



## Treatment and rehabilitation of drug addiction

Several approaches and services exist for the treatment of drug addiction. In Estonia, the most available treatment is substitution treatment of opioid addiction, the provision of which is based on the clinical protocol for opioid addiction. The primary treatment for opioid addiction is psychosocial help, which is based on the daily administration of a medication (methadone). The treatment can have various objectives, which can include the termination or reduction of opioid abuse, the reduction of the harm caused by the use of opioids, and the improvement of the quality of life and wellbeing of the people addicted to opioids.

It is not possible to differentiate the patient data based on detoxification or maintenance treatments since the objective of the treatment may change in the course of the therapy. Through the years, over 1,000 people annually have received substitution treatment for opioid addiction (fig. 1). This number includes all the patients that have received treatment during the year, including those who have left the treatment programme during the year and those who have joined.

A more detailed data of substitution treatment between 2015 and 2017 is provided in **table 1** (number of treatment places financed from the national budget).



### Generally, substitution treatment can be divided into two main approaches:

- Detoxification treatment, which can be carried out in stages by gradually reducing the medication dose with the objective to stop the person's opioid use.
- Maintenance treatment, the objective of which is stabilise the health of the patient and improve his or her psychosocial state by the long-term and regular administration of medication without having a definite deadline for completing the treatment.

Most of the substitution treatment for opioid addiction is financed from the national budget through the National Institute of Health Development (NIHD). In the period from 2015 to 2017, substitution treatment for opioid addiction at the West Tallinn Central Hospital was also financed by the Tallinn City Government (for the treatment of patients living in Tallinn). The number of patients that received treatment financed by the City of Tallinn were: 132 in 2015; 127 in 2016; and 70 in 2017. At the Wismar Hospital in Tallinn, patients can also get paid substitution treatment with Suboxone (with active ingredients buprenorphine and naloxone). Through the years, an average of 20 to 30 so-called Suboxone patients have been treated per year. It is also possible to receive substitution treatment for opioid addiction at the Pärnu Hospital and a few patients have been treated.



**Figure 1.** Patients that received opioid substitution treatment between 2008 and 2017 (Source: NIHD 2017)

**In Estonia, the following institutions provide various drug addiction treatment services for adults:**

**1. Tallinn**

- AS Lääne-Tallinna Keskhaigla psühhiaatriakeskus
- AS Lääne-Tallinna Keskhaigla nakkuskliinik (kombineeritud ARV-ga)
- OÜ Tervisekeskus Elulootus
- AS Wismari Haigla

**8. Tallinn**

AS Wismari Haigla

- Asendusravi teenusepakkujad
- Statsionaarse rehabilitatsiooni teenusepakkujad
- Statsionaarse võõrutusravi teenusepakkujad

**2. Kiviõli/Jõhvi**

OÜ Corrigo

**3. Sillamäe**

OÜ Aasa Kliinik

**4. Narva**

OÜ Narva Sõltuvuse Ravikeskus

**6. Sillamäe**

SA Viljandi Haigla

**5. Tartu**

Tartu Ülikooli kliinikum

**7,9 Viljandi**

SA Viljandi Haigla

**Figure 2.** Various drug addiction treatment possibilities for adults (Source: NIHD 2018)

In 2017, **short-term inpatient detoxification treatment**, financed by the state, was provided at Wismari Hospital and Viljandi Hospital (the Viljandi Hospital started providing the service in August of 2017). People from anywhere in Estonia can receive treatment at these facilities. Detoxification treatment is provided for the users of both opioids and stimulants with the goal is to stop the drug use. On average, the detox treatment lasts two to four weeks, and is followed by outpatient care or counselling. Wismari Hospital has five beds and the patient must pay €2.50 per day for the first ten days, thereafter, the treatment and follow-up treatment are free for all patients. Viljandi Hospital has ten free beds, and if necessary, the patient can continue treatment in a long-term rehabilitation programme.

