

# Methadone in the management of opioid dependence: programs and policies around the world

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## ABSTRACT

The methadone detoxification treatment of opiate dependence was introduced during the first heroin epidemic in 1960. The urgency to serve a large opiate dependent population and the fact that methadone treatment is the only model known by the physicians responsible for the treatment obviated the adoption. The client as well as the public accepted the methadone treatment as they used to accept other health care services as a passive recipient. In retrospect, given the circumstances, the methadone detoxification treatment was probably the most pragmatic solution. Since the epidemic lasted for only three to four years, the demand for efficacy and efficiency of the treatment. When the second wave of heroin epidemic started around 1967 there was not yet an awareness or premonition of the overwhelming social impact in the subsequent years. Finally in 1976 the widespread heroin dependence became so apparent that the government declared drug dependence as a national priority problem. Because of the lack of any development of drug dependence treatment in the government services, methadone detoxification remains as the common treatment model adopted by all government treatment services.

Key words: Methadone; Management, Opioid drug dependence.

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