

FC03-06

TREATMENT OF OPIOID DEPENDENCE USING A TELE-PSYCHIATRY MODEL

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Introduction: Opioid dependence has increased greater than 150% from 1965-2008. Almost 2 Million Americans are currently opioid dependent. Approximately 4.4 million teenagers and adults have used opioid prescription painkillers for nonmedical purposes. Greater than 75% of opioid dependent patients in the U.S. go untreated. Greater than 60 % of opioid dependent patients don't seek treatment due to lack of accessibility of treatment centers or programs.

Method: 100 opioid dependent patients (illicit street and iatrogenic) volunteered and entered a "TELE-PSYCHIATRY MODEL" for treatment of their dependence (age range 19,- 61. 58 males,42 females). Utilizing the Buprenorphine protocol, all patients were interviewed, examined, induced, and regularly followed, ALL utilizing SECURE VIDEOCONFERENCE interactive treatment methodologies. No in-person contact was made with any patients.

Results: 2 patients dropped out , 98 remain in treatment, and opioid free after a 7 month average. All patients found the Tele Psychiatry model to be acceptable, effective and preferable.