

Is there an association between poly-drug use and alcohol consumption in an Irish cohort of methadone maintained patients?

Jo-Hanna Ivers

Department of Public Health & Primary Care

Trinity College Dublin

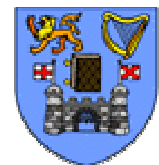
Catherine Darker, Brion Sweeney, Haytham El

Hassan, Bobby Smyth

& Joe Barry

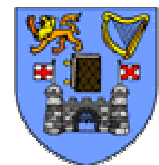


Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Background - Irish Context

- ▶ There are approximately 10,000 patients receiving methadone maintenance throughout the Irish Republic (*Central Treatment List, Dublin 2010*)
- ▶ There is a high prevalence of problem alcohol use among patients attending primary care for methadone (*Ryder et al 2009*) **see also** (*MacManus and Fitzpatrick, 2007*).
- ▶ Addressing problem alcohol use In Ireland has been identified as a priority for population health.



Community-based Addiction Service Users

Unlike primary care difficult to reach group

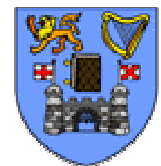
Bio-psychosocial issues:

- Health
- Education
- Employment
- Forensic

Poly-drug use

In Europe, the concept of poly-drug use dates back to the 1970s.

In its broadest terms, poly-drug use is defined as the use of one or more substances with an illegal drug plus another legal or illegal drug.



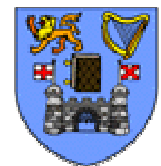
Harmful Effects of Alcohol & poly-drug use

- Increased risk of:
 - Premature death
 - Overdose
 - Cocaine Cardiac Death



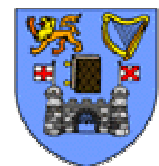
Current Research Question

- **Aim:** To determine whether there was an association between poly-drug use and alcohol consumption amongst patients accessing community based methadone maintenance clinics.



Method

- ▶ **Participants:** All participants were receiving methadone maintenance.
- ▶ **Measures:**
 - AUDIT
 - Urine analysis: heroin, benzodiazepine & cocaine
- ▶ **Setting:** Three community based methadone maintenance clinics in Dublin



Results AUDIT Screening

Mean Total AUDIT (10 items) scores at baseline

Total pop
(n=710)

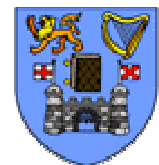
AUDIT Positive
(n=160)

Dependent
(n=65)

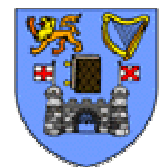
(22.5%)

(9.3%)

N=225 31.8% (males=162 females=63).

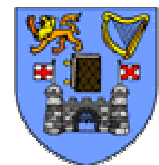


*Was there a significant
association between poly-drug
use and alcohol at baseline?*



Correlation between AUDIT Score & Poly-drug use

- No significant association was found between AUDIT score and opiate ($p=0.8$) benzodiazepine ($p=0.91$) and cocaine use ($p=0.16$) at baseline.

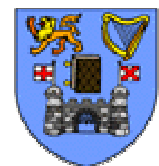


Pattern of Poly-drug Use

20% (n=45)	Opiates and Benzodiazepine
15% (n=34)	Benzodiazepine alone
15% (n=34)	Opiates, Benzodiazepine and Cocaine
11% (n=25)	Benzodiazepine and Cocaine
39% (n=87)	Random combinations

Characteristics AUDIT Score & Poly-drug use

- 3+ Positive Opiate, Benzodiazepine and Cocaine = lower AUDIT Score at baseline.
- Binge drinkers (6+ Units) (n=133/59.1%) more likely to use cocaine.

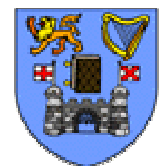


Findings

- Binge drinkers were more likely to have caused or acquired an injury in the last year than those who did not binge drink.
- Benzodiazepine users were more likely than heroin or cocaine users to have caused or acquired an injury in the last year than those who used cocaine or heroin alone.

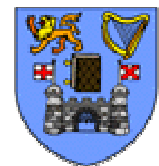
Discussion

- ▶ No statistically significant association between methadone maintained patients' poly-drug use and AUDIT scores at baseline.
- ▶ Trend:
Poly-drug use+ AUDIT scores-
AUDIT scores+ poly-drug use-



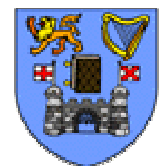
Discussion Continued

- ▶ Therefore methadone maintained poly-drug users appear to consume alcohol in a different way to other substances:
- ▶ Less frequently
- ▶ Substitution
- ▶ Binge



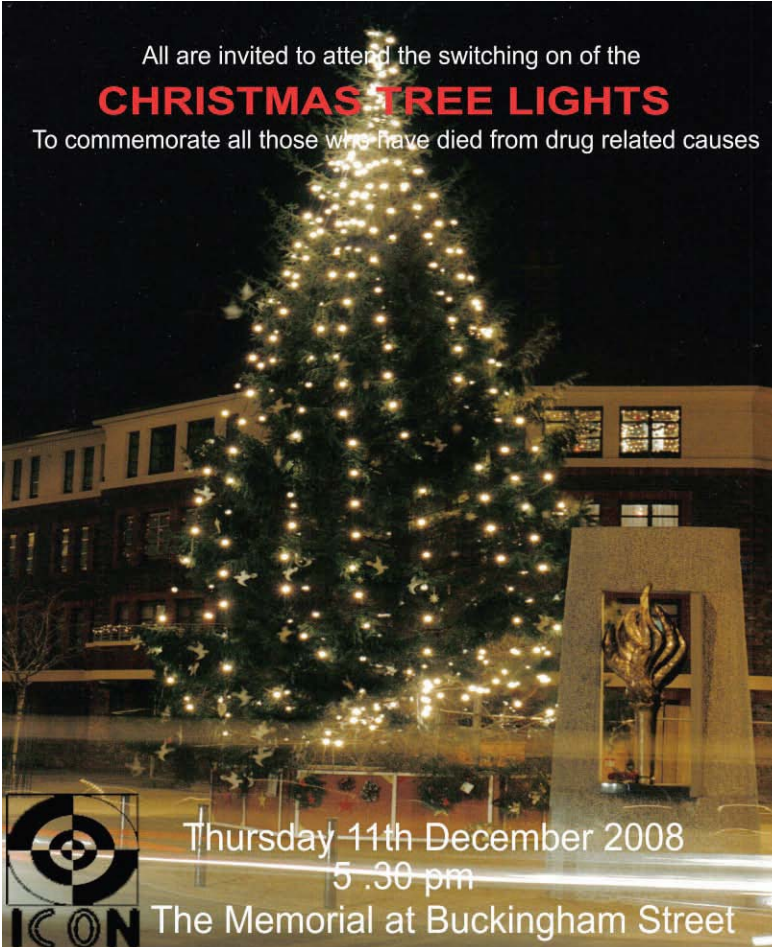
Implications for treatment providers

- High Prevalence problem alcohol use
- Treatment for harmful and hazardous drinking within the addiction services remains secondary priority.
- Integration of routine screening for alcohol misuse in initial care plans.




Commemoration

All are invited to attend the switching on of the
CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS
To commemorate all those who have died from drug related causes



Thursday 11th December 2008
5.30 pm
The Memorial at Buckingham Street



Finally

- *Many thanks to patients and clinicians for taking part in this research.*



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

