

A Study of Methadone Maintenance for Male Prisoners: Three-Month Post-Release Outcomes

This study examined benefits of methadone maintenance among prerelease prison inmates. Incarcerated males with pre-incarceration heroin dependence (n = 197) were randomly assigned to (a) group educational counseling (counseling only); (b) counseling, with opportunity to begin methadone maintenance on release (counseling + transfer); or (c) counseling and methadone maintenance in prison, with opportunity to continue methadone maintenance on release (counseling + methadone). At 90-day follow-up, counseling + methadone participants were significantly more likely than counseling-only and counseling + transfer participants to attend drug treatment ($p = .0001$) and less likely to be reincarcerated ($p = .019$). Counseling + methadone and counseling + transfer participants were significantly less likely (all $ps < .05$) to report heroin use, cocaine use, and criminal involvement than counseling-only participants. Follow-up is needed to determine whether these findings hold over a longer period.