

“COVID, Medication for Substance Use Disorder, & Community Partnerships”

Study Overview

This study looks at how Massachusetts is implementing new legislation requiring medication assisted treatment in jails. It also looks at the outcomes among the individuals who received medication for substance use disorder and the costs of delivering a program like that.



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COVID led to shut downs of jail at the time this study was getting started, so the researchers pivoted and made the best of their situation with a whole new approach.



The researchers combined two data sets to put together a timely study of individuals with OUD who were released both pre- and during COVID to compare against each other to look at both groups' outcomes.

TAKE-AWAYS

- ✓ There was a fairly modest increase in fatal overdoses for individuals who were released during COVID period (three fold but based on very modest numbers).
- ✓ Methadone showed an effect on non-fatal overdoses and fatal overdoses.
- ✓ Today, the Massachusetts jails in our study are treating more people and they are being more aggressive with that treatment (e.g., treating folks with MOUD whether they came into jail on a medication or not).
- ✓ Linkage to care appears to have improved.
- ✓ Other non-study jails in Massachusetts have begun implementing the program as they learn about some of the positive outcomes that the researchers found in their pilot study.
- ✓ Strong researcher-practitioner partnerships made this all possible.