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Pharmacological treatment of opioid dependence in India

Soumya Sachdeva¹ and Adam Bisaga²

¹New York State Presbyterian Hospital, USA

²Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi, India

Introduction: In 2012, it was found that 5.2% of the world population in the age group of 15-64 years had used an illicit drug once in the previous year. The annual prevalence of opiate abuse in Asia is estimated to be at 0.35%. The majority of heroin consumption in Asia occurs in China, Pakistan, Iran and India.

Objective: The purpose of this review is to provide evidence based clinical practice guidelines to prescribers and other health practitioners involved in the care of opioid dependent patients with a special reference to Naltrexone.

Materials & Methods: Relevant literature was identified through a PubMed literature search for publications and a review was developed.

Discussion: Buprenorphine was the earliest drug to be used successfully in India for the treatment of opiate dependence. Its use began as early as in 1993. The regimen of buprenorphine-naloxone treatment has been made available in drug treatment centers since last few years. Methadone has been launched recently as a multi-site study as a pilot project in India. However, there have been no studies on Naltrexone in the SEAR region yet. Several clinical trials from different countries hold evidence that use of Naltrexone has higher efficacy, minimal toxicity and minimal safety concerns. Data also suggest superior efficacy of long acting injectable Naltrexone compared to oral Naltrexone.

Conclusion: The use of opioid antagonists for long term treatment of patients with opioid addiction is one of the newer emerging modalities of treatment. It is recommended that trials on both oral and injectable naltrexone should be started to see the efficacy in the SEAR region.

Biography

Soumya Sachdeva has completed her MBBS (Bachelors of Medicine and Surgery) from Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi, India. She is very passionate about medical research and has 7 publications in PubMed and 2 others in peer reviewed journals. She is also the Editor, Board of *Journal of Young Medical Researchers* and is also the Ambassador for *International Journal of Medical Students (IJMS)*. She was a Research Volunteer at Columbia University Medical Center, where she worked on substance abuse.

docsoumya14@gmail.com

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