Medically Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

Exactly what is Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT)? MAT is the use of various medications IN COMBINATION WITH behavioral counseling to reduce opioid use and overdoses in Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) patients.

- Methadone is an opioid agonist
- Buprenorphine (Subutex) is a partial opioid agonist
- Buprenorphine + Naloxone (Suboxone) is a combination of a partial opioid agonist with an opioid antagonist
- Naltrexone (Vivitrol) (Opioid antagonist)

Is MAT effective? It has been repeatedly shown to reduce opioid use and its consequences of overdoses, overdose deaths, and the legal ramifications OUD.

Does MAT just trade one addiction for another? No. MAT bridges the gap between biological/medical treatment and behavioral treatment of OUD. There is synergism with both components, so neither is as effective as both in combination.

How long does MAT last? Patients on MAT for 1-2 years have shown the greatest long-term success. In fact, there is currently no evidence to support any benefits from stopping MAT.

How does one decide which medication to use? Treatment centers utilize a multitude of factors in each case to decide which medication compliments which modality of behavioral therapy, individualized to each patient.

Does MAT disrupt or hinder a patient’s recovery? No. MAT has been shown to assist patients in recovery by improving quality of life, level of functioning, and ability to handle stress. Most importantly, MAT reduces mortality while patients begin recovery.

Is MAT better than abstinence? Obviously, abstinence is the ideal. However, it is not realistic in most people with OUD. MAT is evidence based and is the recommended course of treatment for opioid addiction by the following: American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, AMA, National Institute on drug abuse, Substance Abuse and mental health Services Administration, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a multitude of other authorities.

Where can I get more information to help my patients with MAT in our area?

Muskingum Behavioral Health – Naltrexone (Vivitrol) https://www.muskingumbehavioralhealth.com/
