Recovery Science and Harm Reduction Reading Group

02/22/2024

**Meeting summary**:

The article examined hospitalization for patients with opioid use disorder. There are differences by age, race, and gender for hospitalizations, which suggests there is a need to develop treatment programs to meet the specific needs of these groups. The guest speaker was Dr. Patience Moyo, who researches the uses of health care among groups of people with different health conditions. Her research has found a few things about older adults with opioid use disorder, including gaps in care where treatment and health services were not provided after hospitalizations. Older adults with opioid use disorder face unique challenges in accessing care including limited access to skilled nursing facilities (i.e., healthcare facilities for older patients with mental and physical health conditions). There is not much research on the needs of this population. Dr. Moyo discussed how different routes of long-term care for health conditions, like opioid use disorder, should be provided for older adults and that newer models of health care consider the unique needs of geriatric populations with addiction. The group discussed the historical events that have shaped the course of addiction for older adults with opioid use disorder, including the war on drugs and negative experiences with addiction treatment decades ago, and how the course of addiction likely looks different between racial groups. For staff who work with these older adults with opioid use disorder, it is best to discuss the patient’s previous treatment episodes and to honor their independence to make their own healthcare choices. There are some challenges to providing this health care, like figuring out how to avoid isolation for patients by promoting skills to develop supportive social networks. For organizations that provide addiction treatment, it is important to accommodate the unique needs of older adults, for example, making sure buildings are accessible to patients with mobility needs (like wheelchairs) and that they have support when using technology to access addiction treatment or recovery groups. Adults with opioid use disorder all have different preferences for treatment and support.