

UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE USING BUVIDAL (LONG-LASTING BUPRENORPHINE) OPIATE SUBSTITUTE TREATMENT: A SERVICE EVALUATION

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Discussion and Recommendations: Buvidal treatment satisfaction is very high, however many people are experiencing psychological distress and are interested in psychological support. This highlights the need for increased access to tiered psychological provisions within the Cardiff and Vale UHB Community Addictions Unit and across Wales, to work to NICE guidance (2019). Further research might consider gender differences, given the indication for increased distress in males using Buvidal.

Introduction

This evaluation aimed to better understand the psychological needs of people using Buvidal to inform service delivery, to ensure Buvidal is provided within a National Institute for Health and Care Excellence framework of medical, social and psychological treatment (NICE, 2019).

Monthly supervised long-lasting buprenorphine (Buvidal) is a novel treatment for people struggling to adhere to daily opioid medication. Buvidal has been rolled out across Wales, driven in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic (WG, 2021).

Treatment benefits of Buvidal have been demonstrated (Tong *et al.*, 2021), alongside some 'surfacing mental health difficulties', including trauma-related symptoms, perhaps managed previously through opiate use. This is in line with a high prevalence of co-occurring disorders of traumatic stress and substance misuse (Pietrzak *et al.*, 2011), and evidence that substances may be used to self-medicate (Dvorak *et al.*, 2014).

Buvidal treatment satisfaction



■ Not at all satisfied ■ Indifferent/a bit satisfied
■ Mostly satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Results

	Total N=40	Female N=14	Male N=26
Mean Age (SD)	43.13 (8.53)	41.29 (9.28)	44.12 (8.12)
Duration on Buvidal (months) (SD)	8.95 (5.94)	9.93 (7.71)	8.42 (4.83)

- Of the 40 participants, 85% were very satisfied and 15% mostly satisfied with Buvidal.
- Participants reported either not using opiates at all (77.5%), or using less (22.5%), and the majority (65%) were not using, or using less of other substances.
- 32.5% of participants rated their mental health as 'very good', or 'good', 35% as 'neither poor nor good', and 32.5% as 'very poor', or 'poor'.
- This contrasted somewhat with findings from the CORE-10 indicated a moderate severity of psychological distress in the group, with a mean score of 15.58 (SD=10.62).
- Of the 60% of participants who reported 'frequently' or 'sometimes' needing additional help with emotional difficulties, three in four reported experiencing distressing unwanted images or memories 'often' or 'most or all of the time' in the past week on the CORE-10.
- 82.5% of participants indicated interest in 1:1 psychological support, and 30% in group support.
- Only 5% of people had attended psychological therapy previously.

Methods

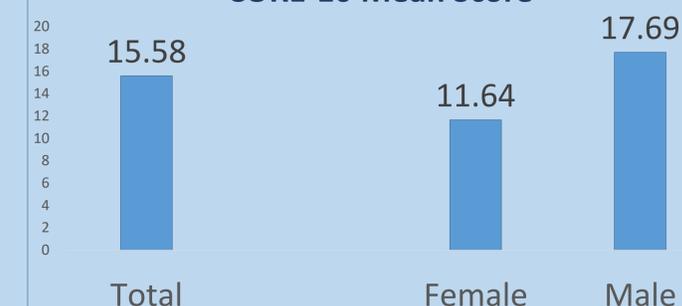


January-March 2022: A proportion of clients attending CAU Buvidal clinics were invited to talk through and complete a one-off questionnaire, co-produced with people with lived experience of substance misuse, via Voices Action Change. Approximately 40% of clients receiving Buvidal through CAU participated. The questionnaire captured information on treatment satisfaction, substance use, psychological distress, and psychological support seeking. The CORE-10 psychological distress outcome measure was also administered.

References

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CORE-10 Mean Score



Distressing unwanted images or memories in the past week reported by those wanting help with emotional difficulties



Interest in one-to-one support



Limitations A one-off questionnaire only provides a snapshot, however evidence suggests the support needs of people on Buvidal may change over time (Hennessy, 2017). The findings do not reflect the views of patients who have not adhered to treatment, nor those who have not consented to participate.

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