

Attitudes Toward Buprenorphine and Methadone Among Opioid-Dependent Individuals

Attitudes and beliefs about drug abuse treatment have long been known to shape response to that treatment. Two major pharmacological alternatives are available for opioid dependence: methadone, which has been available for the past 40 years, and buprenorphine, a recently introduced medication. This mixed-methods study examined the attitudes of opioid-dependent individuals toward methadone and buprenorphine. A total of 195 participants ($n = 140$ who were enrolling in one of six Baltimore area methadone programs and $n = 55$ who were out-of-treatment) were administered the Attitudes toward Methadone and toward Buprenorphine Scales, and a subset ($n = 46$) received an ethnographic interview. The in-treatment group had significantly more positive attitudes toward methadone than did the out-of-treatment group ($p < .001$), while they did not differ in their attitudes toward buprenorphine. Both groups had significantly more positive attitudes toward buprenorphine than methadone. Addressing these attitudes may increase treatment entry and retention.