# FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPROVEMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AMONG METHADONE MAINTENANCE TREATMENT CLIENTS: A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF REGISTER DATA FROM 15 CLINICS IN GUANGDONG, CHINA

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**Background:** Methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) has been the mainstay for opioid substitution treatment. A good family relationship reduced concurrent drug use. Little is known about factors associated with the improvement of family relationships among MMT clients. We hypothesise that some specific status transitions and behaviour changes are associated with family relationships improvement.

**Methods:** We retrospectively analysed the register data extracted from 15 MMT clinics in Guangdong, China. Demographic and MMT characteristics were collected. Clients' family relationships, statuses including living status, source of living cost and employment, behaviours including contact with drug-using friends and sexual behaviour were collected at enrolment, 6, 12 months and annually thereafter. Family relationships were self-reported as difficult, general, or good. Family relationships improvement, status transitions and behaviour changes during follow-up periods were indicated by the difference of two consecutive follow-ups. Generalized estimating equation (GEE) for binary outcomes was used to assess factors associated with family relationships improvement. To reduce bias, only those follow-up periods with initial family relationships as difficult or general were included in this analysis.

**Results:** 1425 individuals with 2223 follow-up periods were included. 864 (60.63%) clients' family relationships were improved at least once, with 959 (43.14%) improved follow-up periods during the whole follow-up. The improvement of family relationships was positively associated with initiating to live with family (OR=1.48, 95% CI: 1.05-2.08), initiating living on a regular wage(OR=1.63, 95% CI: 1.27-2.10), employment entry (OR=1.28, 95% CI: 1.03-1.58), ceasing contact with drug-using friends (OR=1.63, 95% CI: 1.35-1.98), and initiating sexual behaviour (OR=1.43, 95% CI: 1.12-1.82).

**Conclusion:** The improvement of clients' family relationships during MMT are associated with their status transitions or behaviour changes. This may help us understand how MMT improves patients' family relationships.