

## DETERMINANTS OF LONG-TERM RETENTION IN OPIOID AGONIST THERAPY AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN MONTREAL, CANADA

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### Background:

Opioid agonist therapy (OAT) is a key intervention for addressing hepatitis C virus infection in people who inject drugs (PWID). Longer-term engagement in OAT has been associated with better health and social outcomes, but there is a need to better understand factors supporting retention in treatment. We sought to identify sociodemographic characteristics, drug use patterns, and treatment factors associated with retention in OAT among active PWID.

### Methods:

**Design:** Cross-sectional analysis of baseline data collected within a longitudinal cohort study of PWID in Montreal (2011-2020). Eligibility for OAT was defined by illicit opioid use or OAT receipt in the past-six months.

**Measures:** Retention in OAT was defined as self-reported time spent in treatment at baseline and categorized as not on OAT, <1 year, 1-3 years, ≥3 years. Multinomial logistic regression analyses were used to identify factors associated with retention.

### Results:

Among the 546 participants eligible for OAT (mean age: 37; 78% male) 47% were currently enrolled in OAT (29% in treatment for <1 year, 21% for 1-3 years, 50% for ≥3 years). In multivariable analyses in the overall sample, female gender, age, and stable housing were positively associated with 3 years retention in OAT (vs. not enrolled), whereas inverse associations were observed for regular opioid, cocaine, and cannabis use. Among participants receiving OAT, longer retention was positively associated with allowance for takeaway doses and inversely associated with regular urine screening. High-dose OAT was associated with nearly four-fold odds of engagement in OAT for 1-3 years, compared to low dose OAT. This association was not statistically significant for the ≥3 years category.

### Conclusion:

Among active PWID receiving OAT, high prevalence of long-term engagement in treatment was observed. In addition to sociodemographic factors, we identified treatment-related factors associated with greater treatment duration, suggesting the need for flexible implementation approaches in OAT programmes.

### Disclosure of Interest Statement: *See example below:*

*The conference collaborators recognise the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.*

VLAD: None Declared. HOJ: Salary from Canadian Institutes of Health Research grant. MINOYAN: Doctoral research awards from the Fonds de Recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS) and the Canadian Network on Hepatitis C (CanHepC). BRUNEAU: Research grants from Gilead Sciences and Abbvie (unrelated to the present work); Canada Research Chair in Addiction Medicine; Advisor fees from Gilead Sciences and Abbvie (unrelated to the present work).