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Buprenorphine tapering with and without long acting antagonists

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Drug addiction is a chronic relapsing disorder and substitution therapy with buprenorphine once started is generally recommended for indefinite period of time with stable patients since different studies report high relapse rate after stoppage of buprenorphine. However some stable patients want to stop the therapy for various reasons. We report a series of 34 patients who were stopped from taking buprenorphine and after that either only comfort medicines were given or patients were given two long acting preparation of antagonist Naltrexone implants. All these patients were psychosocially stable at least for 6 months before stopping buprenorphine. In all these patients a seven day detoxification from the buprenorphine was done. In all these patients weekly telephonic calls were made and urine was tested for Opioid either on clinic visit or by significant others at home for six months. In first group of 16 patients, only comfort medicines were given after seven days. After three months, eight patients tested negative for urine Opioid, two patients went out of country permanently, one patient was untraceable and five had relapsed back to Opioid use. After six months 4 patients tested negative to urine Opioids (25%), 3 were untraceable and seven had relapsed back to Opioid use. In second (Naltrexone implant) group of 18 patients, first implant was done after seven days of detox and second implant was put after 12 weeks of first implant. After 3 months, 13 patients tested negative for Opioid and were re-implanted, 2 were untraceable and 3 had relapsed. After 6 months 11 implanted patients tested negative for Opioid (61%), 2 were untraceable and 5 had relapsed. We find implant therapy as safe and effective method to reduce relapse to Opioids.

Biography

Singh Jaswinder Gandhi is working with a non-profit organization Amrit Drug de Addiction and Research Foundation. He has published his research papers in many national and international journals and has presented his work in many national and international conferences. He has written two books on drug addiction which are being used as reference books in northern India. More than 27000 copies of his first book and 5000 copies of his second book have been distributed so far free of cost by Amrit drug de Addiction and Research Foundation. He is also producing a film against drug addiction in which he has written the story, dialogues and screenplay. He has passed the certification exam by ISAM scoring 80% marks. He is working as a consultant reviewer for the website Buppractice.com which is funded by NIDA.

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