

Opportunities for addiction care and HIV prevention in Russia

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Opioid agonist therapy using methadone is regarded as one of the most effective treatments for opioid use disorders as well as helping to reduce HIV risks. Such therapy, however, is not yet available in Russia.

Researchers from Boston Medical Center (BMC), in collaboration with Brandeis University and Washington State University conducted a study to estimate costs and reduction in disease burden if this treatment were available in Russia and implemented into their [health](#) care system. These results were published online in *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention and Policy*.

The study estimated that providing methadone therapy to as few as 3% of people with opioid addiction would result in almost 50,000 Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) averted, a substantial reduction in disease burden, over 10 years at a cost of just over \$17 million USD.

"The major factors contributing to the growing HIV epidemic in Russia is the lack of such evidence-based prevention and treatment programs for people who use drugs," said Dr. Vasiliy Vlassov, president of the Society for Evidence Based Medicine in Russia. "While there are almost a million people living with HIV in Russia, it is evident that we must continue efforts through smarter health policies."

The findings suggest that implementing methadone [therapy](#) to treat opioid use disorders at existing facilities in Russia would have health benefits and be highly cost-effective.

More information: Bulat Idrisov et al. Implementation of methadone therapy for opioid use disorder in Russia – a modeled cost-effectiveness analysis, *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy* (2017). [DOI: 10.1186/s13011-016-0087-9](https://doi.org/10.1186/s13011-016-0087-9)

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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