Methadone Substitution Therapy: The Mauritian Context

Dr Fayzal Sulliman & Dr G. Hussein Rassool
Mark Twain: Mauritius was created before Heaven
UNODC-World Drug Report-2009

- Worldwide-Mauritius is the second largest consumer of opiates.

- The report shows that the prevalence rate of opiate use is highest in Mauritius (2%).

- The of heroin has become alarming in some East and Southern African countries, in particular Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia.

- (INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD Annual Report 2009)
Estimated Number of Drug Users (Rapid Situation Assessment-2004)

- **Opiate (Subutex-Buprenorphine)**
  18,000 – 20,000.

- **IDU**
  16,000 – 17,000.

- **Cannabis**
  25,000 – 30,000.
Characteristics of Users (Drug)

- Men
- Women - 5-10% (Sex work)
- Average age - 30
- Majority of IDU’s: Creole, Muslim, Hindu.
- IDU started using cannabis...
- Mode of heroin use: 94% Inject (RSA 2004)
- Sharing of Needles: 46% (RSA 2004)
Living with Blood-Borne Viruses

- No of People Living with HIV and AIDS: 10,000 – 12,000.
- Country Prevalence: 1.8% (UNAIDS 2007)
- IDUs Living with Hepatitis C-97.3% (UNGASS Mauritius Country Progress Report 2010)
- Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) 47.4%

(Source: REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS - COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORT 2010. NATIONAL AIDS SECRETARIAT PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE)
Integrated Behavioral and Biological Surveillance Survey among Injecting Drug Users in Mauritius, 2009

- HIV prevalence is 47.4%.
- HCV prevalence is 97.3%.
- HBV prevalence is 9.0%
- Syphilis prevalence is 2.7%
- Among IDUs who tested positive for HIV, 99.7% also tested positive for HCV infection.
- HIV prevalence among female IDUs is 70.6%
MODE OF TRANSMISSION
(JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2009)

- HETEROSEXUAL: 20.6%
- HOMOSEXUAL / BISEXUAL: 0.5%
- INTRAVENOUS DRUG USER: 73.2%
- MOTHER TO CHILD: 1.1%
- OTHER AND UNDETERMINED: 0.5%
- HOMOSEXUAL / IDU: 0.2%
- HETEROSEXUAL / IDU: 20.6%
- HOMOSEXUAL / BISEXUAL: 0.5%
METHADONE SUBSTITUTION THERAPY IN MAURITIUS

- 2054 people on MST in January 2010 (MOHQL).
- 5500 of IDUs who have access to NEP
- 36.5% of IDUs have reported obtaining injecting equipment through NEP
- Induction: Residential-2 Weeks
- 9 Dispensing Points.
- Follow-up: Outpatient
- Average Dose: 40-80 Mg.
METHADONE SUBSTITUTION THERAPY IN MAURITIUS

- Psychosocial Support - NGOs
- High Retention Rate
- High Demand
- Accepted As A Best Practice For The Region (SADC)
- Formal Outcome Evaluation Under Way
TREATMENT OVERVIEW (%)

- 89% Clients on Maintenance
- 2% Clients passed away
- 8% Clients dropped out
- 1% Clients detoxed

• Review of the Repressive Legal System*.
  1. Decriminalization of Buprenorphine
  2. Review of the Dangerous Drug Act 2000 (DDA)
  3. Availability of Drug Consumption Rooms
  4. Harm Reduction in prison settings
  5. Harm Reduction for young IDUs

• 2. Adequate medical treatment*

1. HCV Prevention and Treatment

• 3. Discrimination*
Other Challenges...

- Accessible Services
- Dispensing of Methadone
- Social Marketing
- Reaching a target of 12,000 IDU’s on MST