

Abstract

BACKGROUND: Buprenorphine is currently the most popular opiate drug on Czech drug scene. There was estimated at around 6,300 users of buprenorphine (Subutex ® mainly), in 2012 according to the annual report of the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. It provided 15% of all problem drug users in the country. However the issue of abuse of buprenorphine is discussed among experts rarely.

AIMS: The aim of the study was described patterns of use of buprenorphine among clients Outreach programme Sananim. Emphasis is placed mainly on frequency of use, the daily consumption of buprenorphine and a description of common patterns of user behavior, from the purchase to the method of application of the drug. It was also examined subjective perceptions of somatic complications of users and frequency of use of other illicit drugs.

METHODS: Data were collected by semi-structured questionnaire, which clients of Outreach programme Sananim filled with assistance of the researcher. For data analysis method was used grounded theory. Descriptive statistics was used subsequently and results were supplemented by testimonies of clients for illustrate. Open questions were evaluated according to the procedures of grounded theory - coding, categorization.

RESULTS: All respondents were taking buprenorphine injection drug. Tablet was divided into smaller pieces, crushed in the cap (60% respondents), dissolved in the syringe (40% respondents) or some other container (40% respondents) and used to the forearm (68%). A third of respondents use filters or alcohol wipes. The average daily dose was 3 mg buprenorphine and user applied it about 3 times a day. The tablet was most often purchased on the black market (39%) or bought legally on doctor's prescription (29%). The most common medical complication was obstruction of the blood vessels of the respondents (70%), edema (36%) and tingling (25%). 82 % of responders was polydrug users and most of them used methamphetamine (89%).

CONCLUSIONS: Buprenorphine is abused in very small amounts, mostly risky manner. Most of the interviewed clients were polydrug users, and many of them had health complications. The results were further discussed and compared with studies abroad. There was also suggested the possibilities for the implication of the results in practice.

Keywords

Buprenorphine, drug use patterns, outreach programme, injecting drug use