

Abstract

This study examined the uses of diverted methadone and buprenorphine among opiate-addicted individuals recruited from new admissions to methadone programs and from out-of-treatment individuals recruited from the streets. Self-report data regarding diversion were obtained from surveys and semi-structured qualitative interviews. Approximately 16% ($n=84$) of the total sample ($N=515$) reported using diverted (street) methadone 2-3 times per week for six months or more, and for an average of 7.8 days ($SD=10.3$) within the past month. The group reporting lifetime use of diverted methadone as compared to the group that did not report such use was less likely to use heroin and cocaine in the 30 days prior to admission ($ps < .01$) and had lower ASI Drug Composite scores ($p < .05$). Participants in our qualitative sub-sample ($n=22$) indicated that street methadone was more widely used than street buprenorphine and that both drugs were largely used as self-medication for detoxification and withdrawal symptoms. Participants reported using low dosages and no injection of either medication was reported.

Key words: methadone, buprenorphine, diversion, mixed-methods