

Cure and Care 1Malaysia Clinic (C&C1m), Sungai Besi Kuala Lumpur: How Effective is Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs for Outpatient Clients?

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ABSTRACT

Drug addiction is one of the most destructive phenomenon that has existed since the past decades. The future of the next generation will be jeopardized by drug addiction not only in Malaysia but in every nation. The Malaysian government through its agencies has implemented many drug treatment and rehabilitation efforts, from punitive to human health approaches in order to combat this issue. In 2010, the government transformed PUSPEN (which is a drug compulsory centre) into Cure & Care 1Malaysia Clinic (C&C1M) which provides open access services to drug abusers, drug users, their families, employers and individuals with drug problems. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to determine the level of effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation programs of C&C1M in Sungai Besi Kuala Lumpur. The study has adopted a cross-sectional design that focused on the outpatients of C&C 1M Clinic, Sungai Besi. A set of questionnaires were distributed to n= 46 active out-patient clients. The data was analyzed by using 'SPSS for Windows' version 21. The reliability of the questionnaire is tested in the pilot study with Cronbach's Alpha 0.922. The findings of the study have revealed that the level of effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation programs among the outpatient clients was high. As a conclusion, current drug treatment and rehabilitation programs should continue with major improvements to ensure their effectiveness in alleviating the drug addiction problem in Malaysia.

KEYWORDS: Cure& Care 1Malaysia Clinic, Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation, Punitive, Human Health approaches

INTRODUCTION

Drug or opium was consumed as medicine to cure aches and pain by the people in ancient time. From time to time the main function of drug or opium has been abused and this has led to many negative consequences for the individual, society and country. This has also become an international issue which involves nearly all nations in the world. There are many factors which triggered the evolution of drug abuse such as geographical area, war and international trade. As part of the world community, Malaysia has influenced and been affected by the drug malaise. Part of the reason for this is because Malaysia is located near to the Golden Triangle which includes Thailand, Myanmar and Laos [1]. The international trade among the above nations and easy access of people mobility have triggered the demand for drugs in Malaysia [2]

In responding to the dangerous use of drugs, Malaysia has taken a harsh and punitive approach to curb the malaise through stringent laws, regulation and policies. Any person who is involved with drug abuse and trafficking is liable to the penalties based on Dangerous Drug Ordinance and Poisons Ordinance 1952. Under the provision of this act, there are severe penalties for drug abuse and trafficking such as corporal punishment and even the death penalty for producers, distributors and traffickers. However, the number of drug abuse still keeps increasing. Statistics released by National Anti Drug Agency (NADA) [3] indicated a high proportion of drug addicts still existed, and relapse cases were frequent although various efforts were undertaken to overcome the drug dependency and abuse problems. Following the increasing number of drug abuse in the country, relapse issues raised the concern of the relevant authorities especially in the aspect of drug treatment and rehabilitation programs. Relapse refers to the return to drug use after an attempt to stop from drug addiction [4]. High number of relapse cases among the ex- drug addict indicate the ineffectiveness of the treatment and rehabilitation program provided to them [5]. This in turn leads to wastage to the efforts undertaken by the government as the drug problem is still serious and contributes to the emergence of new problems such as relapse drug users [6]. Most of the relapses cases occurred in Kuala Lumpur followed by Penang [3]. The relapse rates remain a serious concern as the rehabilitation programs have failed to reduce the drug addiction problems [7] and produced little success in combating drug addiction in Malaysia [8].

Consequently, due to the ineffectiveness of the legislation in curbing the drug problem, in 1983 the Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation, Act 1983 had been passed by Parliament to specifically cater to the need for

treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. This was implemented through taking legal proceedings against those who have been arrested for drug related crimes. The arrested individuals must receive two years of mandatory drug treatment programs in the Narcotic Addiction Rehabilitation Centre or *Pusat Pemulihan Narkotik* (PUSPEN) or two years supervision orders in the community. However, this approach had been criticized due to the high rate of relapse from 70 to 90 percent, little medical care and physical abuse resulting from corporal punishment [5].

Due to the lack of effectiveness of such punitive measures to curb the drug scourge in the country, there was a three hundred and sixty degree turn to focus instead on more humane measures such as initiating harm reduction programs which was supported by the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). The program has introduced methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) and needle and syringe exchange programs in public and private clinic and hospitals. The implementation of harm reduction has triggered the country to shift its strategy to a more humane approach in dealing with drug addiction. Further, globally World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that drug addiction is not a crime but it is a brain relapsing disease which changes the behavior of individuals who abuse the drug. The global trends has influenced Malaysia to take a more humane approach, especially in treating and rehabilitating the individual who is involved with drug abuse, dependency and addiction.

