

Wound care uptake among clients at a low-threshold, mobile buprenorphine service



INTRODUCTION

- Skin and soft tissue infections (SSTI) are prevalent amongst people who use drugs (PWUD),¹ causing significant morbidity and health care utilization.²
- Negative health care experiences including inadequate withdrawal management and stigma reduce care-seeking for wounds,³ increasing risk of poor health outcomes, subsequent hospitalizations, and death.⁴
- Models of care that integrate wound care with harm reduction services provided in community settings have been shown to be effective,⁵ and expanded models of care are needed.

METHODS

- In 2018, The Baltimore City Health Department rolled out a mobile clinic called Healthcare on The Spot (The Spot) that integrates low-threshold opioid treatment with infectious disease, mental health, and wound care services in Baltimore City, Maryland.
- We conducted a retrospective cohort analysis of patients accessing wound care services on our mobile clinic from August 4, 2021 to January 4, 2023.
- We provide descriptive statistics of demographics and service delivery, as well as a detailed description of one patient's wound care services.



RESULTS

Of 698 patients receiving care on The Spot from August 4, 2021 to January 4, 2023, 62 (9%) received a documented wound care visit.

Characteristics of patients receiving wound care on The Spot (N=62)		
Gender	Male	39 (63%)
	Female	22 (35%)
	Transgender	1 (0.2%)
Race	Black/African American	23 (37%)
	White	39 (63%)
Age	Mean age	42 years
Risk factors	Active injection drug use (in last 6 months)	37 (60%)
	Homeless or unstably housed	27 (44%)
	Hepatitis C positive	43 (69%)
Services	Tested for hepatitis C and HIV	44 (71%)
	Engaged in buprenorphine program	48 (77%)
Wound care services		
Wound type (not mutually exclusive)	Chronic ulcer	35 (53%)
	Acute – abscess and/or cellulitis	26 (42%)
Number of wound visits	1	13 (21%)
	2-3	35 (56%)
	4 or more	14 (23%)
Treatment of infection	Prescribed antibiotics	15 (24%)
	Referred to emergency room	8 (13%)

Case: 33-year-old woman engaged in care wound care and buprenorphine treatment on The Spot



A CASE OF SUCCESS

A 33-year-old female with Hepatitis C, opioid use disorder, and lower-extremity chronic wound, established care on The Spot in January of 2022. In 12 months she engaged in 16 appointments, with a focus on wound care and buprenorphine treatment. Wound care visits included patient education, patient-specific wound care supplies, conservative sharp debridement, application of silver-alginate dressings, and oral antibiotic therapy. Her wound healed completely within a year, and she remains engaged in OUD treatment.

CONCLUSION

- Wound care services can be integrated into low-threshold, community-based drug treatment programs.
- Engaging patients in wound care helps to build trust and can lead to enhanced engagement in addiction and other services.
- Models of integrated services for PWUD have the potential to improve the continuum of care for high-need services including infectious complications of drug use.

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