Librarians’ Role in Raising Awareness: Medication Assisted Treatment for Pregnant Women with Opioid Use Disorder

INTRODUCTION
As the opioid crisis in America continues, medical librarians have a role to play to advance knowledge and information to help to alleviate this epidemic. Many barriers to addiction treatment exist, including lack of access, inadequate health insurance, and stigma. Pregnancy, in particular, is misunderstood in relation to Medication Assisted Treatment for addiction. Medical librarians can provide access to authoritative sources for the most up to date information on addiction treatment pre and postpartum.

MISCONCEPTIONS
- Pregnant women should discontinue methadone maintenance. FACT: methadone is safe and effective for the management of opioid dependence during pregnancy.¹
- Women can't breastfeed while on methadone maintenance. FACT: Women who received methadone maintenance during pregnancy and are stable should be encouraged to breastfeed their infants postpartum.²
- Infants can be born addicted. FACT: Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome is not the same as addiction and is a manageable condition.³

“For pregnant women with an opioid use disorder, opioid agonist pharmacotherapy is the recommended therapy and is preferable to medically supervised withdrawal because withdrawal is associated with high relapse rates, which lead to worse outcomes.”**

*Opioid Use and Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Committee on Obstetric Practice
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Committee Opinion No. 711

GUIDELINES
Librarians serving addiction medicine professionals can point to toolkits and resources about current practices and guidelines, such as:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Clinical Guidance for Treating Pregnant and Parenting Women With Opioid Use Disorder and Their Infants.
- American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM): Substance Use, Misuse, and Use Disorders During and Following Pregnancy, with an Emphasis on Opioids.

REFERENCES