

Methadone - A chemical solution to a chemical problem

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In the country in which I live one of the treatment approaches to heroin addiction is the use of methadone. This is called a medical or pharmacological approach to drug dependence. The 'addict' is given methadone which is a drug that the person becomes addicted to. The theory is that when addicted to methadone the person is able to live a far more stable life than when addicted to heroin. Also as it can be legally prescribed the person does not have to be involved in the underground world of the drug subculture. They have a way of moving out of that subculture.

There are some/many who dislike this method of treatment for heroin addiction. Firstly the person becomes addicted to the methadone and so they are just switching the addiction and are not stopping the addiction. Reportedly, methadone is quite nasty to withdraw from, much more nasty than heroin. So it does come in for some bad press.



I have met some who strongly dislike methadone and yet I have met others who has worked quite well for. So again with different treatments it is better to fit the treatment to the person and not the person to the treatment. If it works for the user then do it, if it does not work for the user then do not use it.

There is however another point I would like to raise that questions the

pharmacological approach. This is where we get to the title of this article. Methadone is a chemical solution to a chemical problem. It is using a drug to get the person off drugs and thus we have the main problem. The pharmacological approach says: "Do as I say not as I do". It says: "Take this drug to stop taking drugs". It is a double message.

Yes one can argue state that there are legal and illegal drugs and that is true, and the user will understand that but still one can say a drug is a drug which is also true. The Child ego state will tend to hear all the words and the rationale, but tend to believe - A drug is a drug.



So it is a similar situation to a parent who is holding a glass of wine in hand whilst telling the teenager not to take drugs. When the teenager makes such a statement to the parent about the hypocrisy of what they are doing and saying, the parent will usually respond that alcohol is OK because it is legal and drugs are not OK because they are illegal. Again the Adult ego state can understand that but the Child ego state tends to see it in more basic (truer?) terms. Alcohol

is a drug that gets you out of it and marijuana is a drug that gets you out of it and that means there is not much difference.

Then we have the parent who is puffing away on a cigarette whilst telling the children they should not smoke. "Do as I say, not as I do" is the double message and with humans words are cheap and behaviour counts for much more and will be much more influential in the effects on the child modelling.

So there is an inherent flaw in treating a drug problem with a drug solution. It gives permission to take drugs. However with some addicts it can be a solution. There are some people who are very dependent type people where the only realistic solution is them getting addicted to something that is less harmful. Those who go to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) are of this kind. The AA approach is that you are an alcoholic and will always be an alcoholic and that you need a higher authority (god) to assist you in staying off alcohol. In other words you are dependent on the higher authority. So the dependency from alcohol moves to the higher authority. However it is a much better life to be addicted to god than to alcohol and some have remained sober for many many years this way. Perhaps a chemical solution to a chemical problem is one realistic solution for the highly dependent type of drug user.