

MODIFIED MAP IN COVID QUARANTINE

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Background:

The establishment of a culturally safe medically supervised quarantine facility for homeless indigenous people with significant alcohol or drug use issues who were COVID positive in South Australia included the provision of a managed alcohol program (MAP).

Description of model of care/intervention:

Clients were offered a MAP or alcohol withdrawal management (using diazepam) and could change part way through on request and swap from MAP to withdrawal management or vice versa. The initial alcohol provision was aimed to achieve an estimated maximum BAL of 0.2 based on the anticipated cohort of heavily dependent drinkers (known to present to sobering up services with BAL 0.3-0.4). The alcohol was provided as full-strength beer (4.9%) or cask wine (9.5%) and offered 3 hourly between 8am-8pm.

As the program progressed, episodic hazardous drinkers (related to cultural practices) who were not dependent were admitted, leading to concerns regarding intoxicated behaviour in the unit.

Consequently, informal modifications of alcohol provisions led to formal review and recalculation of alcohol quantities aimed to achieve lower peak BAL (estimated maximum 0.12). Modified MAP was also used in those with end stage decompensated liver disease.

Effectiveness:

All 53 eligible clients elected to stay in the unit (rather than hotel quarantine). Full MAP was started for 29, modified MAP for 11 and 13 elected withdrawal management of whom 10 swapped to MAP/modified MAP. Modification of MAP resulted in no further reports of intoxication.

One client on MAP was transferred to a medi-hotel for aggression (primary THC user) but overall less incidences of aggressive behaviour than usually encountered in the withdrawal unit.

Conclusion and next steps:

MAP was safely offered with good client acceptance and low level of complications in quarantine. Successful modification and tailoring of MAP in response to a changing client profile is a novel approach that could be employed in other settings.

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