Baseline findings from Project NEAT: Nicotine as treatment for tobacco smoking


Introduction / Issues

Smoking rates in alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment settings are much higher than in the general Australian population. Few smoking cessation strategies with long term effectiveness are available. Project NEAT is a randomised controlled trial testing the effectiveness of Nicotine Vaporised Products (NVP) compared to the current best practice combination Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), when used following discharge from residential AOD withdrawal services. Both groups receive Quitline counselling support.

Design and Methods

A two-arm, single-blinded, parallel-group randomised trial with a 6-month post-intervention follow-up (9 months following baseline) was conducted. Participants were service users from five AOD withdrawal units across three states of Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria), aged 18+ years who smoked daily and were interested in quitting. Researchers recruited participants during treatment, completed a baseline survey, and randomised them. Participants received their first Quitline call during treatment. At discharge, all participants received a discharge pack containing either NVPs or NRT, depending on allocation.

Key Findings

This paper will present baseline results, describe the sample and intervention conditions. The study population of 358 participants (to date) is 57% males, 42% females aged 18+ who smoke tobacco daily and primarily receiving alcohol use treatment (78%). Seventy one percent of participants had never tried quitting with 58% wanted to remain smoke-free after discharge.

Discussions and Conclusions: From a public health perspective, this approach has the potential to have tremendous reach into a priority population for smoking cessation, especially when the population have a high willingness to cease smoking (67%).

Implications for Practice or Policy:

This research has significant potential to influence policy and clinical practice. The method of using NVP’s within health services, under clinical oversight via a prescription, is a model that aligns with Australia’s regulatory framework.

Disclosure of Interest: None