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Impact of COVID-19 on Individuals with Opioid Use Disorder’s access to Services and Substance use

Camryn Bernheimer, Erin Kelly, PhD, Lara Weinstein, MD*
Introduction

• Opioid crisis has devastated Philadelphia on an individual, community, and SES level
• PA exceeds national averages for opioid dependence and abuse
  – 6th highest drug overdose rate in the nation
• Improved access and quality is needed
• Improvement to logistical, administrative, and stigma related barriers
• COVID-19 disrupted the lives of people globally and exacerbated existing crises, such as the opioid epidemic.
Objectives & Hypothesis

• Research Question
  – How has COVID-19 impacted MAT service utilization, access to care, and substance use for individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD)?

• Hypothesis
  – MAT service use and access to care decreased, while substance use increased in patients with OUD after COVID-19 when compared to those prior to COVID-19.
Approach & Results

• Study design- medical chart review
  – Demographics
  – Number of MAT, PCP, and BHC visits
  – Urine drug testing
• MAT patients at Stephen Klein Wellness Center and Pathways to Housing PA
  – n = 170
• COVID-19 was defined as 3/14/2020
  – 3 months prior to COVID-19 compared to 3 months post COVID-19.
• Analysis
  – Frequencies and Fischer's exact test for demographic analysis
  – Independent t-test to compare categorical-continuous relationships
  – Paired t-test when evaluating pre-post relationships
Approach & Results

• 91% retention rate
• 26 new patients Post COVID-19
  – No significant difference in demographics or location utilized
• Average number of MAT and BHC visits decreased significantly post COVID-19, while PCP visits stayed the same
  – No significant difference in patients meeting appointment guidelines (1 MAT visit per month)
  – Post COVID-19 MAT visits
    • Significant difference in Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic patients
    • No significant difference
      – white vs. non-white patients
      – female vs. male
      – Location utilized
• Urine drug screening
  – Overall decrease in the number of positive and negative tests post COVID-19
  – Proportion of tests that were positive pre vs. post
    • Significant decrease in positive buprenorphine tests
    • No significant difference for opioids, cocaine, marijuana, or fentanyl positive tests
Conclusions

• Patients are being retained in OUD treatment regardless of demographic variables.
• OUD patients are overall coming in for less appointments and less adherent to buprenorphine.
• This could help create new guidelines for how best to treat OUD patients during COVID-19.
Future Directions

- Follow up if there has been changes over time
- Determine if telemedicine has played a role in results
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