

A clinical research network approach to a trial of oral lisdexamfetamine for the treatment of acute methamphetamine withdrawal

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Introduction / Issues: There is currently no evidence-based pharmacological treatment for methamphetamine (MA) withdrawal. We used a clinical research network approach to develop and undertake a pharmacotherapy study.

Approach: A network approach was used to facilitate the study concept and design. This leveraged the experience and reach of the New South Wales Drug and Alcohol Clinical Research Improvement Network (DACRIN), and the National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs (NCCRED) Methamphetamine and Emerging Drugs Clinical Research Network Working Group (WG). There was a strong commitment from partners to the development of a pilot study, with the aim to seek competitive funding for a multi-centre trial.

Results: An open-label pilot trial of lisdexamfetamine for acute methamphetamine withdrawal (the OLAM study) was implemented effectively, demonstrating the feasibility of clinical research networks to collaborate towards a multi-centre RCT. The approach was sufficiently flexible to address uncontrollable external factors (pivoting in response to the COVID-19.). Study results will underpin the RCT, thereby strengthening the proposed methods.

Discussion and conclusions: Harnessing the experience and clinical reach of the DACRIN and WG, we undertook a collaborative approach to the design of a pharmacotherapy study for MA withdrawal. Strong clinical partnerships help connect research directly to patients, and enhance the capacity for translation of results. Results of the pilot study will inform the larger RCT design, and its implementation will be facilitated through the networks.

Implications for Practice of Policy: This approach demonstrated that clinical research networks can collaborate to enhance clinical research capacity.

Implications for Translational Research: Research developed by clinicians improves the likelihood that results will be translated. Clinicians are able to inform study design to ensure the questions and methods are clinical relevant and implementable.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: This study was funded by the National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs (NCCRED). NCCRED receives funding from the Australian Government Department of Health. The authors have no other relevant interests to declare.