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Women-Reported Barriers and Facilitators of Adherence to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

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Women-Reported Barriers and Facilitators of Adherence to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

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INTRODUCTION

- Opioid use disorder (OUD) is a chronic health condition best managed with long-term treatment with medications (MOUD)
  - Methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone
- Less than 20% of people with OUD receive treatment
- Women with OUD do not remain engaged with MOUD long enough to achieve sustained benefits
- Aim: Identify barriers and facilitators that impact women’s MOUD adherence

METHODS

- Research design, site, and recruitment
  - Community-Partnered Research Approach
  - Springfield & Holyoke, MA
    - Community-based outpatient programs
    - Word of mouth, clinician referrals, flyers
- Data collection and analysis
  - Semi-structured interviews & focus groups
    - August-December 2018
    - 1 ½-2 hours
    - Recorded & professionally transcribed
    - $25 gift card
  - Grounded theory analysis
- Strengths and limitations
  - Qualitative, exploratory data (+)
  - Non-random convenience sample (-)

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- 20 women enrolled in outpatient MOUD treatment program for >90 days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (mean ± SD)</th>
<th>Women (n=20)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36.6 ± 8.5 years</td>
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- Race/ethnicity
  - White, Non-Hispanic: 65%
  - Black, Non-Hispanic: 25%
  - Hispanic or Latina/x: 30%
- Educational attainment
  - High school/GED: 5%
  - Trade/vocational/tech training post-high school: 5%
  - Some college/Associate’s degree: 30%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 5%
- Employment status
  - Employed full-time: 20%
  - Employed part-time: 25%
  - Disabled and not working: 25%
  - Retired and not working: 10%
- Adult household income in last 12 months
  - <$10,000: 45%
  - $10,001-$20,000: 35%
  - $20,001-$40,000: 15%
  - $40,001-$75,000: 5%
- Opioid use (mean ± SD)
  - Age at 1st initiation: 26.6 ± 7.1 years
  - Average duration of use, all opioids: 4.8 ± 2.4 years
- Methadone treatment
  - Enrolled in methadone program: 100%
  - Age at 1st first treatment (mean ± SD): 31.3 ± 11.1 years
  - Methadone treatment duration (mean ± SD): 24.2 ± 4.4 years
- Buprenorphine treatment
  - Prefers methadone over buprenorphine: 70%
  - Knows about buprenorphine: 70%
  - Experienced negative buprenorphine side effects: 5%
  - Did not seek buprenorphine: 40%
  - Heard of negative buprenorphine side effects: 30%

FACILITATORS

- Program characteristics
  - Sense of “safety” for women with trauma histories
  - Peer-mentor model
    - Relatability
    - Hope and motivation
- Gender-specific skill building
  - Replacement behaviors that build self-esteem
  - Boundary setting with active users
    - Friends, partners, family

BARRIERS

- Fear & anxiety of MOUD-related stigma
  - Social networks & social media messaging that MOUD is “substituting one drug for another”
- Gender-specific side effects
  - Weight gain
  - Tooth decay
  - Interactions with mental health medications
- Consequences of being discovered as a MOUD client
  - Loss of child custody
  - Children being bullied
  - Loss of employment & workplace stigma
  - Associations with sex-work

IMPLICATIONS

- To improve gender-specific treatment:
  - Integrate recovery coaches/peer mentors
  - Provide education about MOUD side-effects
  - Provide relevant skill-building activities
  - Outreach efforts to address community-level gender-specific stigmas
- To understand medication preference
  - Further examine methadone preference
  - Identify negative buprenorphine side effects

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