

## LONGER TERM OUTCOMES FOR PHARMACEUTICAL OPIOID DEPENDENCE: 12 MONTH FINDINGS FROM AN IN-TREATMENT COHORT

Suzanne Nielsen<sup>1,2</sup>, Briony Larance<sup>1</sup>, Nicholas Lintzeris<sup>2,3</sup>, Simon Holliday<sup>4</sup>, Michael Vanderhaven<sup>1</sup>, Antonia Hordern<sup>1</sup>, Adrian Dunlop<sup>4,5</sup>, Paul Haber<sup>3,6</sup>, Bridin Murnion<sup>3,6</sup>, Catherine Silsbury<sup>7</sup>, Jennifer Johnson<sup>8</sup>, Apo Demirkol<sup>2,9</sup>, Craig Sadler<sup>4,5,9</sup>, Nghi Phung<sup>7</sup>, Gabrielle Campbell<sup>1</sup>, Michael Farrell<sup>1</sup>, Milton Cohen<sup>10,11</sup>, Raimondo Bruno<sup>12</sup>, Mark Hardy<sup>13</sup>, Amanda Brown<sup>4</sup>, Jennie Houseman<sup>13</sup>, Louisa Degenhardt<sup>1</sup>

1. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW, Australia; 2. The Langton Centre, South East Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) Drug and Alcohol Services, Australia; 3. Discipline of Addiction Medicine, University of Sydney, Australia; 4. Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services, Hunter New England Local Health District Australia; 5. University of Newcastle, Australia; 6. Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Australia; 7. Drug Health Service, Western Sydney Local Health District, Australia; 8. University Centre for Rural Health, Lismore; 9. Cavalry Mater Hospital 10. University of New South Wales, Australia 11. St Vincents Hospital, Australia; 12. University of Tasmania, Australia; 13. Drug and Alcohol Services, Northern Sydney Local Health District

**Introduction and Aims:** Little is known about the longer-term treatment outcomes for people who enter treatment with pharmaceutical opioid dependence. This study aims to establish a cohort of pharmaceutical opioid dependent people in treatment, and examine outcomes including types of treatment experienced, and changes in pain, physical and mental health over time.

**Design and Methods:** Prospective cohort study conducting telephone interviews at baseline, 3, and 12 months. The questionnaire covers physical health, pain, health service utilisation, psychological functioning, and pharmaceutical and illicit drug use and treatment experiences.

**Results:** One hundred and eight participants were interviewed at baseline. Three and 12 month follow-up rates were 94 and 89%. The sample was 52% female, with a mean age of 41yrs (SD 11yrs) at baseline. At baseline most were currently in Opioid Substitution Treatment with either buprenorphine (+/- naloxone) (54%) or methadone (37%). At 12 months 82% of the cohort were still in treatment, and most (75%) of the cohort reported no unsanctioned pharmaceutical opioid use in the past three months. Using multivariate analyses, reporting ever having used heroin was associated with ongoing unsanctioned pharmaceutical opioid use, and being employed was associated with no longer being in treatment.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** This is the first study in Australia to prospectively follow up in-treatment pharmaceutical opioid users. High rates of pain and mental-health co-morbidity were reported. Despite this, high treatment retention and low rates of unsanctioned pharmaceutical opioid use were reported, suggesting positive treatment outcomes for this new population of opioid users.

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