

Providers & persons in recovery from OUD experience **fear** and **stigma** in silos.

How can we bridge the gap?

A Misunderstanding of Biology: Stigma Surrounding MAT & OUD

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Background

Systematic literature review aimed to explore current research regarding Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) utilized in the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD). The purpose of the current analysis was to identify the subset of literature related to attitudes and stigma associated with OUD and MAT in an effort to better direct practice and inform future research

Methods

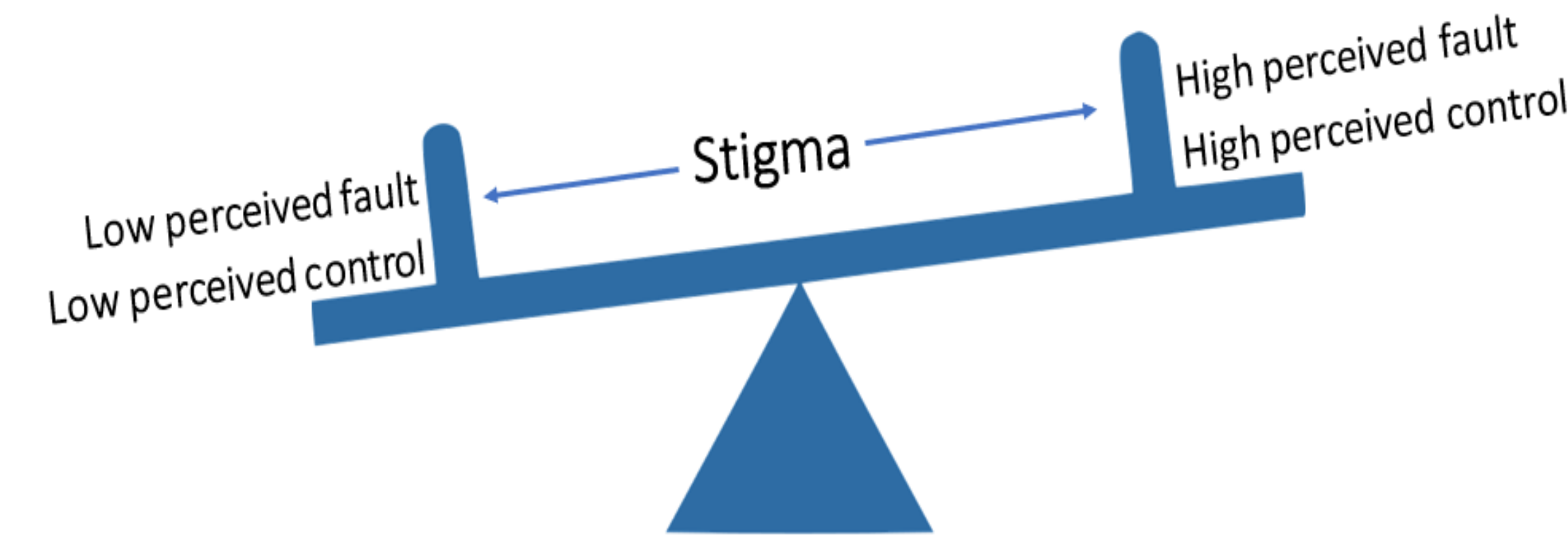
Using Academic Search Complete, Medline via PubMed, PsycINFO, Cochrane Library, Social Work Abstracts, Social Services Abstract, and Google Scholar, articles were identified using terms "Medication Assisted Treatment", "Opioid-Assisted Treatment", "Opioid Use Disorder" and "Opioids".

Results

- The search yielded 1,115 articles total, of which 251 were included for analysis.
- Ten themes related to MAT and OUD emerged
 - 41 included articles related to attitudes and stigma

Findings

- 20 articles** focused on provider and agency attitudes and perceptions, whereas **21 articles** focused on the experience of persons in recovery.
- Provider concerns** focused on issues related to: diversion or misuse of MAT, compliance, "difficult patients," lack of acceptance of and confidence in ability to prescribe, assignment of responsibility, client motivation to recover, resistance from practice partners, and stigma.
- Persons in recovery** focused on issues related to: peer identification, self-efficacy, fear, safety, consistency with abstinence, acceptability, motivation/willpower, negative associations & adverse experiences, varying attitudes based on medication used (i.e. methadone, buprenorphine, extended release naltrexone, etc.).
- A large number of studies explored **perceived barriers to services**, including: lack of specialty support, provider education and exposure, psychosocial supports for clients, access; insurance reimbursement; structural barriers; incarceration; peer perceptions; and language.
- Several studies examined **the impact of specialized continuing education trainings** on attitudes surrounding MAT & OUD, referral intentions, and knowledge of the topic.



