

Review of: "Substance use disorder and associated factors at an opioid de-addiction clinic in Western Kenya"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is a descriptive study that describes patients in a methadone treatment program in Western Kenya. As such, it contributes to understanding substance use in Sub Saharan Africa, an area that has a growing substance use problem and a lack of studies concerning substance use disorder. However, the paper loses an opportunity to evaluate one of the few methadone programs in East Africa and to place the study more clearly in that context. While the sample size is quite small, it may be possible to test for a significant difference in substance use pre and post-intervention. It certainly appears that a large change in substance use occurred. Perhaps you did not have the power to do that.

There are some methodological issues that could be clarified. The study appears to be a pre- post-intervention design, but this is not made clear. Were participants initiating treatment at the first survey? How long after methadone was initiated was the second survey conducted? It is also not clear what is meant by "after treatment." Methadone maintenance is often considered a long treatment for a chronic condition, and treatment can last for years. If methadone maintenance was limited in time, which may be understandable in a low-resource context, this should be made clear. Also, the authors seem to imply that there was more to the treatment than the medication. Other aspects of the intervention should be clearly described.

One of the conclusions in the Discussion was a bit unwarranted. Given the small and non-random recruitment of participants, I don't think much can or should be said about potential differences in age at first use among participants from different locations.

Overall, this paper's largest contribution is in presenting descriptive data about substance use in Sub Saharan Africa and some evidence regarding one of the first methadone maintenance programs. This in itself is a significant contribution.