

Abstinence Incentive Effects in a Short-Term Outpatient Detoxification Program

Despite being widely available, outpatient detoxification has limited efficacy as a stand-alone treatment. This study examined whether abstinence-contingent incentives would improve outcomes for patients entering outpatient opiate detoxification. Participants (N = 211) received a 100 US dollars voucher on the last day of detoxification either contingent on opiate and cocaine abstinence or noncontingently. Urine samples were collected at intake, on Wednesday, Friday (the last day of detoxification), and the following Monday. Among contingent-voucher participants, 31% were drug-free on Friday compared with 18% of noncontingent controls ($Z = 2.4$, $p < .05$). Few (12-13%) participants tested negative on Monday. Results support the ability of vouchers to produce modest improvements in abstinence initiation rates during brief detoxification but suggest that additional interventions are needed to sustain improvements.