In 2010, in line with the Government Transformation Program (GTP) and National Key Result Area (NKRA) for reducing crime, the government had transformed the National anti-drug agency (NADA) into a responsible agency which provides drug treatment and rehabilitation. The idea of transformation has shifted punitive types of services to humanistic health approaches [9]. Rather than focusing solely on compulsory rehabilitative treatment for convicted drug offenders, the open-concept approach provides drug users with the opportunity to receive treatment voluntarily at local community service centers without facing legal judgment or prosecution. This new approach was aimed at allowing relapsed users to seek treatment while continuing with their life and career. This approach also encourages drug users with the motivation to change, to seek treatment voluntarily without any legal consequences. Therefore, this transformation has replaced PUSPEN with Cure & Care Malaysia Clinic and Cure & Care Rehabilitation Centre which is a more humane approach in providing drug treatment and rehabilitation. Thus, this study has focused on the transformation in C&C1M Clinic, especially C&C1M clinic Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur. This centre is the pioneer project for drug treatment and rehabilitation transformation in Malaysia. The aim of this study was to determine the level of effectiveness of this drug treatment and rehabilitation program. A quantitative study was carried out among the outpatient clients in C&C1M Clinic Sungai Besi which indicated that the drug treatment and rehabilitation program was highly effective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Drug is number one enemy for the country as it reduces the potential of human resource, encourages crime and causes fear among the public [10]. Most of the victims are the young generation who is the backbone and hope of a nation's future. There are many factors which contribute to drug abuse in Malaysia. The external factors are geographically Malaysia is one of the vital transit countries for economic activities which indirectly made it the transit of drug producing country for Asian and Western markets [11,12] and the mobility of people through tourist activities has provided the opportunity for drug trafficking and smuggling activities [13]. While internally, the drug abuse is influenced by peer pressure, curiosity, depression, work requirement and entertainment [3].

The involvement of individuals in drug abuse also does not solely depend on any one factor but many interdependent factors which contribute to this phenomenon. Besides peer pressure, the main causes of the drug abuse were triggered by family problems such as parental behavior, family relationship, home atmosphere and economic standing or poverty [7]. This shows that, in the Malaysian context, the most contributing factors of drug abuse begins at family level. Furthermore, the situation becomes worse as many pull factors from the external environment such as drug trafficking and smuggling contribute to the situation. Drug abuse is a complex and dynamic issue which is faced by many countries regardless of developing and developed countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, United States and even Sweden. There are no universal policies applicable to deal with drug abuse problems due to different cultural context in each country [14]. However, this does not mean a losing battle on the war on drugs, but continuous and sustained efforts from each country will ensure the drug abuse phenomenon can be alleviated.

In Malaysia, the effort to combat drug addiction problem has always remained the main agenda every year since the government recognized drug as the number one enemy in 1983. On 7 February 1996, the National Drug Agency was established to foresee the matter regarding the National Anti Drug action plan and in 2004 its name was changed to National Anti- Drug Agency (NADA). NADA has become a prime agency to handle all matters regarding drug issues in Malaysia. The effort to provide drug treatment and rehabilitation to the drug addicts was strengthened with the establishment of C&C1M clinic. C&C1M clinic is one of the comprehensive approaches that were designed to deal with the drug addiction problem faced by society. After the implementation of C&C1M clinic in 2010, there was a significant change in the drug addiction situation in Malaysia. It was found

that 94.4 percent of the clients were able to reduce drug craving, 37.1 percent were able to reduce injecting drug use and 61 percent of clients were also confident of not using the drugs in the future [15].

Despite that, relapse is an unpredictable, vibrant and complex process that can occur at anytime even though the drug addict has fully recovered and is clear from drugs [16]. It is because 70 percent to 90 percent of drug addicts still relapsed within the first year of discharge even though the treatment and rehabilitation program was successful [7]. Relapse cases are also vulnerable and often occur within a short term after release from the treatment and rehabilitation center [17, 18]. There is a significant relationship between age, chronic disease history and marital status to relapse problems among the drug abusers [19]. Therefore, it is important for the addicts to receive various forms of treatment although they relapse a few times before they are fully recovered. Thus, the effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation center is essential to reduce relapse and eradicate relapse intention among the clients. Furthermore, the purpose of drug treatment and rehabilitation is to eradicate the dependency of the user on drugs and ensure the patients are able to be productive and function effectively within family, workplace and community [20]. Even though the drug treatment and rehabilitation of drug addiction reduce drug intake, addicts should also receive various forms of treatment to prevent relapse in the future [21].

Therefore, to evaluate the effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation program in C&C1M Clinic, this study has adopted Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model. The evaluation on the effectiveness should begin from the level of reaction, learning, attitude and benefits. The model follows a goal-based approach to measure the effectiveness of the program and it is most influential in measuring the goal and objective of the program [22]. This is similar with the study conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the Shield Program [23]. Therefore, the measurement of the effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation program in this study was appropriate. Hence, it can be said that drug has threatened men, women and children's dignity; their ambition and hope. The fight on drugs will go on. This will require global support, country proactive actions and cooperation from society. On the part of drug abusers they also need to have high resiliency in order to realize the efforts taken to eradicate drug problems.

