First aid courses and use of Naloxone by drug users

Experience gained with a model project by Fixpunkt e. V., Berlin, Germany
Starting situation

► majority of overdoses occur in private homes
► often other drug users are present
► they are unable to react suitably
The general goals

to increase:

► the ability to act

► the readiness to take over responsibility when dealing with drug emergencies
Concrete aims

► to make the reasons for drug emergencies and risk situations known and recognised
► to improve awareness of symptoms
► the use of qualified first aid measures
► to provide additional options for action by using Naloxone
► to make use of professional emergency services
Target groups

- i.v. drug users
- drug users in substitution treatment
- occasional consumers
- new consumers
- detained consumers
- drug users who have abandoned therapy
- relatives
- professional helpers
Places
where the project is to be realised

► contact stores
► advice centres
► medical substitution practices
► stationary facilities
► detention centres
► in a mobile van on public drug scenes
Experiences from practical work

► intensive work is necessary to motivate drug consumers to confront this subject
► repression appears to be part of the personal survival strategy
► ideal to integrate the project in structures already existing
► the trust factor makes access to the drug users easier
Standards of first aid courses

- how the opiates work
- what happens during an overdose
- recognising an overdose
- special risks (e.g. mixed consumptions, after refraining)
- how Naloxone works, side effects
- indication, how to use Naloxone
- what to do when a helpless person is found
- practical exercises (e.g. taking a pulse, recovery position, cardiopulmonary resuscitation)
- how to call the emergency doctor
Details about the project from 1/12/1998 to 31/12/2002

► First aid courses:
  - 1,615 participants (1,030 professional helpers and relatives; 525 drug users)

► Handing out Naloxone:
  - 264 drug users (172 were in substitution treatment)

► Follow-up contacts:
  - 101 made contact, some more than once
  - Totally 248 follow up contacts
Naloxone usage

- 70 participants injected Naloxone
- Totally 105 cases of Naloxone usage are documented
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of using Naloxone</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indicated</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questionable</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>pointless</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Naloxone dosage

- 0.5 ampoule (0.2 mg) - 23
- 1 ampoule (0.4 mg) - 70
- 1.5 ampoule (0.6 mg) - 1
- 2 ampoules (0.8 mg) - 11
Injection method

Number of injection

- subcutaneous
- intramuscular
- intravenous
Withdrawal symptoms after Naloxone injection

- 72 with no symptoms
- 33 with symptoms
Ambulance called additional to Naloxone usage

number of persons

no
yes

69
36
Affected person

Number of persons

stranger
acquaintance

24
81
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Sheltered Facility</th>
<th>Public Places</th>
<th>Home</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td></td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
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</table>
Evaluation

► education, handing out Naloxone to active i.v. drug users and the responsible of Naloxone is possible

► Naloxone was the motivation to take part in a first aid course

► difficult for non-professionals (not only for drug users!) to carry out resuscitation measures

► especially for i.v. drug users it is indeed practicable to inject Naloxone in emergencies

► the trust placed by Fixpunkt e.V. in the drug users ability to act responsibly, was received very positively
Model project, what followed?

► not possible to integrate primary emergency prevention measures conceptually and structurally in Germany
► no adequate follow-up financing after the model phase
► courses and Naloxone handouts are continued casually „in the background“
► very few follow-up contacts
► Courses for professional helpers have become established
Data 2006 & 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First aid courses</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>professional helpers</td>
<td>547</td>
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<tr>
<td>drug users</td>
<td>369</td>
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<tr>
<td>178 (98 participants in the Naloxone project)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up contacts</td>
<td>17 (11 Naloxone usage)</td>
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</table>
Thank you very much for your attention!