

The LACES Brief

February
2011

An update on the Los Angeles County Evaluation System,
An Outcome Reporting Program

Vivitrol is the injectable form of naltrexone, an opioid receptor antagonist that acts by blocking the mu-opioid receptors in the brain. These receptors are responsible for the “high” or “buzz” individuals feel when alcohol is consumed. When the receptors are blocked, the “high” or “buzz” is no longer achievable and cravings for alcohol are reduced significantly. Los Angeles County Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) implemented Vivitrol with three alcohol and other drug use treatment agencies in Los Angeles County as part of a pilot project to determine if the use of Vivitrol would significantly reduce cravings and alcohol use days and improve outcomes (increased length of stay, employment, and engagement in social support activities, and reduced homelessness and days of physical health problems). To evaluate the use of Vivitrol, UCLA developed a form whereby clients would be asked about alcohol use days (any use and use to intoxication) as well as side effects and impact on cravings of other substances. The Urge to Drink scale was also employed. This information along with outcomes gathered from the Los Angeles County Participant Reporting System admission and discharge forms were the foundation of the evaluation. Currently, client outcomes are unavailable because few clients have been discharged. Other data from 84 clients were analyzed for this report. Below are selected findings.

Chart 1: Reported Primary Drug at Admission for Vivitrol Clients (n=84)

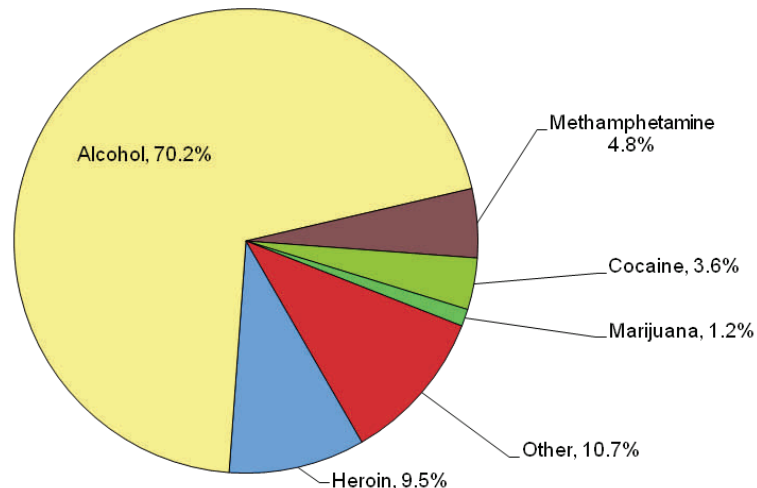
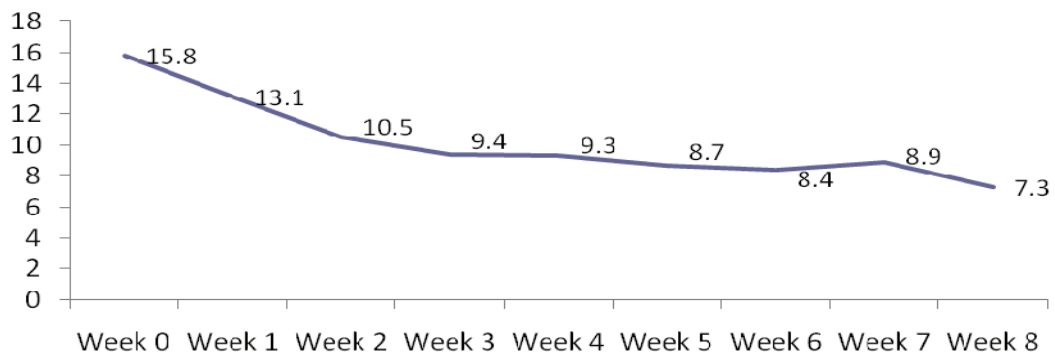


Chart 2: Reductions in Urge to Drink from Week 0 – Week 8 (n= 84)



As shown in Chart 2, the mean number of cravings per week for alcohol were reduced from a high of 15.8 to a low of 7.3 over eight weeks.