

Demographic Features of Patients on Methadone Maintenance Treatment in Zahedan, Iran

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Addiction is a complex, chronic and multidimensional illness which is defined as involuntary and uncontrollable desire for drug use - in which person cannot resist against his/her desire to use drugs - despite negative symptoms and relapses. Statistics presented by international organizations (WHO 2011) suggests worldwide increase in drug use. The only difference in drug use between various countries relies on pattern of drug use. Therefore, it is essential to make prevention and treatment plans based on drug use pattern, trend of changes in drug use pattern based on type of drug being used, method of drug use and characteristics of people who are under treatment. In this cross-sectional study, we examined some demographic characteristics of patients who visited methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) province centers in 2011. This study was conducted as a census one. All information associated to 4158 individuals - who were under treatment in MMT province centers in 2011- were collected through check lists, and these data were analyzed using SPSS-19. Findings of this research showed that: Among all patients, 84% were male and 16% female; 87% were under 15 years old, 50% between 15 and 35 years old, 45% between 35 and 65 years old and 4.13% over 65 years old; 58% had no diploma, 29% had diploma and 13% had academic education; 36% were single, 60% married and 4% separated; 51% had rental housing, 46% possessed private housing and 4% were homeless; 27% used opium sap, 26% opium, 17% crystal, 14% marijuana, 9% crack, 5% heroin, 0.08% morphine and 1.2% used other drugs; 55% employed smoking method to use drugs, 41% oral and 4% intravenous method; 15% had more than three times history of MMT, 13% had three times, 18% had two times and 19% had one time history of MMT, 35% had no history of MMT; 74% were employed while 26% were unemployed. According to results, number of male individuals were higher than number of female individuals. A problem associated with this issue is that getting treatment is quite costly for housewives and female households. In this university, state agencies make a priority for women to get a discount. This issue resulted in an increase number of female individuals up to 16% in 2010 from previously 6% female individuals in 2006

[1]. Majority of patients were ranged in an active age group, married, educated and household owner ones who pursuit treatment for their addiction from these centers. Addicted individuals with proper social, economic and domestic situation are highly motivated to get treatment. MMT resulted in the situation that patients gained back their job; furthermore, they had better performance. Statistics indicated that number of employed people increased to 74% in 2010 from previously 40% in 2006 [2]. Thus, following measures should be taken seriously: introducing MMT, increasing number of MMT centers. In contrast to drug use in this province in 2006, opium sap decreased from 37% to 27%, opium from 28.6% to 26%, heroin from 18% to 5%, while crack and crystal increased from 6% to 17% [2, 3]. Smoking and oral method to use drugs were also dominant form 2006 to 2010 and showed no change during these years. However, 4% of people still employed intravenous method to use drugs. Thereby, it is essential to make intervention plans in order to increase DIC centers and as a result decrease damage to people who use this method.

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