

# Rehabilitation favoured over methadone according to study findings

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The public does not value drug treatment generally but believes detoxification and rehabilitation is a better approach to drug treatment than methadone maintenance, according to a University of Aberdeen study, the findings of which were presented today at the British Science Festival.

The findings contradict scientific evidence which shows methadone maintenance is an effective way of reducing [drug](#)-related deaths, [illicit drug use](#) and the consequences of drug use such as drug-related crime.

Dr Catriona Matheson from the University of Aberdeen's Centre for [Primary Care](#) who led the study said: "The results of our study showed that the general public values detoxification and rehabilitation

approaches more than a methadone maintenance approach.

Participants were asked how much money from the public purse they would be prepared to pay towards the expansion of four different drug [treatment options](#) - needle exchange programmes, methadone maintenance programmes, community-based detoxification and rehabilitation and residential-based detoxification and rehabilitation.

Findings showed

- 50.3% valued community-based detoxification and rehabilitation
- 51.4% valued residential-based detoxification and rehabilitation
- 43.2% valued Needle exchange programme
- 39.4% valued Methadone maintenance programme

Of those that valued treatment they valued community based detoxification highest and this was twice as high as methadone maintenance.

Dr Matheson continued: "In monetary terms respondents were willing to pay most for community detoxification and rehabilitation (£16.10) followed closely by residential detoxification and rehabilitation (£14.10) then needle exchange provision (£10.23) and to pay the least for [methadone](#) maintenance treatment (£8.29).

"Past scientific evidence states that for every £1 spent on drug treatment £2.50 is saved in health and social costs." There is no such evidence available to support [detoxification](#) and rehabilitation programmes.

Participants were also asked for their experience of drug and alcohol use and a range of questions about what they knew about drugs and what they thought about drug users as people and how to treat them.

Dr Matheson added: "Our study found that the more knowledgeable a person is about drug users and treatments, the more open-minded they would be towards drug treatment".

"Respondents with a higher knowledge of drug users and treatments had more positive attitudes – this shows that a better informed public on drug users and the effectiveness of the various drug treatments available could lead to a more evolved attitude in society as to how we manage this group."

Provided by University of Aberdeen

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