

# 6.16 Project Meeting Minutes



## Project Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** June 18, 2024

**Participants:** Andreas Markoulidakis, Matthew Hickman, Hayley Jones, Jaroslaw Lang, Fan Zhang

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Main Topic:** Project data preparation and analytical framework update

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### 1. Technical & Training Issues

#### 1.1 Charger Issue

- **Discussion:** Fan was temporarily using a roommate's charger while waiting for a replacement.
- **Resolution:** PHS mailed a suitable charger on June 17; the issue has been resolved.
- **Recommendation:** Andreas suggested that Fan could also contact Bristol IT Services for a backup device.

#### 1.2 MRC Online Training

- **Reminder:** Andreas reminded Fan to complete the required MRC training, including GDPR and Confidentiality modules.
- **Training Link:** [MRC Training Portal](#)
- **Action Required:** Upon completion, save two PDFs:
  - a. Certificate of completion
  - b. Summary of completed modules

#### 1.3 VPN Access

- **Importance:** Jaroslaw emphasized that VPN access is essential for accessing data and resources.
  - **Status:** Fan successfully set up VPN on June 18.
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## 2. Data and Cohort Definition

### 2.1 Cohort and Exposure Group

- **Main Cohort:** Individuals in Scotland receiving Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) between 2015–2022, identified via OAT prescription records in the SHIELD dataset.
- **Exposure Group (C&O):** Those who used both opioids and cocaine during treatment, based on records from the DAISy and SDMD datasets.

### 2.2 Cocaine Variable Structure (Three Tiers)

1. **Raw Columns:** Up to five substances can be recorded; no fixed order.
2. **Grouped Level:** ~300 substances are aggregated into ~30 categories for analysis.
3. **Binary Flag:** A "1" indicates any instance of cocaine recorded in the assessment.

### 2.3 Debate on Cocaine Entry Position

- **Andreas:** Since all cohort members are opioid-dependent, the position of cocaine in the list is not critical.
- **MH:** Suggested performing a **sensitivity test** to compare results depending on cocaine's listed position.
- **Hayley:** Emphasized first checking prevalence distribution to ensure the flag is meaningful.

### 2.4 Handling Time of Assessment

- **Challenge:** SDMD assessments are one-off at treatment entry, not longitudinal.
  - **Decision:** Treat cocaine use as a **baseline variable**, not time-varying.
  - **Opioid Dependence Duration:** Use a **2-year continuation window** after last prescription to define opioid dependence.
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## 3. Event Types – Deaths and Hospitalizations

### 3.1 Mortality Events

- ICD-10 Classification will be used.
- No additional analysis of accidental deaths is conducted.
- **Scope:** Broader definitions preferred for interpretability.
- **Types of death to be analyzed:**
  - All-cause mortality

- Drug-related poisonings (not limited to opioids)
  - Cardiovascular-related deaths (CVD)
- **Stratification:** By substance (opioid, cocaine, other)

## 3.2 Non-Fatal Events – Hospital Admissions

- ICD-10 Classification will be used.
  - **Approach:** Use same structure as mortality:
    - Drug-related hospital admissions
    - CVD-related admissions (particularly cocaine-associated acute events)
  - **Goal:** Assess whether cocaine use is associated with elevated acute CVD risk.
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## 4. 🧱 Covariates & Inclusion Criteria

### 4.1 Missing SDMD Data

- **Issue:** Not all OAT recipients have SDMD records.
- **Conclusion:** Should **not exclude** individuals without SDMD; missingness likely administrative, not behavioral.

### 4.2 Handling Multiple SDMD Records

- **Hayley's Suggestion:** Use **only one** (e.g., first) SDMD record per individual to fix the exposure variable and avoid time inconsistency.

### 4.3 Covariates to Include

- **Core Covariates:**
    - Sex
    - Age Groups (following Megan's structure)
    - Health Board Region: Glasgow, Tayside, Rest of Scotland
    - **Homelessness:**
      - Strongly associated with HIV and C&O use; **should be included**
    - **Prison History:**
      - Too complex at this stage; potentially excluded for now
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## 5. Next Steps and Task Assignments

### 5.1 Next Meeting

- **Date:** Monday, July 1, 2024
- **Time:** 2:00–3:00 PM
- **Organizer:** Fan will send out calendar invites and meeting reminders

### 5.2 Task Summary

Task	Assignee
Resolve charger issue	Fan
Complete MRC online training and save PDFs	Fan
Set up VPN and ensure data access	Fan
Draft detailed analysis plan (cohort, exclusion, event types)	Fan
Conduct initial summary stats of cocaine prevalence in SDMD	Fan
Summarize and circulate these meeting minutes	Fan
Schedule and invite team to July 1 meeting	Fan
Add Homelessness variable to dataset	Jaroslav
Background literature review	Fan