

RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

Long-Acting Buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder

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Research Summary

This study evaluated the effectiveness of long-acting buprenorphine (XR-Bup), a monthly injectable formulation, for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD). The findings demonstrate that XR-Bup significantly improves treatment adherence, reduces opioid use, and decreases healthcare utilization, making it a valuable option for patients who struggle with daily medication regimens. The study highlights the potential of XR-Bup to enhance long-term recovery outcomes and reduce the burden on healthcare systems.

Study Design:

- » **Design:** Observational study
- » **Participants:** 227 patients diagnosed with moderate to severe OUD
- » **Intervention:** Monthly injections of extended-release buprenorphine (XR-Bup)
- » **Duration:** 6 months
- » **Setting:** Outpatient addiction treatment clinics
- » **Data Collection:** Healthcare utilization data (ED visits, hospitalizations), opioid use (self-report and urine drug screens), and patient satisfaction surveys

Study Findings:

1. Improved Adherence:

- » XR-Bup eliminated the need for daily dosing, leading to significantly higher adherence rates compared to sublingual buprenorphine.
- » Patients reported that the once-monthly injection was more convenient and less disruptive to their daily lives.

2. Reduced Opioid Use:

- » Patients on XR-Bup showed a 60% reduction in opioid use during the study period, as measured by self-reports and urine drug screens.
- » The reduction in opioid use was sustained throughout the 6-month treatment period.

3. Decreased Healthcare Utilization:

- » Patients on XR-Bup had 40% fewer emergency department (ED) visits and 35% fewer hospitalizations related to OUD compared to baseline.
- » The reduction in healthcare utilization was attributed to improved treatment adherence and reduced opioid use.

4. Patient Satisfaction:

- » 85% of patients reported being "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with XR-Bup, citing its convenience and

Study Findings:

- » effectiveness as key factors.
- » Patients also reported improved quality of life, including better relationships and increased ability to maintain employment.

5. Safety and Tolerability:

- » XR-Bup was well-tolerated, with no serious adverse events reported.
- » Common side effects included mild injection site reactions, which resolved without intervention.

Study Limitation & Future Directions:

Limitations:

- » The study was observational, which limits the ability to establish causality.
- » The sample size was relatively small, and the study population was primarily urban, which may limit generalizability to rural or underserved populations.
- » The study did not include a control group, making it difficult to compare XR-Bup directly to other treatments.

Future Directions:

- » Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are needed to confirm the findings and establish the comparative effectiveness of XR-Bup versus other MOUD options.
- » Future studies should explore the long-term outcomes of XR-Bup, including its impact on overdose rates and mortality.
- » Research should also investigate the cost-effectiveness of XR-Bup and its potential to reduce healthcare costs on a larger scale.

Clinical Implications of the Research

Clinical Implications for Payers:



- » XR-Bup has the potential to reduce overall healthcare costs by decreasing ED visits, hospitalizations, and relapse-related expenses.
- » Payers should consider expanding coverage for XR-Bup to improve patient outcomes and reduce long-term costs.

Clinical Implications for Provider Organizations & Health Systems:



- » Incorporating XR-Bup into treatment protocols can reduce the burden on emergency and inpatient services, allowing for better resource allocation.
- » Health systems should advocate for policies that improve access to XR-Bup, particularly for high-risk populations such as those with a history of frequent relapses or overdose.

Clinical Implications for Clinical Professionals:



- » XR-Bup should be considered for patients who struggle with adherence to daily medications or who have a history of frequent relapses.
- » Providers should educate patients about the benefits of XR-Bup, including its convenience, effectiveness, and potential to improve quality of life.

Clinical Implications for Consumers:



- » XR-Bup offers a convenient, once-monthly treatment option that can improve adherence and reduce the risk of relapse.
- » Patients should be informed about the benefits of XR-Bup and supported in overcoming any barriers to access, such as cost or insurance coverage.

Administrative & Business Implications

Administrative Implications for Payers:



- » Expanding coverage for XR-Bup could lead to significant cost savings by reducing healthcare utilization and improving patient outcomes.
- » Payers should consider value-based reimbursement models that incentivize the use of long-acting formulations like XR-Bup.

Administrative Implications for Provider Organizations & Health Systems:



- » Tracking outcomes related to XR-Bup, such as treatment retention and healthcare utilization, can support quality improvement initiatives and influence policy changes.
- » Health systems should invest in training and infrastructure to support the administration of XR-Bup, including ensuring that staff are trained in proper injection techniques.

Administrative Implications for Clinical Professionals:



- » Providers should advocate for better insurance coverage and patient support services to improve access to XR-Bup.
- » Educating clinical teams on the benefits of XR-Bup can enhance its integration into broader treatment models and improve patient outcomes.

Other Considerations

Integration into Broader Treatment Models:

- » XR-Bup should be incorporated into comprehensive care models that include behavioral health, primary care, and social support services.
- » Collaborative care models can help address the multifaceted needs of patients with OUD and improve long-term outcomes.

Quality Metrics & Reporting:

- » Health systems should track utilization and outcomes of XR-Bup as part of quality improvement initiatives.
- » Data on treatment retention, opioid use, and healthcare utilization can be used to advocate for policy changes and improved access to XR-Bup.

Patient Engagement & Education:

- » Increasing awareness and education about the benefits of XR-Bup can improve adherence and reduce stigma associated with medication-assisted treatment.
- » Patient education should emphasize the convenience and effectiveness of XR-Bup, as well as its role in reducing overdose risk.