



Media Attention to Heroin Use in New York State

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Editorial

In New York State, heroin use has gained more attention within the media in recent months. Although media is an effective way to disseminate information to the public, there are significant factors that are omitted from these reports. Within the field of substance use treatment, clinicians are having more and more difficulty facilitating the process of referring clients to the appropriate level of care. There are fewer treatment options for detox and clients, who have chronic relapses, have difficulty being readmitted to the appropriate level of care.

According to Wright and Sathe [1], the number of treatment facilities has declined from 2002 to 2006, in New York State. Health insurance companies determine the number of days an individual will be treated at an inpatient rehabilitation facility in order for the facility to receive payment for services rendered. If heroin use is a societal concern, the logical progression would be that health insurance benefits would comply with the recommendations from the clinicians in the field. Additionally, it would be beneficial to have more treatment facilities for individuals to receive services.

In 2011, heroin is reported to be one of the most commonly used drugs [2]. However, the data presented by the Treatment Episode Data

Set, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration indicate that heroin has remained statistically constant, with little variation, between 1992 and 2011 [2]. It appears that the specific addictive substances that gain media attention have less to do with prevalence of use and more to do with public health concerns and individual interests.

Drug and alcohol abuse continues to a persistent problem in . The more imperative issues should exclude the sensationalization of a particular drug in the media. Instead, the focus should be oriented towards accessibility to treatment services, quality of care, and stability of funding.

References

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2. (2013) Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) 2001 – 2011. National Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.