

Addiction Exchange

News from the worlds of clinical practice and research

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Welcome to *Addiction Exchange*, a forum for the exchange of clinical practice and research information among clinicians, scientists, educators, and administrators in the field of addiction. In this issue, we continue discussing the research-based guide to treatment based on the NIDA publication *Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment* (1999). This publication reviews the current research that substantiates the effectiveness of drug addiction treatment. In the last issue, the first seven of the thirteen principles were reviewed. The remaining principles are:

Principle 8: *Addicted or drug-abusing individuals with coexisting mental disorders should have both disorders treated in an integrated way.* Clients with coexisting disorders have additional needs that require practitioners to attend to treatment issues, such as medication compliance, while also addressing the drug addiction issues, in order to ensure a successful recovery process.

Principle 9: *Medical detoxification is only the first stage of addiction treatment and by itself does little to change long-term drug use.* Detoxification is a form of treatment that addresses the client's physiological needs. For some clients it is a necessary first step to engaging in successful treatment. However, detoxification alone does not address the psychological, behavioral, social or legal concerns that are often a part of drug addiction. Research indicates that detoxification is more effective when it includes a formal assessment of all of these needs and a referral for further treatment.

Principle 10: *Treatment does not need to be voluntary in order to be effective.* Research has shown that drug addiction treatment can be effective when combined with legal sanctions as it increases the length of time clients will remain in treatment. Several approaches within the criminal justice have proven to be effective, such as drug courts and the Treatment Accountability and Safer Communities program (TASC).

Principle 11: *Possible drug use during treatment must be monitored continuously.* In order for treatment to be effective, clients need to remain drug free. The monitoring of drug use provides objective feedback to the practitioner and client regarding this concern. Although some practitioners may have a philosophical conflict with this approach, having access to this information can be helpful to clients. Practitioners are able to intervene early in a relapse pattern, re-assess clients' needs, and adjust the treatment plan accordingly.

Principle 12: *Treatment programs should provide assessment for HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B and C, Tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, and counseling to help patients modify or change behaviors that place themselves or others at risk of infection.* Research indicates that many drug-addicted clients are at high-risk for infectious diseases. Those who inject drugs and do not seek treatment are up to six times more likely to become infected than clients who do enter and receive treatment. These clients also increase the risk of infection for their family members and partners. Drug addiction treatment should include screening, counseling and referral for services regarding infectious diseases for clients and significant others.

Principle 13: *Recovery from drug addiction can be a long-term process and frequently requires multiple episodes of treatment.* Drug addiction is a chronic illness which can include relapse. As with other chronic illnesses, treatment needs to be available throughout the course of a client's recovery process. One treatment episode will probably not be sufficient for most clients. Therefore, relapse prevention is a critical component of any drug addiction treatment program.

For further information on evidence based treatment approaches, the Mid-Atlantic ATTC and Mountain West ATTC are offering an online course starting May 1. For registration information, go to <http://www.mid-attc.org> or <http://www.unr.edu/mwattc>.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (1999) *Principles of drug addiction treatment: A research-based guide.* A NIH publication, No. 99-4180.

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