Designing a prospective, multisite implementation-efficacy trial of a collaborative prescriber-pharmacist model for Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence: The EPIC-MATOD Trial

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Introduction: Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence (MATOD) is clinically effective and cost effective, however a lack of prescribers limits access. Collaborative care arrangements can address barriers to treatment for MATOD, but have yet to be developed or trialed in Australia.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews (n=25) were conducted with pharmacists, prescribers and consumers to inform development of a collaborative model of care aimed at improving access to MATOD. Interview guides were underpinned by the domains of the COM-B model. A Clinical Reference Group with lived and clinical experience was engaged to co-design a model. An implementation study was designed to gather clinical and cost effectiveness data.

Results: There was strong support for collaborative care, with the main perceived benefits including improved access, continuity of care, and leveraging pharmacists' engagement with consumers. The Enhancing Pharmacists Involvement in Care (EPIC)-MATOD study was formulated to evaluate clinical and implementation outcomes among people with opioid dependence receiving care under the collaborative model. We will conduct a prospective, multisite, implementation trial design with outcomes mapped to the RE-AIM framework. The primary clinical outcome will be patient retention in treatment at 26 weeks. The primary implementation outcome will be treatment capacity, based on prescriber time required to provide treatment through collaborative care compared with traditional care. A range of secondary outcomes will be examined.

Conclusion: We identified preferred features of collaborative care, including being protocol driven using individualised treatment plans. A pilot study will now test the model of care in practice and collect information that will inform broader implementation.

Implications for Translational Research: The implementation study (ACTRN1262100087184) will provide important information on outcomes and acceptability of collaborative care for MATOD, as well as costs and key considerations in delivering a collaborative model of care in Australia and other countries where similar treatment barriers exist.

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