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Combining Treatments for Opioid Addictions

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Abstract

In 2018 the National Survey of Drug Use and Health reported that 9.9 million people misused prescription pain relievers out of 10.3 million who reported using opioids. Opioid abuse has grown from just being considered a medical dilemma, it has clearly become a social and economic issue (Eaton and Vettese, 2020). This proposal will be investigating the combination of pre-existing pharmacological treatments and support group therapy. This is not a new concept however because of the nature of opioid addictions having severe withdrawal symptoms most treatments are primarily medication base. Drug addictions have been known to carry a negative stigma which can lead to prescribed opioid abusers feeling isolated. By adding a support group therapy, like the one used in alcohol abuse such as Alcoholics Anonymous, to the medication base therapy the opioid patients can lessen the internalized stigma and receive the help needed. The proposed methods will be observing 10 clinical settings which will divide their opioid patients into two groups receiving either the combine therapy or just the pharmacological therapy

Specific Aim: To combine existing pharmacological treatments and support group therapy to lower negative stigmas and rise sobriety success .

Hypothesis: The group with both the pharmacological treatment and the support group therapy will have fewer negative stigmas and higher success rates

Introduction

Opioids

- Are a class of drugs that usually intended for pain relief
- They can produce a euphoria sensation which can lead to misuse (Blake et al. 2020)

Opioid Crisis

- Opioid overdose has been a problematic struggle in the last three decades (Fig 1)
- There was an alarming rise of opioid related deaths in 2018 leading U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to declare a public health emergency.

Medication based treatments

Current Pharmacological treatments

- Methadone
 - Introduced to the public in 1947
 - Full agonist targets opioids receptors
 - There is still a risk of forming dependence and overdosing
 - Due to stigmas this treatments has many regulations limiting availability (Blanco-Gandia et al. 2020)
- Buprenorphine
 - Partial agonist to prevent withdrawal symptom and reduce cravings
 - Overdosing is less likely due to being a partial agonist
 - Recommended treatment for opioid dependent patient with HIV or pregnant patients
 - Has less regulations allowing physician to treat in office-based setting (Bonhomme et al. 2012)

Stigmas

What are stigmas?

- a social or society phenomenon which shames or discredits a person or circumstance
- Drug addictions have been viewed negatively in the publics eye
- Over 70% of Americans believe opioid addiction is due to poor individual choice and lack of discipline (Affiliated Faculty Beth McGinty)
- Barriers can made between opioid addicted patient and healthcare worker
- Further isolation for opioid addict. (Blake et al. 2020)

Proposed Methods

Set-Up

10 clinical providing opioid treatment locations

Participants

Each location will be divided into two groups.
Group A will just be offered the pharmacological treatment
Group B will be offered the pharmacological treatment and a support group therapy

Questionnaires

Both groups will be provided pre- and post-questionnaires on the stigmas they had and the overall experience.
The second questionnaire will be given each time they go in for there treatments going over their attendance and progress.

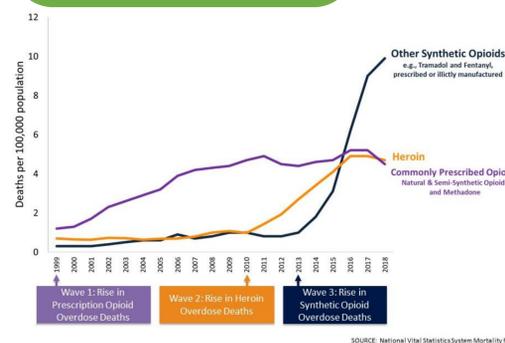


Fig 1. Shows the waves of opioids being used.



Results

- The expected results would hopefully show that surveys for the combined groups had more positive experiences in treatments and support than in the medication base only treatment.
- This would help to see if the stigmas the patients had about the treatment and relationship with healthcare worker had become positive
- The expected results would also show higher attendance rates on the combined treatments.

Conclusions

- By combining the existing pharmacological treatment with a support group therapy previous stigmatization of patients can hopefully lessen and maximize their success rate.
- Harm reduction is considered as providing practical strategies tries to the meet the patients where they are at to improve their health and prevent further overdoses (Eaton and Vettese, 2020).

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