

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE TREATMENT OF PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Executive summary

Psychotropic substance abuse and dependence is a serious problem around the world and in Hong Kong. During the last three decades, treatments for dependence on cocaine, amphetamine, cannabis and other psychotropic substances have been developing rapidly. This review provides an overview of the current status of treatments for psychotropic substances.

The review explores the following treatment aspects: psychosocial treatments, pharmacotherapies, biological therapies, traditional medicine, integrated treatment models and the framework of addiction treatment.

The data are from published articles and books and the majority are from research performed in North America and European. Psychosocial treatments play the primary role in treating psychotropic substance use disorders and evidence-based psychosocial treatments have been established. Pharmacotherapies and immunological therapies are promising treatment candidates, but so far no medication or vaccine has been proven to be effective in treating psychotropic substance use disorders. Several integrated treatment models based on psychosocial treatments have been developed and more comprehensive models that emphasize multidisciplinary cooperation are under exploration. Along with recognition of the chronic nature of addiction disorder, the framework of treatments in this field is now facing a transformation from a traditional acute care model to a continuing care model. High dropout and relapse rates and a low abstinence rate are common despite the treatment methods.

The treatment of psychotropic substance use disorders is still a tough problem. Future studies or practice may put effort into developing optimistic treatment methods and models, and fostering a more sustainable care system. The provision of local evidence-based treatment approaches is also an urgent task for local authorities.