**Long-term inpatient rehabilitation services** for adults are provided by Viljandi Hospital in its two departments, which are located in Viljandi and Sillamäe. Patients from all areas of Estonia are treated. The service is not substance-specific and it is provided to both men and women. On average, the rehabilitation lasts 9 months depending on the state of the patient's health. There are 21 beds in the Viljandi department and 26 in the Sillamäe department. The goal of the rehabilitation is to achieve permanent psychological changes and have the patient adopt new behavioural pattern with the help of various therapeutic techniques and counselling by specialists. As a result of the rehabilitation, the patients' psychological and physical health is improved and they have acquired social coping skills; the patients are able to live their everyday lives and go to work. The service is free.

**Follow-up services** are also provided to people who have completed inpatient rehabilitation, the goal of which is to prevent relapse and support the client's social adaptation. The service is provided on a case-by-case basis and this includes outpatient social counselling, psychological counselling and peer counselling. The service is intended for both recovering drug users as well as their families. The counselling is conducted individually and in groups. The service is available in various parts of the Estonia (Tallinn, Jõhvi, Narva and Viljandi).



**Treatment and rehabilitation services for youth**

In 2017 Corrigo was providing **inpatient rehabilitation services** for 14- to 18-year olds that were abusing addictive substances. Based on individual needs, the service can last from 9 to 12 months. The rehabilitation process is focused on restoring the healthy state, physical condition, and social coping skills of the youths. The service is based on the academic year and includes the development of study habits and work with professional specialists. The number of places and patients per year is shown in table 1.

Tallinn Children's Hospital provides **short-term inpatient detoxification treatment** for youth with addiction problems. On average, the detox treatment lasts two to four weeks. In 2017, the youngest patient to be treated was eight years old and the oldest was 17 (the average age was 13.6 years). The young people being treated at the unit for children and youth with addiction disorders at that Tallinn Children's Hospital are given study and educational training, in order to provide the youth with meaningful activities and teach them social coping skills. In addition, regular **group and family therapy sessions and phone counselling** is provided to the parents of children with addiction problems and to youth with similar problems. In 2017, 795 phone consultations occurred and family therapy was conducted on 334 occasions.

In Jõhvi, Corrigo provides individual **psychological counselling and family counselling** for youth and/or parents and conducts **interactive training**. In the course of the interactive training, the youth are informed of the impact of using drugs, of the possibilities for getting help, and motivated to seek help in case of drug-related problems. If necessary, the youth are sent to professional specialists. The training sessions take place in schools, social welfare institutions and elsewhere, if necessary.

**Table 1.** Drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation services, volumes and patients, 2015–2017 (only government-financed services)

Service	2015		2016		2017	
	No. of places	No. of patients per year	No. of places	No. of patients per year	No. of places	No. of patients per year
<b>Adults</b>						
Opioid substitution treatment	683	1116	610	1248	610	1186
Inpatient rehabilitation	47	147	47	118	47	156
Inpatient detoxification	5	47	5	53	15	131
<b>Total no. of adults</b>		<b>1310</b>		<b>1419</b>		<b>1473</b>
<b>Youths</b>						
Inpatient rehabilitation	16	34	16	19	16	32
Inpatient detoxification	4	133	4	133	4	152
<b>Total no. of youths</b>		<b>167</b>		<b>152</b>		<b>184</b>

Source: RTA 2015-2017, NIHD

## In addition to specialised drug addiction treatment services

People who are suffering from addiction problems can also seek help from the outpatient receptions of the psychiatric clinics. For example, people with addiction disorders can register at the Psychiatric Clinic of the Estonian Regional Hospital and the Psychiatric Clinic of the Pärnu Hospital, based on the regular waiting list. The treatment of people with health insurance is financed by the Estonian Health Insurance Fund and uninsured patients must pay for the service themselves.

In Estonia, it is also possible to receive and continue to receive addiction treatment in house of detention and prisons. In houses of detention it is possible to continue the substitution treatment for opioid addiction started before detention or while in prison (in cooperation between the prison and the treatment centre). In prisons, the initial detoxification state is usually treated with non-opiate medication and, if necessary, with methadone. In 2017, treatment with non-opiate medication was carried out 33 times and opiate-based detox treatment 49 times. Maintenance treatment was initiated in prison 87 times. In 2016, detox treatment with non-opiate medication and methadone was carried out 23 times (31 times in 2015), and maintenance treatment was initiated 119 times (118 times in 2015) (Ministry of Justice, 2018).

