

# A Tool for Buprenorphine Care

(A series of monthly newsletters about buprenorphine treatment)

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## Hepatitis C and implications for treatment with buprenorphine

Hepatitis C is a common comorbidity in patients with opioid dependence. It presents some challenges, but it does not necessarily preclude treatment with buprenorphine.

Hepatitis C (or B) infection may have played a role in cases of cytolytic hepatitis and hepatitis with jaundice that were observed during clinical trials of Suboxone. Abnormalities ranged from transient asymptomatic elevations of hepatic transaminases to case reports of liver failure, necrosis, hepatorenal syndrome, and hepatic encephalopathy (source: suboxone.com).

Elevation in liver enzymes (AST and ALT) has been reported in individuals receiving buprenorphine both in the short and long term, so it is especially important to perform liver function tests periodically in patients who have hepatitis C (though abnormalities are much more likely for those who inject buprenorphine rather than take it sublingually). Abnormalities or medical problems detected by laboratory evaluation should be addressed as they would be for patients who are not addicted (source: TIP 40).

## Buprenorphine and medication-assisted addiction treatment in the news

Good press *and* bad press.

"[Help beyond addiction](#)." Neena Satija. The Boston Globe, Boston, Mass. September 10, 2011.

## Research update

Mouse-over to see abstract. **Click to get free full text (when available).**

Comparative profiles of men and women with opioid dependence: results from a national multisite effectiveness trial. Back SE, Payne RL, Wahlquist AH, Carter RE, Stroud Z, Haynes L, Hillhouse M, Brady KT, Ling W. *Am J Drug Alcohol Abuse*. 2011 Sep;37(5):313-23. PMID: 21854273.

Co-occurring amphetamine use and associated medical and psychiatric comorbidity among opioid-dependent adults: results from the Clinical Trials Network. Pilowsky DJ, Wu LT, Burchett B, Blazer DG, Woody GE, Ling W. *Subst Abuse Rehabil*. 2011 Jan 1;2:133-144. PMID: 21886430.

Opioid dependence. Praveen KT, Law F, O'Shea J, Melichar J. *Clin Evid (Online)*. 2011 Sep 20;2011. pii: 1015. PMID: 21929827.

Preliminary buprenorphine sublingual tablet pharmacokinetic data in plasma, oral fluid, and sweat during treatment of opioid-dependent pregnant women. Concheiro M, Jones HE, Johnson RE, Choo R, Huestis MA. *Ther Drug Monit*. 2011 Oct;33(5):619-26. PMID: 21860340.

## Don't forget about these great resources!

1. [SUD SharePoint site](#). Use the same password you use to log on to a VA computer.
2. [BupPractice.com](#). Funded by a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) grant, the site contains easy-to-find information about a sundry of topics related to buprenorphine care.
3. SAMHSA's [TAP 30: A Guide for Nurses](#) (pdf).
4. [Physicians' Clinical Support System — Buprenorphine](#). PCSS-B is a collaboration between the AAAP, AOAAM, and APA. It provides training, guidance in advocacy, and a place for mentors and mentees to connect.