

Criminal Justice Reform in Treating Opioid use Disorders: Medication for Addiction Treatment and other Pathways to Recovery

The number of people who have opioid use disorders in the United States has reached epidemic proportions, resulting in an increased rate of overdoses and deaths. The epidemic is widespread, negatively impacting most communities. Since 1989, one of the most promising interventions in treating substance use disorders in the criminal justice system has been drug courts. Nearly three decades of evidence has shown that drug courts are more effective than other interventions, such as traditional probation or incarceration. The problem, however, is that little is known about how drug courts serve participants who have opioid use disorders and how participants view the use of medication for addiction treatment (MAT) in drug courts. This is the first known qualitative study to use focus groups to explore drug court participants' (n = 38) opinions and experiences with using MAT, including methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone, in drug court to treat their opioid use disorders.