



EMCDDA DOCUMENTATION CENTRE INFORMATION BULLETIN

CORONAVIRUS, 28 August 2020

GREY LITERATURE

Managing drug and alcohol misuse at work

Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD)
London: 2020

The issue of drug and alcohol misuse at work has always existed, adversely affecting employees' health, work performance, conduct, and safety. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on working life – and the resulting economic downturn – have heightened many of the wellbeing risk factors, such as increased emotional and financial pressures and social isolation. Employers must ensure they have a clear policy on substance misuse and we recommend that drug and alcohol misuse forms part of their overall wellbeing offering to ensure any need for disciplinary action is coupled with a preventative and supportive approach to help employees get the help they need.

This report provides an overview of current employer practice in preventing and managing drug and alcohol misuse at work. It examines why the argument for greater employer support and preventative action around drug and alcohol misuse is stronger than ever.

https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/drug-alcohol-misuse-work-report-1_tcm18-83090.pdf

Coronavirus: l'hospitalisation de jour d'addictologie se réinvente en temps de confinement

Gomet, R; Souchet, C; Le Mouellic, M; et al
Alcoologie et Addictologie
42, 1, p.54-57, 2020

La pandémie due au coronavirus a entraîné la mise en place de mesures de confinement en France. Ce contexte est susceptible d'impacter psychologiquement les patients présentant une addiction et d'entraîner une majoration de certaines conduites addictives. Des sevrages forcés dus à des difficultés d'obtention de stupéfiants sont également à craindre. Afin de limiter le risque de propagation virale, l'hôpital de jour d'addictologie d'Albert Chenevier à Créteil a dû fermer ses portes. L'organisation des soins a été modifiée afin de renforcer la prise en charge individuelle à distance. Notre équipe pluridisciplinaire multiplie les initiatives afin de renforcer l'accompagnement des patients durant cette période (téléconsultations, programmes d'activité physique, newsletters, etc.). Un mois après le début du confinement et la fermeture de notre unité, aucun perdu de vue n'est à déplorer et la majorité des patients (81%) maintient l'abstinence. Les interventions proposées semblent satisfaire et aider efficacement les patients à traverser cette période difficile. Une évaluation à la fin du confinement pourra confirmer cette tendance encourageante. Cette expérience pourrait offrir à terme des perspectives quant aux prises en charge des patients les plus isolés.

Psychedelic science in post-Covid psychiatry

Kelly, J R, Crockett, M T, Alexander, L, et al.
Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine
19 August 2020
DOI:10.1017/ipm.2020.94

The medium to long term consequences of COVID-19 are not yet known, though an increase in mental health problems are predicted. Multidisciplinary strategies across socio-economic and psychological levels may be needed to mitigate the mental health burden of COVID-19. Preliminary evidence from the rapidly progressing field of psychedelic science, shows that psilocybin assisted psychotherapy (PAP), offers a promising trans-diagnostic treatment strategy for a range of disorders with restricted and maladaptive habitual patterns of cognition and behaviour, notably depression, addiction and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). The COMPASS pathways, phase 2b double blind trial of PAP in antidepressant-free, treatment resistant depression (TRD) is underway across 19 research sites, to determine the safety, efficacy and optimal dose of psilocybin. Results from the Imperial College London Psilodep-RCT comparing the efficacy and mechanisms of action of PAP to the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) escitalopram will soon be published. However, the efficacy and safety of PAP in conjunction with SSRIs in TRD is not yet known. A new COMPASS study, with a centre in Dublin, will answer this question, with implications for the future delivery of PAP. While at an early stage of clinical development, and notwithstanding the immense challenges of COVID-19, PAP is likely to play an important therapeutic role for certain disorders in post COVID-19 clinical psychiatry.

Integrating harm reduction and clinical care: Lessons from Covid-19 respite and recuperation facilities

Kimmel, S D; Bazzi, A R; Baocas, J A
Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, 2020, 118, 108103

In response to the novel coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, many people experiencing homelessness and substance use disorders entered respite and recuperation facilities for care and to isolate and prevent subsequent SARS-CoV-2 transmission. However, because drug use was officially prohibited in these facilities, we observed people who use substances leaving isolation temporarily or prematurely. The initial Covid-19 surge magnified the need for harm reduction access for those who use substances to ensure their safety and well-being and that of their local communities. In this commentary, we argue that expanding harm reduction access is crucial for subsequent waves of SARS-CoV-2 infection and also for patients who use substances and are hospitalized for other reasons.

