

# The LACES Brief

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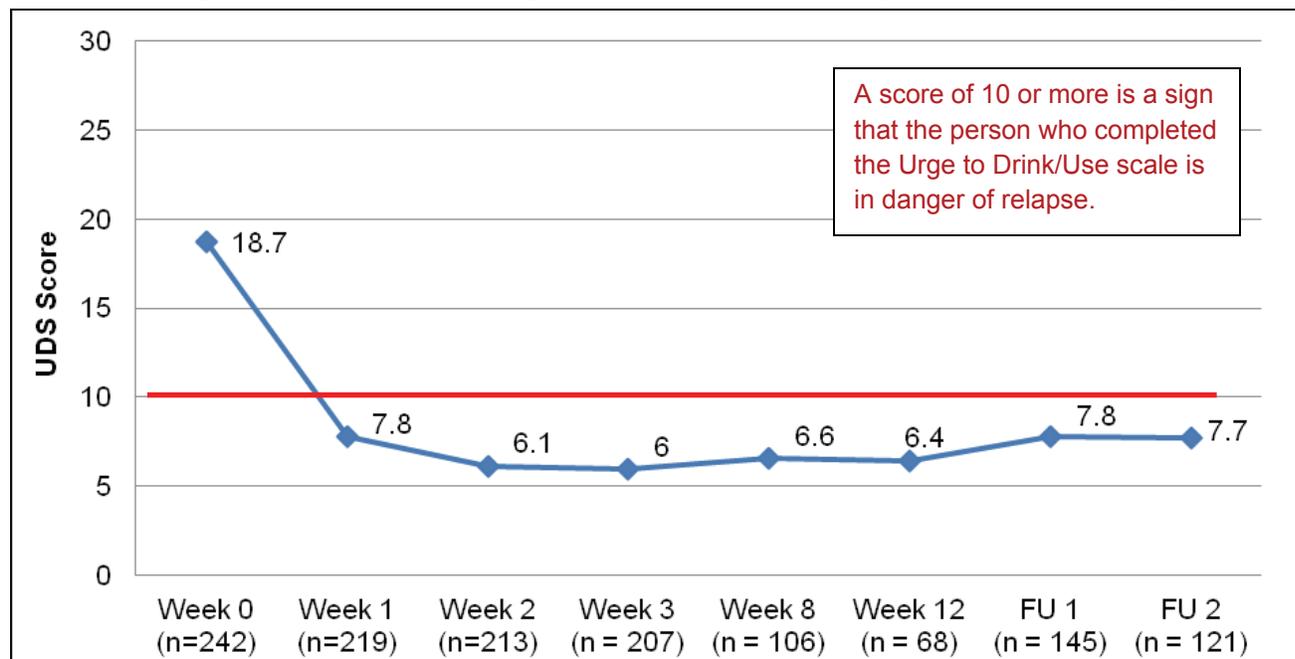
## An update on the Los Angeles County Evaluation System, An Outcome Reporting Program

In 2010, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC), in collaboration with UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs (ISAP), conducted an outcome evaluation on the implementation of Vivitrol in three county-funded treatment centers. Results suggested that patients' urges to drink were reduced, with limited side effects from the medication. Given the success of the first pilot project, in February 2012, LACES began a second Vivitrol evaluation. This brief evaluation examines whether patients can maintain their sobriety once they are no longer receiving Vivitrol injections. Consistent with first evaluation, the current evaluation collects data on medically assisted treatment (to ascertain side effects, days used, etc.) the urge to drink/use (to ascertain cravings), and LACPRS (to ascertain treatment outcomes). Among the evaluation questions, one critical questions in the evaluation are:

- How does the urge to use alcohol/opioids change from baseline (prior to the dose of Vivitrol) to 30- and 60-days after the last dose of Vivitrol?*
- Did urges to use alcohol/opioids return to pre-Vivitrol levels once the medication was no longer administered?*

The Urge to Drink/Use scales was used as a measure of cravings. These scales contain five questions about cravings: frequency, duration, time spent thinking about drinking/using, craving severity, difficulty resisting, and overall craving. Each question is rated from 0 to 6, with 6 indicating the highest severity. A cumulative score from 0 to 30 is derived. A score of 10 or more is clinically significant; thus a patient who receives a score of 10 or more is considered in danger of relapse. Below are preliminary findings on changes in urges from baseline to follow-up for participants in the second evaluation study.

Chart 1: Preliminary Baseline-to-Follow-Up Changes in Urges to Use Alcohol or Opioids among all Vivitrol Patients Seeking Assistance with Alcohol or Opioid Problems (N =242)



As illustrated in Chart 1, at baseline (Week 0), the urge to use score was 18.7. However, the urge to use scores decreased at week 2 and again at week 3; to 6.1 and 6 respectively. At Week 8 and Week 12 urges to use increased slightly; to 6.6 and 6.4 respectively. At the first follow-up, the urge to use increased to 7.8 and then decreased to 7.7 at the second follow-up. The overall observed decrease in urges to use suggests that the patients' urges decreased from a clinically significant score to a score reflecting less danger of relapse.