiatric disorders. By this stage, the patient has already become indifferent towards their most beloved ones and neglect their self-care and nutrition. As a result, they might face more physical ailments and complications. Under such circumstances, the only task they invest in and are motivated for is drug-seeking and drug-use. Majority of substance dependent individuals feel as rejected by the community.

One of the other characteristics of a drug user is "personality changes" which presents as "aggression", "being demanding", and "being flattering". The high cost of drug on the one hand, and lack of proper job and income (as a consequence of drug use) on the other hand might make the individual so desperate, to the extent that they might attempt robbery, selling sex, begging, or even criminal acts. They might also be easily inclined to lie in order to hide their own addiction. By time, the relationship with family and close ones loosens while the individual leans towards substance-de-