

Management of Substance Use Disorder in Physician Health Programs

Category: Poster Presentation (In-Person)

Abstract Body

Background:

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) pose unique challenges for physicians, necessitating specialized management. Physician Health Programs (PHPs) have achieved remarkable success, setting a gold standard for SUDs recovery with abstinence rates above 75% compared to 50-65% in other programs (Bruguera et al., 2020; Dupont et al., 2009; Geuijen et al., 2020). Despite PHP efficacy, barriers such as stigma, fear, and economic consequences hinder early engagement. Tailoring programs to physicians' needs is vital.

Proposal:

To review current research on SUDs management in physicians, focusing on innovative changes since the establishment of treatment protocols. By identifying emerging themes this review seeks strategies to optimize outcomes for addicted physicians through early intervention, minimization of barriers, and personalized treatment solutions.

Method:

Conduct a descriptive review of recent literature to understand emerging themes in managing physicians with SUDs.

Results:

Physician treatment for SUDs has a multifaceted, structured approach and has seen minimal changes since the early 2000s, with most research relying on data that is a decade old. Mutual support groups and intensive treatment were noted to be important towards successful outcomes (Merlo et al., 2022). Biological monitoring has also proven valuable, with the added benefit of offering objective measures of safe practice upon return to work (Geuijen et al., 2020).

Further research is needed to identify the most supportive components for physician recovery and flexible elements for individualized care. A comparison of PHP programs found that despite variations in treatment and monitoring, the outcomes were equally successful suggesting that a person-centered approach may be more supportive in patient recovery (Brooks, et al., 2012).

Advancements in technology and increased test sensitivity may offer alternative options, affording physicians more time or combining testing modalities. However, this area requires further investigation.

Key Words (Max 5)

- Biological models
- Occupational Health
- Recovery
- Substance Use Disorders (general)
- Treatment models/programs

Learning Objective #1

Upon reviewing this study, attendees will be able to understand the unique challenges posed in management of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) among physicians, recognize the current strategies used by Physician Health Programs (PHPs) in achieving abstinence, and identify barriers to early engagement such as stigma, fear, and economic consequences.

Learning Objective #2

Attendees will be able to evaluate the importance of tailoring SUDs treatment programs to meet individual physician needs, analyze the research gap presented, & propose innovative changes in PHP models based on emerging research themes. Attendees can analyze the potential benefits of a person-centered approach in enhancing patient recovery outcomes.

Reference #1

Geuijen PM, van den Broek SJM, Dijkstra BAG, Kuppens JM, de Haan HA, de Jong CAJ, Schene AH, Atsma F, & Schellekens AFA. (2021). Success Rates of Monitoring for Healthcare Professionals with a Substance Use Disorder: A Meta-Analysis. *J Clin Med*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm10020264>

Reference #2

Merlo, L. J., Campbell, M. D., Shea, C., White, W., Skipper, G. E., Sutton, J. A., & DuPont, R. L. (2022). Essential components of physician health program monitoring for substance use disorder: A survey of participants 5 years post successful program completion. *The American Journal on Addictions*, 31(2), 115–122. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajad.13257>

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