Coordination, cooperation, and creativity within harm reduction networks in Iran: COVID-19 prevention and control among people who use drugs

Alavi, M, Moghanibashi-Mansourieh, A, Radfar, S R, et al.
International Journal of Drug Policy, 2020, 102908

An unprecedented public health crisis confronts the world. Iran is among the hardest-hit countries, where effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are stretched across society and felt by the most marginalised people. Among people who use drugs, a comprehensive response to the crisis calls for broad collaboration, coordination, and creativity involving multiple government and non-government organisations. This commentary provides early insights into an unfolding experience, demonstrating the operational and policy impact of an initiative, bringing together a diverse array of harm reduction stakeholders to address the pandemic. In the context of lived experiences of social and economic marginalization, this initiative intends to lead efforts in developing an equitable response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policies to improve substance use disorder treatment with telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Drake C, Yu J, Lurie N, et al
Journal of Addiction Medicine
18 August 2020
DOI:10.1097/ADM.0000000000000727

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an urgent need to expand access to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment through telehealth. A more permanent adoption of tele-SUD treatment options could positively alter the future of SUD treatment. We identify four steps that will help to ensure a broader transition to telehealth will be successful in improving the health outcomes of patients with SUDs. These steps are: (1) investing in telehealth infrastructure to enable health care providers and patients to use telehealth; (2) training and equipping providers to provide SUD treatment through telehealth; (3) providing patients with the financial and social support, hardware, and training necessary to use telehealth; (4) making temporary changes to telehealth law and regulation permanent. We believe these 4 steps will be critical to initiating SUD treatment for many persons that have yet to receive it, and for preserving SUD treatment continuity for millions of other patients both during and after the pandemic.

Changing outdated methadone regulations that harm pregnant patients

McCarthy JJ, Jones HE, Terplan M, et al
Journal of Addiction Medicine
18 August 2020
DOI:10.1097/ADM.0000000000000720

Methadone regulations have changed minimally since 1974, despite advances in the understanding of the nature of opioid use disorder (OUD) and the role of medications in its treatment. At that time, most patients with OUD were considered to have anti-social personality disorders and the regulations aimed to exert maximal control over medication access. Six- or seven-day clinic attendance is required for months, regardless of distance, or childcare and other social responsibilities. Take home medications are not allowed unless rigid and formulaic conditions are met. Although addiction medicine has rejected the "criminal" paradigm in favor of OUD as a treatable medical disorder, methadone regulations have not kept pace with the science. Pregnancy is characterized by an ultra-rapid metabolic state, but regulations prevent the use of daily divided doses of methadone to maintain stability. This results in repeated episodes of maternal/fetal opioid withdrawal, as well as other fetal physiologic abnormalities. Interference with dose regimen adjustments prevents optimal outcomes. Further, methadone clinics are mostly urban, leaving patients in rural areas without access. This led to excessive morbidity and mortality when the opioid crisis hit. The response of merely expanding capacity in overcrowded urban clinics created a contagion menace when Covid-19 arrived. Pregnant women (and parents with children) were forced to negotiate dosing in dangerous conditions. A revised methadone system must provide treatment that is local, flexible, and limited in size to manage viral contagion risks. This regulatory change can most easily be started by changing regulations that adversely affect pregnant women.

Anticipating mental health and substance use challenges in the aftermath of COVID-19: what the world can teach local health departments

Yox, E
Journal of Public Health Management and Practice
26, 5, p.510-511, 2020

The challenging times and opportunities for pharmacovigilance in Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ogar, C, Mathenge, W, Khaemba, C, Ndagije, H
Drugs and Therapy Perspectives
36, 8, p.351-354, 2020

COVID-19 fear, mental health, and substance misuse conditions among university social work students in Israel and Russia

Yehudai, M, Bender, S, Gritsenko, V, Konstantinov, V, Reznik, A, Isralowitz, R
International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction
6 July 2020
DOI:10.1007/s11469-020-00360-7

COVID 19 fear, stress, anxiety, and substance use among Russian and Belarusian university students

