



Happy New Year - Well, Happy New Fiscal Year, That Is.

LACES has been involved in a number of interesting projects over the last year aimed at further improving treatment in Los Angeles County. Some of these projects are highlighted below.

Medication Assisted Treatment - Vivitrol

Medication-assisted treatment involves the use of medications to assist patients who are struggling with withdrawal, cravings, and other biological aspects of addiction when trying to abstain from drug or alcohol use. Currently, there are over a dozen medications that have been approved for the treatment of addiction related disorders. Los Angeles County is currently pilot testing the implementation of one such medication - Vivitrol. Vivitrol is an opiate antagonist that works by binding to and blocking the receptors in the brain that produce the high and the cravings associated with opiate and alcohol use. Vivitrol is the long-acting (30 day), injectable form of Naltrexone. Unlike other addiction medications such as methadone or antabuse, Vivitrol is neither mood nor mind altering in that it does not get the individual "high" when taken, nor does it make the individual ill if opiates or alcohol are consumed while on the medication. Vivitrol prevents the "high" normally experienced when one takes opiates or consumes alcohol. More importantly, those who take Vivitrol report significant reductions in cravings. Preliminary results of the evaluation indicate good medication compliance, reduced cravings, and limited side effects. More results will be available in the upcoming months.

Telepsychiatry

Telepsychiatry involves using a camera, a computer, and high speed internet to link medical and other treatment professionals with patients who may not otherwise have access to specialty care due to their remote locations. For example, it can be difficult to get addiction psychiatrists and other specialists to rural areas in the County of Los Angeles, such as the Antelope Valley. SAPC and UCLA have worked together over the last several months to implement telepsychiatry at the Antelope Valley Rehabilitation Center (AVRC) in Acton. Currently, addiction psychiatrists at UCLA are seeing patients at AVRC on Tuesdays via telepsychiatry. The use of telepsychiatry reduces costs by eliminating the time required to travel to remote sites; less time to travel also increases the amount of time dedicated to patient care.

Perception of Care

Perception of care is a measure of program performance that is closely related to satisfaction with treatment. Unlike satisfaction however, perception of care is a concept that provides more concrete examples of where programs may improve from the perspective of the patient. For example, a perception of care instrument may ask the client if he or she was admitted in a reasonable amount of time. If the patient disagrees with this statement, the program knows to look at the time it takes to be admitted. A survey to assess client perception of care is being examined to ascertain how well the survey results predict client outcomes and other program performance measures. Results of this study will be available in the early Fall.

Updates on the projects planned for the 2011-2012 fiscal year will be presented briefly in the next newsletter. For more information on these or any other of the many LACES projects, please go to the LACES web site (see below) or contact Desiree A. Crevecoeur-MacPhail Ph.D. at desireec@ucla.edu.