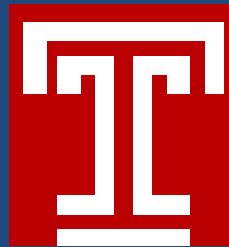


Psychiatry & Co-Occurring Disorders



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Vignette #1 – MAT Program

Counselor to MAT Patient:

“How many pills are you taking?”

Patient (nodding off in chair) to Counselor:

“Only one at bedtime, as prescribed”

Counselor to MAT Patient:

“Does your doctor know you are on the program?”

Patient to Counselor:

“Yeah, I guess, I think we talked about it.”

Vignette #2 – Psychiatrist Office

MAT Patient to Psychiatrist:

“I’m really having a lot of anxiety and panic attacks and I can’t sleep at night.”

Psychiatrist to MAT Patient (nodding in chair):

“You look tired now.”

MAT Patient to Psychiatrist:

“Yeah I’m really not sleeping. Isn’t there anything you can give me?”

Psychiatrist to MAT Patient:

“Here is a prescription for clonazepam and zolpidem; I think they’ll help you.”

Axiom #1

- **Addiction is an anxiety provoking disease**
- **Symptoms of anxiety and psychiatric co-morbidity are high in MAT populations**
 - Ask about them
 - Screen for them
 - Include them in the treatment plan



Axiom #2

Communication is essential



MAT professionals need to speak with MH professionals

MH professionals need to speak with MAT professionals.



Axiom #3



If you don't ask, you won't know.

(and, even if you do ask, you may need to ask again, and again, and again.....)

Because of the high co-morbidity, MH professionals need to screen for substance use disorders and addiction professionals need to inquire about psychiatric symptoms.

Axiom #4

Patients who have taken BZ for longer than 7 years will probably never get off of them.

An informed decision about how to manage patients taking BZ needs to realize how difficult it can be to stop their use.



THIS PILL IS NOT ADDICTIVE! I SHOULD KNOW, I HAVE TAKEN IT EVERY NIGHT FOR TWENTY YEARS NOW.

<http://www.palme.nu/comics/w4h-benzodiazepines.html>



Axiom #5



Not all BZ use is abuse and addiction.

BZ are highly effective in the treatment of anxiety disorders (alternatives do exist though). When evaluating patients, a careful decision making process is necessary:

- What is/are the diagnosis(es)?
- What alternative have been explored/tried?
- What is the patient's recovery plan?
- Are they following it?
- Do the benefits outweigh the risks?



Better Living Through Chemistry ?

