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Title: A survey on the patterns of polysubstance abuse among methadone attendees in Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

The polysubstance abuse is a common phenomenon all around the world, yet there is little known about the pattern of polysubstance abuse in terms of types, number of substance abuse, combination and order. In this study, the assessable population were the methadone attendees in Tai Po, Yuen Long and Kwun Tong Methadone clinic. The inclusion criterion was the subjects must take at least two substances at the same time in their lifetime. Convenience sampling was used, the subjects who joined the study would provide the details about their pattern of polysubstance abuse through face-to-face administration of questionnaire. A checklist was developed to ask about the demographic data, the type of substances they ever taken in the past one year, the combination and order of all substances ever abused at the time of the most recent administration. The ethical issue of the study was approved by The Open University of Hong Kong. A pilot study was conducted before the data collection to test whether the methadone attendees understand what they would be asked. Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis. Total 191 data were collected, including 158 male and 33 female. Mean value of the age is 46.8. Contingency tables were used to illustrate the numbers of substances use; the combinations of polysubstance abuse and order of administrate the substances among the demographic data. Finding indicated that most of the subjects abused Heroin (n= 181, 94.8%), majority of subjects (n=108, 56.5%) abused two substances. The most common combination and order found were Heroin and Alcohol. The finding found that there was a difference on the pattern of polysubstance abuse among sexes and age ranges. Results suggested that polysubstance were abused among methadone attendees and a need for developing effective prevention strategies as well as treatment plans specific to polysubstance abuse.