

LEGAL REGULATIONS AND CLINICAL PRACTICE CONCERNING TAKE-HOME METHADONE IN SUBSTITUTION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT – The paper is a review of legal regulations and clinical practice concerning a possibility of taking home substitution drugs by opiate dependent patients. Distribution of take-home substitution drugs is a common practice allowed by law in a majority of countries where substitution therapy exists. There is no evidence in the literature that take-home methadone can generate severe problems. The increase seen in methadone-related death rates is much smaller than the decrement in the number of deaths due to illicit opiate use. The possibility of taking home substitution drugs is not only convenient for patients and enhances their collaboration with the staff, but is commonly used as a powerful tool for contingency management.

Key words: maintenance therapy, take-home methadone, law regulations, clinical practice