Gritsenko V, Skugarevsky O, Konstantinov V, et al.
International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction
21 May 2020
DOI:10.1007/s11469-020-00330-z

COVID-19 fear, mental health, and substance use among Israeli university students

Zolotov, Y, Reznik, A, Bender, S, Isralowitz, R
International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction
15 June 2020
DOI:10.1007/s11469-020-00351-8

COVID-19, confinement et addictions

No authors listed
Bulletin de l'Académie Nationale de Médecine
204, 7, p.682, 2020

COVID-19, containment and addictions

No authors listed
Bulletin de l'Académie Nationale de Médecine
23 May 2020
DOI:10.1016/j.banm.2020.05.072

Online gambling in the midst of COVID-19: a nexus of mental health concerns, substance use and financial stress

Price, A
International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction
13 July 2020
DOI:10.1007/s11469-020-00366-1

This study examined the emerging impact of COVID-19 on gambling during the first 6 weeks of emergency measures in Ontario, Canada. A cross-sectional online survey of 2005 gamblers, including a sub-sample of 1081 online gamblers (age 18 years and older), was administered to assess risky gambling behaviours and motivations, financial impacts from COVID-19, the influence of COVID-19 on online gambling, mental health concerns and substance use. A series of odds ratio comparisons and measures of association were carried out. Results show significant likelihood of online gambling among those classified as high-risk gamblers (according to the Problem Gambling Severity Index) and those with past experience of online gambling, though migration from land-based gambling was apparent. Among high-risk online gamblers, the most predictive risk factors included moderate and severe anxiety and depression, reduced work hours, being influenced to gamble due to COVID-19, gambling under the influence of cannabis or alcohol and risky gambling motives tied to mental health concerns, including gambling because it helps with nervousness and depression, chasing gambling losses and seeking to earn income. This study has confirmed many of the risk associations presented in emerging COVID-19-related studies and past research on global economic crisis relating to gambling risk, mental health concerns and substance use. However, unlike many past studies, the present paper takes note of all of these elements holistically and provides incremental clarity on online gambling risk factors during the pandemic, specifically.

Innovative strategies to support physical distancing among individuals with active addiction

Bach, P, Robinson, S, Sutherland, C, Brar, R

Lancet Psychiatry

7, 9, p.731-733, 2020

How charities are rising to the COVID challenge - part 2

In our last blog, a selection of our charities told us about how they are adapting to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and in our latest post we wanted to shine a light on some more of these amazing charities, as they react to these unprecedented times. [Includes The Forward Trust] | Advent of Change, UK

<https://adventofchange.com/blogs/news/how-charities-are-rising-to-the-covid19-challenge-part-2>

Drug abuse on the rise because of COVID-19

<https://www.ehstoday.com/covid19/article/21139889/drug-abuse-on-the-rise-because-of-the-coronavirus>

'Sad and chaotic time' for drug users as COVID disrupts illicit supplies

A lot of people have close calls with overdoses that don't get reported' | CBC News, Canada

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/illegal-drugs-overdoses-opioids-pandemic-cocaine-1.5691779>

Vaping increases risk of coronavirus – here's the science

By now, we are all familiar with guidance on how to reduce your risk of contracting coronavirus: wash your hands, wear a mask, social distance. But here's another important piece of advice: don't vape | Conversation, UK

<https://theconversation.com/vaping-increases-risk-of-coronavirus-heres-the-science-144655>

Four steps to continue tele-addiction treatment growth post-COVID-19

<https://inside.upmc.com/four-steps-to-continue-tele-addiction-treatment-growth/>

Coronavirus pandemic taking toll on people struggling with addiction

<https://okcfox.com/news/local/coronavirus-pandemic-taking-toll-on-people-struggling-with-addiction>

The pandemic is exacerbating other, co-occurring epidemic(s)

The current pandemic continues to be the front of discussion, as it should be. Yet, we need not to forget the other epidemic(s) that continue to occur: opioid overdoses, HIV, and the effects of systemic racism chief among them. This is especially true because people among the subgroups affected by these epidemics are at increased risk for the coronavirus and face significantly more problems accessing health care.

<https://pointsadhs.com/2020/08/27/the-pandemic-is-exacerbating-other-co-occurring-epidemics/>