

WHAT WORKS IN METHAMPHETAMINE TREATMENT

There are effective treatments for methamphetamine dependence. In fact, one study showed that methamphetamine users have the most successful outcomes in treatment. Treatment works! And it doesn't have to be long term intensive intervention.

Brief therapy

Baker et al found that just 2 sessions of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Motivational Interviewing increased abstinence in dependent methamphetamine users and 4 sessions also decreased depression. Drop out during treatment was low at 30%.

Brief CBT and MI is the gold standard treatment

Mid length therapy

Smout et al showed that 12 sessions of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a form of behaviour therapy with mindfulness, reduced drug use. However the median number of sessions attended was 3 and drop out during treatment was 70%.

ACT is a viable alternative to traditional CBT

Longer therapy

McKetin et al showed that residential rehabilitation is effective in increasing abstinence among methamphetamine users but relapse after treatment is high at around 80% by 1 year

Some people benefit from long term intensive treatment

Medicines: No medicines are approved to treat methamphetamine dependence. Some are promising and research continues.

Withdrawal ('detox'): Withdrawal on its own has close to 100% relapse. Withdrawal needs to be followed up by effective treatment.

Sources:

Lubman et al (2014) A study of patient pathways in AOD treatment. Turning Point: Fitzroy

Baker et al (2005) Brief CBT interventions for regular amphetamine users: A step in the right direction. Addiction 100(3) 367-78

Smout et al (2010) Psychosocial treatment for methamphetamine disorders. Substance Abuse 31 98-107

McKetin et al (2012) Evaluating the impact of community-based treatment options on methamphetamine use. Addiction 107(11) 1998-2008

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