

Evaluating community pharmacy performance in the Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence program based on operational activity and pharmacist reported outcomes and experiences

LIAM M ELLIOTT¹, GARY J ALTOBELLI^{2,3}, JACINTA L JOHNSON^{1,3}, SONA SAMADIAN^{2,3}

¹UniSA Clinical and Health Sciences, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia, ²Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia, SA Health, Adelaide, Australia, ³SA Pharmacy, SA Health, Adelaide, Australia

Email: ellm005@unisa.mymail.edu.au

Introduction/Issues: Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence (MATOD) is a harm minimisation strategy centred around daily supervised dosing, often in community pharmacies. This investigation aimed to establish a baseline and identify trends in operational MATOD and other harm minimisation activities in South Australian (SA) community pharmacies.

Method/Approach: Quantitative operational data describing MATOD provision in SA pharmacies in 2019/2020 were extracted from published regulatory government agency and non-government organisation datasets. Additional data describing the perspectives of SA community pharmacists providing MATOD were collected using an electronic survey (n = 51) in 2021. Results were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Key Findings: 89% of SA MATOD clients dosed at community pharmacies. While methadone was the most common MATOD treatment option, use of buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) is increasing. MATOD pharmacies were relatively evenly distributed across SA with the greatest concentration in Greater Adelaide. Pharmacies situated near accredited MATOD prescribers tended to service more MATOD clients. Community pharmacies with large numbers of MATOD clients were more willing to accept additional clients. Participation in the Take-Home Naloxone Pilot and Clean Needle Program were associated with servicing more MATOD clients. Most pharmacists were aware of buprenorphine depot formulations, with increased awareness associated with greater willingness to administer them in the future. 80% of pharmacies had received formal MATOD training; while 81% reported interest in future MATOD training.

Discussions and Conclusions: The study established a baseline and identified trends in operational MATOD activity of SA community pharmacies. This evaluation could be repeated in the future to facilitate planning and provision of Drug and Alcohol Services SA (DASSA)/SA Pharmacy services.

Implications for Practice or Policy: These results allow prioritisation of DASSA/SA Pharmacy resources to support SA community pharmacists, improve client access and enhance new and existing community pharmacy MATOD services.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: No conflicts of interest declared.