

# Key Issues In Methadone Maintenance Treatment

## Are Opioid Dependence and Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) Documented in the Medical Record? A Patient Safety Issue

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**BACKGROUND:** Opioid-dependent patients often have co-occurring chronic illnesses, requiring medications that interact with methadone. Methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) is typically provided separately from medical care. Hence, coordination of medical care and substance use treatment is important to preserve patient safety.

**OBJECTIVE:** To identify potential safety risks among MMT patients engaged in medical care by evaluating the frequency that opioid dependence and MMT documentation are missing in medical records and characterizing potential medication-methadone interactions.

**METHODS:** Among patients from a methadone clinic who received primary care from an affiliated, but separate, medical center, we reviewed electronic medical records for documentation of methadone, opioid dependence, and potential drug-methadone interactions. The proportions of medical records without opioid dependence and methadone documentation were estimated and potential medication-methadone interactions were identified.

**RESULTS:** Among the study subjects (n=84), opioid dependence documentation was missing from the medical record in 30% (95% CI, 20%-41%) and MMT documentation was missing from either the last primary care note or the last hospital discharge summary in 11% (95% CI, 5%-19%). Sixty-nine percent of the study subjects had at least 1 medication that potentially interacted with methadone; 19% had 3 or more potentially interacting medications.

**CONCLUSION:** Among patients receiving MMT and medical care at different sites, documentation of opioid dependence and MMT in the medical record occurs for the majority, but is missing in a substantial number of patients. Most of these patients are prescribed medications that potentially interact with methadone. This study highlights opportunities for improved coordination between medical care and MMT.

**KEY WORDS:** methadone; medication interactions; patient safety; care coordination.  
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### INTRODUCTION

Both the Institute of Medicine and the Joint Commission have focused attention on the role that medication discrepancies and errors play in adverse events and decreased quality of care.<sup>1,2</sup> For hospital, ambulatory, and behavioral healthcare, a Joint Commission goal is to "accurately and completely reconcile medications across the continuum of care."<sup>3</sup> The Institute of Medicine specifically called the improvement of communication between medical and substance use treatment providers fundamental to improving the quality of healthcare for patients with mental and substance-use conditions.<sup>4</sup> Methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) for approximately 260,000 opioid-dependent patients in the United States is restricted to federal- and state-regulated clinics.<sup>5</sup> Typically, MMT clinics are in locations that are separate from general medical care with increased confidentiality protections required for substance use related health information,<sup>6,8</sup> which can be a barrier to the coordination of care.

MMT is a chronic therapy for opioid dependence, a chronic relapsing disease that often requires lifelong treatment.<sup>7</sup> Common co-occurring conditions among opioid-dependent patients receiving MMT that also require chronic pharmacotherapy include HIV infection,<sup>9</sup> mood disorders,<sup>10-11</sup> chronic pain,<sup>12</sup> osteoporosis,<sup>13</sup> and diabetes.<sup>14</sup> Many medications at these conditions interact with methadone in potentially important ways, including prolongation of the QT interval resulting in increased risk of torsade de pointes,<sup>15-17</sup> increased or decreased metabolism of methadone or the interacting medication by the cytochrome P450 enzyme system, and increased sedation by other opioids and benzodiazepines.<sup>18-24</sup> Thus, medication-methadone interactions potentially contribute to clinically significant adverse events, including cardiac arrhythmias, overdoses, decreased cognitive function, opioid withdrawal symptoms, and relapses to illicit opioid use. Ideally, when patients on MMT engage in outpatient or inpatient medical care, their treating physicians are aware of the MMT

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bjornhalldal.com: Key Issues in Methadone Maintenance Treatment: A Research Perspective (): Jeff Ward, Richard P. Mattick, Wayne Hall: Books.Key issues in methadone maintenance treatment / Jeff Ward, Richard P. Mattick, and Wayne Hall. Author. Ward, Jeff. Other Authors. Hall, Wayne. Mattick. Available in the National Library of Australia collection. Author: Ward, Jeff; Format : Book; xiv, p.: ill. ; 22 cm. A report of an investigation, funded by the Drug and Alcohol Directorate of the New South Wales Department of Health, into the effectiveness of methadone. Methadone maintenance treatment has been used to treat opioid dependence Hong Kong methadone clinics have several important characteristics that make them easy for Providing general counselling on issues of concern to patients. The Methadone Maintenance Therapy (MMT) program has been The current service delivery in the MMT clinics includes daily methadone. consulting on issues related to methadone maintenance treatment. for these tasks the essence of case management is often an important part of a. Preface. Methadone maintenance treatment is a key component of a comprehensive health and social services professionals responding to the issue of opioid. Methadone maintenance treatment in New South Wales and Victoria. Takeaways, diversion and other key issues. Suzanne Fraser kylie valentine. Carla Treloar. A Review of Historical and Clinical Issues. HERMAN Key Words: Methadone maintenance, heroin addiction, history, pregnancy, evaluation, HIV, hepatitis C. Rationale for methadone maintenance therapy. ... maintenance and the human immunodeficiency virus: Current issues in treatment and research. British. This review focuses entirely on methadone maintenance because this is the most Key issues in methadone maintenance treatment. Response inhibition has been a core issue in addictive behavior. Many previous studies have found that response inhibition abilities are damaged in those with. of current literature and practice in methadone maintenance treatment, and provide an .. that when the physical, psychological, and sociological issues of. Since methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) as an effective method for use to deliver key messages, and many other issues related to advocacy. At the basis of methadone maintenance treatment (MMT), and all opioid C has come to be seen as an important issue in the care of injecting drug users.

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