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Database-Based Medication Profiles of Substituted Patients with Opioid Dependence Syndrome

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Background: The estimated number of opioid addicts in Switzerland is approximately 22,000-27,000. Many of them participate in a substitution-based treatment, where a controlled dispensing of legally accepted medication takes place. Methylphenidate, approved for the treatment of the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), is regarded as a promising substitution substance for cocaine. However, study results are inconsistent. All drug prescriptions and dispenses of the Outpatient Addiction Services (ADS) are registered in a database (MUBA database).

Objective: This study is a first-time retrospective analysis of the patient collective, the drug prescriptions and dispensing practice at ADS Basel.

Methods: Raw data from all patients who participated from 2002 to 2013 in the substitution program at ADS were extracted from the MUBA database. After processing and editing of data, the patient population and (substitution-) medication was described and analyzed.

Results: From 2002 to 2013 the number of patients increased from 112 to 154 and their age from 37.1 to 45.0 years. Additionally, an increase of substances from 2.71 to 3.55 per patient was observed. Most substances were used in the therapeutic area of the nervous system, which includes all substitution medications and methylphenidate preparations. Regarding methylphenidate there was a change in use of the individual preparations and an increase of long-acting substances from 8.04% to 16.24% applied to all patients.

Conclusion: The evaluated data are of very high quality and ensure a good representativeness. Treatment facilities must be prepared and adjust their setting for an aging patient collective. Additionally, it is essential to work on a uniform prescribing practice for methylphenidate, considering the harm reduction approach, which aims to reduce the individual and societal risks and harms of addictive drug use. The findings of this study are not only of great clinical relevance, but also provide an important basis for future investigations.

Key words: Opioid-dependent, substitution-based treatment, methylphenidate, Outpatient Addiction Services (ADS), MUBA database, harm reduction.