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Treatment trials for amphetamine dependence

Mental health problems, dependence, polydrug use and unsafe sex and injecting practices are all associated with amphetamine use. While there are a number of medications available to treat problems such as anxiety or depression, there are no specific pharmacotherapies to optimally treat amphetamine withdrawal and relapse.

Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre is working to improve the health and well-being of people with amphetamine dependence by examining withdrawal and treatment options. A clinical trial of modafinil with a small group of amphetamine users is currently being facilitated by Turning Point and Western Hospital. Modafinil, a “wakefulness drug” possesses some stimulant properties without euphoric effects and has shown preliminary potential for treating cocaine dependence.

Professor Ernest Drucker, a US-based leading authority on drug addiction, AIDS and human rights, has been invited by Turning Point to provide insight on amphetamines and other stimulants.

“There is cause for optimism about the use of substitution stimulant drugs to treat amphetamine dependency,” says Dr Drucker. “Over twenty published reports going back to the 1980s show that orally administered drugs with longer-term effects such as modafinil have considerable promise.”

Dr Drucker will speak on the subject of “Responding to the global epidemic of amphetamines” at Turning Point’s annual oration later today. The Honourable Daniel Andrews, Parliamentary Secretary for Health will also launch the 2005-2006 Turning Point Annual Report.

The oration is being held on Wednesday 4th October at 5.30pm in The Age Theatre, Lower Ground Level, Melbourne Museum, Carlton Gardens, Carlton.

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