

Is Prescribing Higher Doses of Methadone Likely to Promote Elevated Drop-out Rates?

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TO THE EDITOR: During my daily reading in various libraries, I have found in the summer issue of JDI, Journal of Drug Issues, published by Florida State University, an article by Wim van den Brink, Director of the Amsterdam Institute of Addiction and Research and Professor of Psychiatry, on the "Medical co-prescription of heroin to chronic treatment resistant methadone patients in the Netherlands" (1). Among the reasons quoted there for the resistance to methadone, is an "unwillingness to give up heroin use by taking higher doses of methadone because higher methadone doses would prevent [patients] from experiencing the euphoric effects of heroin. Consequently prescribing higher doses of methadone is likely to promote elevated drop-out rates". The quotation is from Korf DJ, Lettink D and Bouma, in a paper written in Dutch and published in the Amsterdam Bureau voor Onderzoek en Statisticj, 1998. As the author is a major authority in the field of addiction, this hypothesis about a minority of drug addicts should be taken into consideration.

Might it be advisable to open a discussion?

References

1. van den Brink W., Hendricks V. M., van Ree J. M. (1999): Medical co-prescription of heroin to chronic treatment resistant methadone patients in the Netherlands. J Drug Issues. 29(3): 587-608.

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