METHODOLOGY

This research has adopted a cross sectional study design which involved the outpatient's clients in C&C1M Clinic Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur. The study involved individuals who received drug treatment and rehabilitation as outpatients without reference to any particular age and gender. C&C1M Clinic Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur was selected because this is the first pilot clinic which offered the service under Cure and Care Model [9]. A total of $n=46$ outpatient clients was surveyed out of $N=120$ of population of study. According to Roscoe (1975), the sample size should be between 30 to 500 elements and the minimum of sample have to be $n=30$ [24]. Therefore, the total of respondent $n=46$ is an appropriate sample for the study. A purposive sample was chosen as a sampling technique and this study focuses on individuals who received outpatient drug treatment and rehabilitation program. The questionnaire was adopted and modified to fit the context of the study [25]. The data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Window version 21. The analysis comprised of descriptive analysis. Prior to actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted in C&C1M clinic Kota Bharu with the sample of $n=10$ outpatients and the reliability test shows Cronbach's Alpha was 0.922.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents represented were male (97.2%) and Malay (73.9%). The data showed that, most of the respondents' age was above 40 years old (50%). Majority of the respondents had no family drug history (82.6%) and the current status of addiction of the respondents indicated that most of them were drug relapse (52.2%) and 100% of the respondents were receiving methadone maintenance treatment.

Table 1. Level of drug treatment and rehabilitation program effectiveness

Variable	N	Mean	Level
Effectiveness of Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Program	46	4.4315	High

As presented in Table 1, the level of effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation program on outpatients was high as mean=4.4315. This is because the majority of the respondents agreed that by receiving the treatment and rehabilitation program in C&C1M clinic their life and behavior have changed. All the respondents were receiving methadone maintenance therapy and this has helped them in reducing their addictive

behavior. For instance, majority of the respondents were working in full time jobs (84.8%) and part time jobs (15.2%). The majority of them also receive monthly income within the range of RM 900- 2250 (54.3%). Furthermore, most of the respondents also were married (52.2%) and they were still able to look after their family. The changes in behavior after receiving treatment had a huge impact to their life although they were relapse drug addict. Therefore, with controlled addictive behavior the respondents were able to work and have the income to support their life. The study has also revealed that the effectiveness level of treatment and rehabilitation program had highly influenced the respondents to free themselves from drug addiction. The respondents were happy to participate with the drug treatment and rehabilitation activities provided in C&C1M clinic. The drug treatment and rehabilitation program provided to them was fun and had met their expectations. Most of the patients in C&C1M clinic were satisfied with the service provided and were ready to recommend the clinic to their family and friends [15].

Moreover, the respondents also agreed that the drug treatment and rehabilitation program provided to them have built their confidence to acquire and afford basic necessities in life such as education, employment, medical care and transportation. The finding of this study was similar to a study done by [26] which revealed that, most of the clients in C&C1M clinic are employed and regained confidence in their life after receiving the treatment and rehabilitation program in C&C1M clinic. The high level of effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation program in C&C1M clinic shows a positive signal for the transformation and changes in the trend of drug addiction in Kuala Lumpur. Hence, the effort to improve and upgrade the service provided should be continuously enhanced in order to ensure effective treatment and rehabilitation programs are provided to the clients in order to cater to the rapid changes of drug addict trend in Malaysia. The finding of the study is only limited to the outpatient clients. Therefore, it could not be generalized to other C&C1M in Malaysia. There are also a limited number of respondents who actively responded to the questionnaire. The findings of the study are not comprehensive as this is a quantitative study. Therefore, in future the study on the effectiveness of drug treatment program should adopt a qualitative approach. The scope of study also should be wider by involving inpatient clients; and include other segments of treatment provided in Malaysia. In addition, a longitudinal study is also suggested on harm reduction strategy as the findings would contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the government transformation program.

CONCLUSIONS

Transformation of C&C1M Clinic to human health approaches is a good shift by the government and it has benefited many clients and contributed in minimizing the drug addiction problems in Malaysia. However, the improvement should be a continuous and sustained effort from the government especially National Anti-Drug agency (NADA). The effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation program should be the main concern as drug addiction is a complex problem that changes from time to time. The client and society also should support and aware of the implementation of this health approach in drug treatment program. This would trigger more chances for the client to recover and free themselves from the drug addiction problem as the society also supported their recovery process. Hence, the drug treatment and rehabilitation program implemented by the government and NADA able to produce high impact result and benefited the society especially drug problems group in Malaysia.

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