

Center for Behavioral Health Studies



Buprenorphine Plus Behavioral Therapy Is Effective for Adolescent Treatment

What is Buprenorphine?

Buprenorphine is the first oral medication physicians can now prescribe for adolescents who are addicted to opiates such as pain medication, heroin, or methadone.

Buprenorphine is an effective medication for opiate addiction that does not require daily or even weekly trips to a clinic. **Buprenorphine blocks the effects of other opiates, by eliminating the cravings for drugs and also prevents withdrawal symptoms such as pain and nausea.**

Research Outline

A National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) study enrolled 36 opioid addicted adolescents, aged 13 to 18, in a 28-day outpatient treatment program. Half the participants (9 male, 9 female) received buprenorphine in tablet form, the rest (5 male, 13 female) received clonidine via transdermal patch. Medication dosages varied depending on each participant's weight and the amount of drug he or she reported abusing before beginning treatment.

All participants also received three, one hour sessions each week of counseling. **Methods included relapse prevention training, along with group counseling and family therapy sessions.**

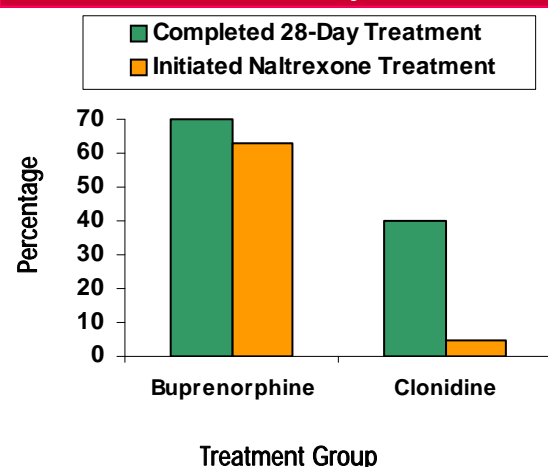
Research Findings

New studies underway are now looking at the medical role of buprenorphine for treatment of adolescents. Adolescents addicted to opioids responded better to buprenorphine than clonidine and included patients also receiving group therapy.

In an other recent NIDA study, adolescents receiving buprenorphine successfully attended more scheduled counseling sessions than peers who received clonidine. Bupre-

norphine patients had higher rates of involvement with a relapse prevention regimen, which included the use of naltrexone.

Buprenorphine Improves Chances for Recovery



Opioid Addicted Teens

Opioid abuse among American teens has doubled over the past decade. The availability of prescription opioids such as OxyContin and Vicodin is partly responsible for fueling these increases. "It's important treatment programs have a medical basis for selecting specific treatments for opioid dependent teens", says Coralee Goni, Rimrock Foundation's Adolescent Services Supervisor.

Ms. Goni explains that "from previous clinical experience we know that buprenorphine has been shown to be the most effective medication for treating opioid addicted adults. What we haven't known up until now is how helpful this drug can be for adolescents."

The willingness of patients who received buprenorphine to complete treatment has improved our patient treatment outcomes significantly.

Summary

Buprenorphine and clonidine were both successful in supporting higher rates of abstinence. However, nearly twice as many buprenorphine as clonidine patients completed the 4 week treatment.

Adolescents were also able to earn vouchers worth \$2.50 for their first opioid nega-

tive urine sample, plus additional money for each subsequent one.

Continuous abstinence allowed young people to earn vouchers redeemable for special rewards such as ski passes, CDs, gym passes, and clothing.

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