Illicit stimulant use among patients receiving injectable opioid agonist treatment: A qualitative grounded theory study

HEATHER PALIS
PhD Candidate, School of Population and Public Health
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada
Disclosure Statement

- I have no conflicts to declare.
Cocaine use in iOAT

- Cocaine use is prevalent in iOAT patients (1-3).
- Treatment outcomes:
  - Lower odds of treatment retention (3).
  - Higher rates of opioid use, poorer retention (4-7).
- Modest declines in cocaine use in iOAT:
  - In SALOME trial:
    - 11/30 days at BL
    - 8/30 days at 6 months
Research Question

- What are the processes by which iOAT patients engage in the use of illicit stimulants?
Methods

- Qualitative one on one interviews (n=31)
- Participants recruited from iOAT cohort study
- Self-reporting any illicit stimulant use
Grounded theory approach

- Direct coding of participants’ words
- Researcher reflection
- Iterative process of data collection + analysis
- Developing a theory
Self-managing illicit stimulant use in iOAT

Distancing from the street environment
“It [iOAT] took me away from the trenches of the street right. I was always a hustler I was always down there, my life was buying dope to sell it to get more dope. Now that I don’t have to do that for the down [heroin] it sort of rubs off on the other drugs too right.”

-63-year old man
Self-managing illicit stimulant use in iOAT

- Distancing from the street environment
- Taking control of use
“It is more control, more control over what I am doing. Before if I had money I would spend it. Now we go shopping at Costco for whatever we need and leave money there for if we need it. I still get cravings [for crack cocaine] and I just try to do different things to try to get my mind off it. I go swimming, rollerblading, just going for a walk, I watch TV, or write. I am well so I can do those things again.”

-45 year old woman
Self-managing illicit stimulant use in iOAT

- Distancing from the street environment
- Taking control of use
- Mobilizing Supports
“If there was something for the cravings it would be amazing. That is what I am trying to beat right now. I side track myself and try to do other things to get it off my mind. So maybe I can figure out how to stop doing it.”
-46 year old woman
Discussion

- iOAT access can offer a first step toward stimulant use self-management

- Self-management framework:
  - Role of both individual efforts with external supports

- Evidence supports dexamphetamine for cocaine use in iOAT (Nuijten et al., 2016)
Next Steps

- Clinically:
  - KT project to promote dexamphetamine prescribing in new iOAT clinics

- Research:
  - Explore heterogeneity in stimulant use patterns
    - Individual, social, environmental factors associated with patterns of use
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