Research That Matters

Higher Treatment Satisfaction With Depot Buprenorphine Compared With Daily Sublingual Buprenorphine

Lintzeris N, Dunlop AJ, Haber PS, et al.

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Research Summary

Long-acting injectable buprenorphine formulations provide an alternative to daily sublingual treatment for opioid dependence. While treatment retention and opioid use outcomes remain important measures of effectiveness, patient experience and treatment satisfaction are increasingly recognized as important factors influencing engagement in care.

In this randomized clinical trial, Lintzeris and colleagues compared weekly or monthly depot buprenorphine with daily sublingual buprenorphine among adults receiving treatment for opioid dependence. The primary outcome was patient-reported treatment satisfaction at 24 weeks, while safety and adverse events were evaluated as secondary outcomes.

The study found significantly higher treatment satisfaction among participants receiving depot buprenorphine compared with those receiving daily sublingual buprenorphine. Although adverse drug reactions were more frequently reported in the depot group, most were mild injection-site reactions. Overall, the findings suggest that long-acting injectable buprenorphine was generally well tolerated and associated with greater treatment satisfaction than daily sublingual treatment.

ACCESS TO THE ARTICLE CAN BE FOUND HERE:

PubMed Central Full Text Article:
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8111483/

STUDY DESIGN

- **Design:** Open-label, randomized clinical trial
- **Participants:** 119 adults with opioid dependence
- **Intervention:** Weekly or monthly subcutaneous depot buprenorphine vs. daily sublingual buprenorphine
- **Duration:** 24 weeks
- **Setting:** Six outpatient addiction treatment centers in Australia (October 2018–September 2019)
- **Primary Outcome:** Global treatment satisfaction at week 24, measured by using the Treatment Satisfaction Questionnaire for Medication (TSQM)
- **Safety Outcomes:** Safety, adverse drug reactions (ADRs), treatment-emergent adverse events (TEAEs), and serious adverse events.

Study Findings

Treatment Satisfaction

- **Participants receiving depot buprenorphine reported significantly higher treatment satisfaction than participants receiving daily sublingual buprenorphine:** Mean TSQM score at week 24:
  - Depot buprenorphine (82.5)
  - Sublingual buprenorphine (74.3).

SAFETY PROFILE

- **Adverse drug reactions were more frequently reported among participants receiving depot buprenorphine:**
  - Depot buprenorphine group: 65.0% (39 participants)
  - Sublingual buprenorphine group: 20.3% (12 participants)
- **Most reported adverse drug reactions were mild injection-site reactions.**
- **Treatment-emergent adverse events occurred in both groups:**
  - Depot buprenorphine: 90.0%
  - Sublingual buprenorphine: 83.1%
- **Severe treatment-emergent adverse events were uncommon:**
  - Depot buprenorphine: 5.0%
  - Sublingual buprenorphine: 6.8%
- **No deaths occurred during the trial, and no participants withdrew from treatment because of adverse events.**

Key Observation

Despite experiencing more treatment-related adverse drug reactions, participants receiving depot buprenorphine reported significantly greater treatment satisfaction than those receiving daily sublingual buprenorphine.

Clinical Implications of the Research

FOR PAYERS

- The study suggests that patient satisfaction may be an important consideration when evaluating treatment options for opioid dependence.
- Long-acting injectable formulations may represent an acceptable treatment option for some patients receiving medication treatment for OUD.

FOR PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS & HEALTH SYSTEMS

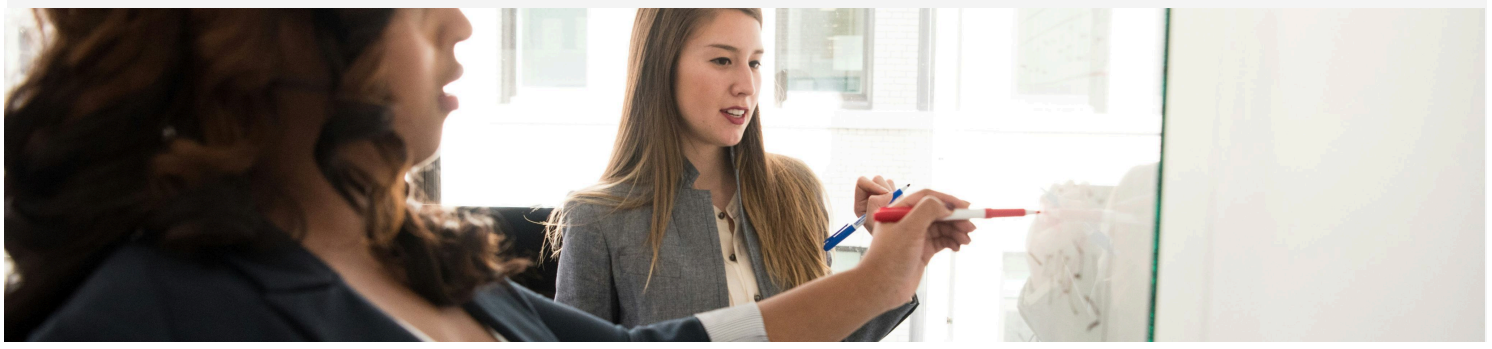
- Depot buprenorphine can be incorporated into outpatient treatment settings with an overall safety profile consistent with prior studies.
- Patient-reported outcomes may provide useful information in addition to traditional clinical measures.

FOR CLINICAL PROFESSIONALS

- Long-acting injectable buprenorphine offers an alternative to daily medication administration for appropriate patients.
- Patients should be informed that mild injection-site reactions are common but were generally manageable within the study.

FOR CONSUMERS

- Long-acting injectable buprenorphine may reduce the need for daily medication administration.
- Treatment decisions should be individualized and made in consultation with a healthcare professional.



Limitations & Future directions

- The open-label study design may have influenced patient-reported outcomes. Additionally, the Australian treatment setting may limit generalizability to all healthcare systems and patient populations.
- Future research should continue evaluating long-term treatment outcomes, safety, retention, and patient experience across diverse populations and clinical settings.

Conclusion

The randomized clinical trial by Lintzeris and colleagues found that participants receiving depot buprenorphine reported significantly higher treatment satisfaction than those receiving daily sublingual buprenorphine. Although adverse drug reactions were more frequently reported in the depot group, most were mild injection-site reactions, and serious adverse events were uncommon. These findings suggest that long-acting injectable buprenorphine is generally well tolerated and may offer a treatment experience that some patients prefer compared with daily sublingual treatment.

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