

[J Psychopharmacol](#). 2014 Aug;28(8):800-3. doi: 10.1177/0269881114528592. Epub 2014 Apr 2.

Naltrexone implant treatment for buprenorphine dependence-- Mauritian case series.

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Abstract

Although substitution therapy with opiate agonist treatments such as methadone and buprenorphine has resulted in a reduction of illicit drug use related harm, such treatment has also resulted in severe problems in some countries where opioid-dependent individuals now inject illicitly sold buprenorphine or buprenorphine-naloxone instead of heroin. There is no approved treatment for buprenorphine dependence. Naltrexone is an opioid antagonist which has been used for the treatment of both alcohol and opioid dependencies. Although both buprenorphine and heroin resemble each other concerning their effects, buprenorphine has a higher affinity to opioid receptors than heroin. Therefore, it is not known if naltrexone can block the psychoactive effects of buprenorphine as it does for heroin. This paper presents observational case series data on the use of a sustained-release naltrexone implant for the treatment of buprenorphine dependence. To the authors' knowledge this is the first use of sustained-release naltrexone for this indication.

KEYWORDS:

Naltrexone; buprenorphine; dependence; sustained release

PMID:

24695742

DOI:

[10.1177/0269881114528592](https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881114528592)