Definition: drug dependent person

*Health Act 1937 (Qld)* and Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996

Definitions

*Health Act 1937 (Qld)*

The Health Act, 1937 (Qld) has the following definition of drug dependent person.

“drug dependent person” means a person -

(a) who, as a result of repeated administration to the person of controlled or restricted drugs or poisons -

(i) demonstrates impaired control; or-

(ii) exhibits drug-seeking behaviour that suggests impaired control;

over the person’s continued use of controlled or restricted drugs or poisons; and

(b) who, when the administration to the person of controlled or restricted drugs or poisons ceases, suffers or is likely to suffer mental or physical distress or disorder.

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – 5th Edition (DSM-V), American Psychiatric Association (2013)*

**Substance Use Disorder**

In order to be diagnosed with Substance Use Disorder the patient must meet at least 2 of the 11 criteria for the diagnosis. The criteria are very similar to those outlined in DSM-IV for abuse and dependence combined. A patient meeting 2-3 if the criteria indicates mild substance use disorder, meeting 4-5 criteria indicates moderate, and 6-7 indicates severe (APA, 2013).

**Diagnostic Criteria**

- Continuing to use opioids despite negative personal consequences
- Repeatedly unable to carry out major obligations at work, school, or home due to opioid use
- Recurrent use of opioids in physically hazardous situations
• Continued use despite persistent or recurring social or interpersonal problems caused or made worse by opioid use

• Tolerance as defined by either a need for markedly increased amounts to achieve intoxication or desired effect or markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount

• Withdrawal manifesting as either characteristic syndrome or the substance is used to avoid withdrawal

• Using greater amounts or using over a longer time period than intended

• Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control opioid use

• Spending a lot of time obtaining, using, or recovering from using opioids

• Stopping or reducing important social, occupational, or recreational activities due to opioid use

• Consistent use of opioids despite acknowledgment of persistent or recurrent physical or psychological difficulties from using opioids

• Craving or a strong desire to use opioids.

**Important caveat about tolerance and withdrawal**

Patients who are prescribed opioid medications for analgesia may exhibit these two criteria (withdrawal and tolerance), but would not necessarily be considered to have a substance use disorder.