

Substance Use Treatment: Predictors of Success and Accountability

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August 2019

We have begun to identify research-oriented professionals who have expertise in the following areas:

1. Indicators of successful substance use treatment.
2. Ways to better monitor the quality of substance use treatment.
3. How treatment protocols vary for sub-groups and/or different substances.

Main Points

1. Addiction is a complex disease, and **there is no “one-size fits all.” Treatment should be personalized, measure progress over time, and develop a long-term strategy for continuing care after treatment.** According to [a report by the Surgeon General](#), integration of substance use treatment into mainstream healthcare services can increase quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of healthcare.
2. **Evidence-based behavioral therapies have better success rates** than non-evidence-based treatments. In seeking treatment, consumers should look for provider qualifications, comprehensive assessments, personalized treatment plans, evidence-based therapies, and continuing recovery support.
3. **Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is effective, especially when combined with behavioral therapies.** FDA-approved medications can treat alcohol use disorder and opioid use disorders, but there are none approved to treat marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, or other substance use disorders. A [recent study](#) identified some federal regulatory barriers to treatment for vulnerable populations, such as pregnant women. For example, current regulations restrict MAT dosage for opioid use disorder until a period of recovery is achieved, which can negatively impact pregnant women who are opioid-dependent.
4. Treatment should be readily available and last for at least three months, but **longer time in treatment improves individuals’ chances of maintaining recovery.** However, even [brief interventions](#) can work with mild forms of alcohol use disorders, and promising evidence suggests they are effective in treating drug use disorders. Monitoring can identify early signs of a relapse so that treatment plans can be adjusted and sobriety can be reinforced with [contingency-management](#).
5. In addition to existing regulations and accreditations, publicly available **consumer report cards can promote accountability and quality of substance use treatment.** Indicators can include provider characteristics, practices linked to effective treatment, risk-adjusted clinical outcomes, and patient satisfaction. A [recent study](#) found that patients’ perceptions of care can influence treatment outcomes.

Key Resources

A recommendation for consumer report cards with resources can be found [here](#).

The National Institute on Drug Abuse published [principles of effective treatment](#), and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism provides a [treatment navigator](#) to help consumers find quality treatment providers.

Using a results-based accountability framework, Connecticut published a variety of health and progress indicators, including those relevant to substance use treatment, in the form of [performance dashboards](#).

RPC Network Experts

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We are currently in the process of recruiting even more experts both in and outside of our network