

Patient satisfaction with counseling services in a methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) program in Ho Chi Minh City, in Vietnam

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Background: With 56% prevalence of HIV-infection among IDUs, the City initiated a MMT program on May 19th, 2008. By the end of 2011, more than 1,200 patients had been admitted to the program. They were provided a comprehensive care system, including medical treatment, HIV referral, linkages, and counseling. The counseling services is an important component of the program as it helps patients to be psychologically stable during a long-term treatment. This paper presents patients' satisfaction with the counseling services delivered in the program.

Methods: A total of 250 patients participated in the study (22 in dose-probing stage, 19 in dose-adjusting stage, 28 in dose-stabilizing stage, and 181 in dose-maintenance stage) in HCMC. A self-administered questionnaire was utilized to evaluate the level of patient satisfaction with the program's counseling services. Counselors are trained with the knowledge of psychological and social counseling to patients being MMT treatment.

Results: Out of the 250 patients with 88% expressed that they were satisfied with counseling services they received, 91.6% felt confident to ask for advice from their counselors, 84% had good relationships 91% felt comfortable to share their feelings and personal issues with their counselors, and 92% indicated that the counseling services they received met their needs. Among the surveyed patients, 94.4% indicated that their counselors were willing to listen to their thoughts and aspirations, 84% said that if they got health problems they were promptly provided referral services to a clinician promptly, 89% believed that the counseling approach is patient-centered.

Conclusions: Results from the study indicated that the counseling activities in the program in HCMC were highly appreciated and satisfying by the patients in the program. The counselors must be specifically trained to counsel the participants in the program who are at different stages of IDUs.

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Dextromethorphan may attenuate inflammatory and dependence in opioid dependence/addiction

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Recent studies show that overactive glia cells and their secretions, especially proinflammatory cytokines, might be related to the development of opioid dependence. We evaluated whether the inflammatory process is related to the progression of opioid dependence. A double-blind, randomly stratified clinical trial to investigate whether add-on dextromethorphan (60-120 mg/day), attenuated inflammation in opioid dependent patients. All participants (107 opioid dependent patients and 84 nondependent healthy controls) were recruited from National Cheng Kung University Hospital. Their plasma cytokine levels were measured to evaluate the effect of add-on dextromethorphan. Plasma TNF- α levels were significantly higher in long-term opioid dependent patients than in healthy controls ($p < 0.001$). Chronic opioid-use-induced TNF- α levels were significantly ($p < 0.05$) attenuated in patients treated for 12 weeks with add-on dextromethorphan, in addition, both tolerance to methadone and opioid dependence were significantly ($p < 0.05$) attenuated in patients received dextromethorphan. These results suggested that dextromethorphan may be used to attenuate inflammatory process and inhibit tolerance of methadone and opioid abuse in opioid dependent patients.

Biography

Professor Ru-Band Lu had his MD from National Defense Medical center, and then received full resident training in Tri-service General Hospital as well as a faculty (lecture) in National Defense Medical Center. He worked as a clinical fellowship of psychopharmacologist in Baylor Medical College, Houston for a year and then in Tri-service General Hospital and National Defense Medical Center after he's going back home. Since then, he started his studies in molecular genetics and built up treatment model in multiple substance dependence/addiction. He has found the neuroimmunological changes using off-label drugs in opioid dependence/addiction and built up a new model in treating substance dependence/addiction.

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