

Role of family support in the efficacy of methadone therapy

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INTRODUCTION

According to certain studies, opiate addiction is a significant health and social problem in society. Opiate substitution treatment has been shown to be very effective in the treatment of opiate addiction.(1,2) But of course psychosocial treatment as well as family support is necessary to achieve complete stabilization of the patient. (3)

Family plays a crucial role in improvement and treatment continuation of individuals under methadone treatment. Understanding, supporting, and accepting the patient by the family and friends are factors influencing the treatment and rehabilitation process (3,4).

The AIM of this study is precisely to perceive the influence of family support in the effectiveness of methadone treatment

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The prospective study was conducted at the Day Hospital for Addictions department of Psychiatric Hospital Skopje over a period of six months. Two groups of 30 heroin addicts who was entering in methadone treatment were evaluated. Group A with family support and Group B without family support. Subjects from both groups were aged 28 ± 14 years with a daily methadone dose of 60-120 mg/methadone. Patients who had other somatic or psychiatric diseases were excluded from the study.

In the evaluation of both groups, a non-standardized questionnaire was used to determine (gender, age, marital status, employment and family support) among the patients. The frequency of abuse of more psychoactive substances (PAS) was determined through anamnesis, hetero anamnesis, somatic examination (intravenous examination) as well as through screening of urine for the presence of psychoactive substances. Student's t-test was used for statistical processing of the data.

RESULTS:

The obtained results in our study indicated that there is a significant statistical difference in PAS abuse between the two studied groups in the period before treatment and after six months of treatment with methadone therapy and family support ($p=0.001$). So , the frequency of PAS abuse was statistically significantly reduced in the group of patients with family support in the period of six months of treatment in relation of the patients without family support in the treatment. And also , patients with family support had a higher percentage of work engagement($p=0,001$) .Which means that there is a close relationship between family support, their stabilization and work efficiency

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics and frequency of psychoactive substances (PAS) abuse between examination groups

Parameter	Group A with family support (means \pm SD)	Group B with family support (means \pm SD)	t-test	P level
Age (years)	29.5 \pm 6.4	27.3 \pm 6.2	1,12	0,07
Marital status (married/unmarried)	73,3% / 26,7%	37,3%/62,7%	2,14	0,01
employment	64,3%/35,7%	35,5%/65,5%	2,74	0,001
Use of psychoactive substances	95,5%/0,5%	74,6%/25,4%	2,79	0,001

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that family support significantly increased the mean of the individuals' support scores ($P < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with the results of some previous studies (3,4,5), who showed that having high social support played a great role in confronting and better adaptability of addicts' families with stressors and providing their social and mental health, and the also some study who indicated that family and interaction, family challenges, and family structure were the main layers effective in the relapse process (6,7). In explaining these results, it can be mentioned that the cold emotional atmosphere exacerbates indifference among the members of the addicted family, the use of drugs and even failure in drug rehabilitation(1,7). The lack of collaboration, cooperation, unity, and intimate relationships in the family results in deprivations, which makes family members ready for drug abuse(2,3).

However, the findings in our study do not correlate with the thoughts of some other authors, according to which an overprotective family environment can lead to the fragility of the family system, i.e. support, and result in the ineffectiveness of the treatment(1,7) .

CONCLUSION

The obtained results confirmed that family support has a great influence on the stabilization of methadone treatment patients

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