BENZODIAZEPINE USE AND MEDICATION–ASSISTED TREATMENT

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ACUTE AND IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF BENZO USE

IMPAIRMENT

- BZD use during MAT can cause impairment that leads to motor vehicle accidents.
- It has been found that patients tend to underestimate their own level of impairment.

OVERDOSE

- The majority of overdose deaths in methadone or buprenorphine treatment have involved the use of BZDs or other CNS depressants (like alcohol).
- The first couple weeks of MAT ("induction") is the most dangerous time. Uncontrolled BZD use during induction presents an extremely high risk for overdose.

SUICIDE

- BZD use is a risk factor for completed suicide.

LONGER TERM EFFECTS OF BENZO USE

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF LONG TERM BENZO USE INCLUDE:

- Long-term disturbances in sleep and mood
- Increased risk of hip fracture
- Anxiety and development of severe depression
- Emotional blunting
- Reduced brain function (especially large doses)
- The potential for an uncomfortable withdrawal syndrome that can last for months to years, especially if BZDs are taken for longer than one month

BENZO USE AND YOUR RECOVERY

ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER SUCCESS IN MEDICATION–ASSISTED TREATMENT

- The use of other drugs generally tends to be a predictor of poor treatment adherence in MAT.
- Patient use of BZDs negatively affects attendance at treatment sessions and progress in MAT.

IRETA. (2013). Management of benzodiazepines in medication-assisted treatment.
Retrieved from website: http://www.ccbh.com/pdfs/Providers/healthchoices/bestpractice/BP_Guidelines_for_Benzodiazepines.pdf