

# Extended Voucher-based Reinforcement Therapy for Long-term Drug Abstinence

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**Objective:** To determine whether longer durations of voucher-based reinforcement therapy (VBRT) increase long-term abstinence compared to standard durations. **Methods:** Cocaine-abusing or dependent methadone-maintenance patients (N=130) were randomized to receive either Standard (12-week; n=62) or Extended (36-week; n=68) VBRT. Participants provided 3 urine samples weekly during VBRT, and each cocaine-negative sample produced a voucher exchangeable for goods and services. **Results:** Extended VBRT produced longer durations of self-reported continuous abstinence during study Year 1 (M = 74 vs. 46 days;  $F(1,128) = 5.23$ ,  $P =$

0.024), but not during Year 2. However, each week of abstinence during Year 1 was associated with an increase of 9.19 days of abstinence during Year 2, regardless of study condition ( $t(1)=4.92$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). **Conclusions:** Longer-duration VBRT can increase abstinence during VBRT, but may not maintain it afterwards. However, longer during-treatment abstinence begets later abstinence suggesting that further research regarding this relationship is needed.

**Key words:** long-term maintenance, substance abuse, cocaine abuse, contingency management, voucher-based reinforcement therapy

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