



Policy Brief



Agonist treatment for Benzodiazepine Dependence

A Randomised Controlled Trial (BMX-BAR)

Summary

Many people with an opioid dependence disorder who enter opioid agonist treatment also have benzodiazepine dependence.

The use of illicit benzodiazepines may disturb the stabilizing effect of the opioid agonist treatment and can make it difficult to achieve specific treatment goals. In addition, concurrent use of benzodiazepines with opioids is associated with a greater risk of overdose.

The aim of this project is to investigate the efficacy and safety of agonist treatment with benzodiazepines added to the standard interventions (psychosocial approaches) in patients with dependence to benzodiazepine undergoing opioid agonist treatment.

This is an RCT at the Department of Addiction Medicine at Haukeland.

The project period is September 2022 to January 2025. The research in BAR is closely integrated within the OAT clinics in Bergen. Around 100 participants will be recruited from all seven outpatient clinics in Bergen that provide integrated opioid agonist treatment.

Inclusion criteria are: dependence to benzodiazepine with a minimum duration of 3 years and an average frequency of use ≥ 4 days a week. Primary outcome is use of illicit benzodiazepines. Secondary outcomes are psychological distress, and health-related quality of life, among others.

Involvement of users

The project will have a close collaboration with the patient organizations ProLAR Nett (<http://prolar.no>).

Bergen Addiction Research group (BAR) aims to conduct research that contributes to better health and more evidence based treatment of patients with substance use disorders

Research team

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LINK to BAR webpage:

<https://helse-bergen.no/avdelinger/rusmedisin/rusmedisin-seksjon-forskning/bar>