Implications

Negative attitudes and stigma surrounding MAT and OUD are abundant as are misinformation and a lack of available resources. These negative perceptions can be linked to fewer treatment options (i.e. referral intentions, number of available prescribers, etc.), treatment decisions, and client outcomes. Although both clients and providers reported a desire for more information and education, there were no efforts or interventions proposed to cross-train or educate the two together. Further research is needed related to interprofessional educational efforts, stigma reduction strategies, negative multi-behavioral health outcomes related to lack of treatment, and public perceptions related to MAT & OUD.

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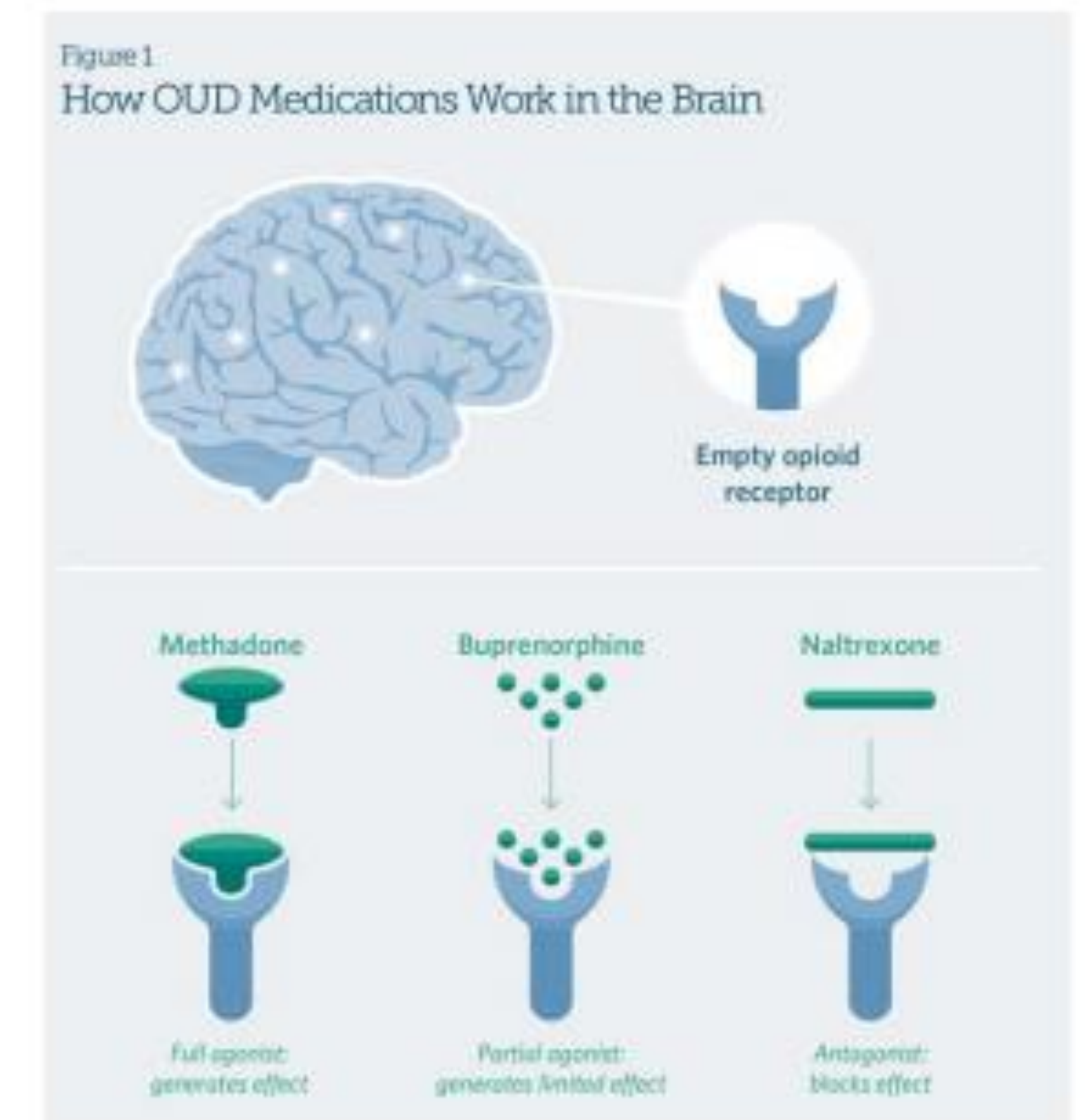
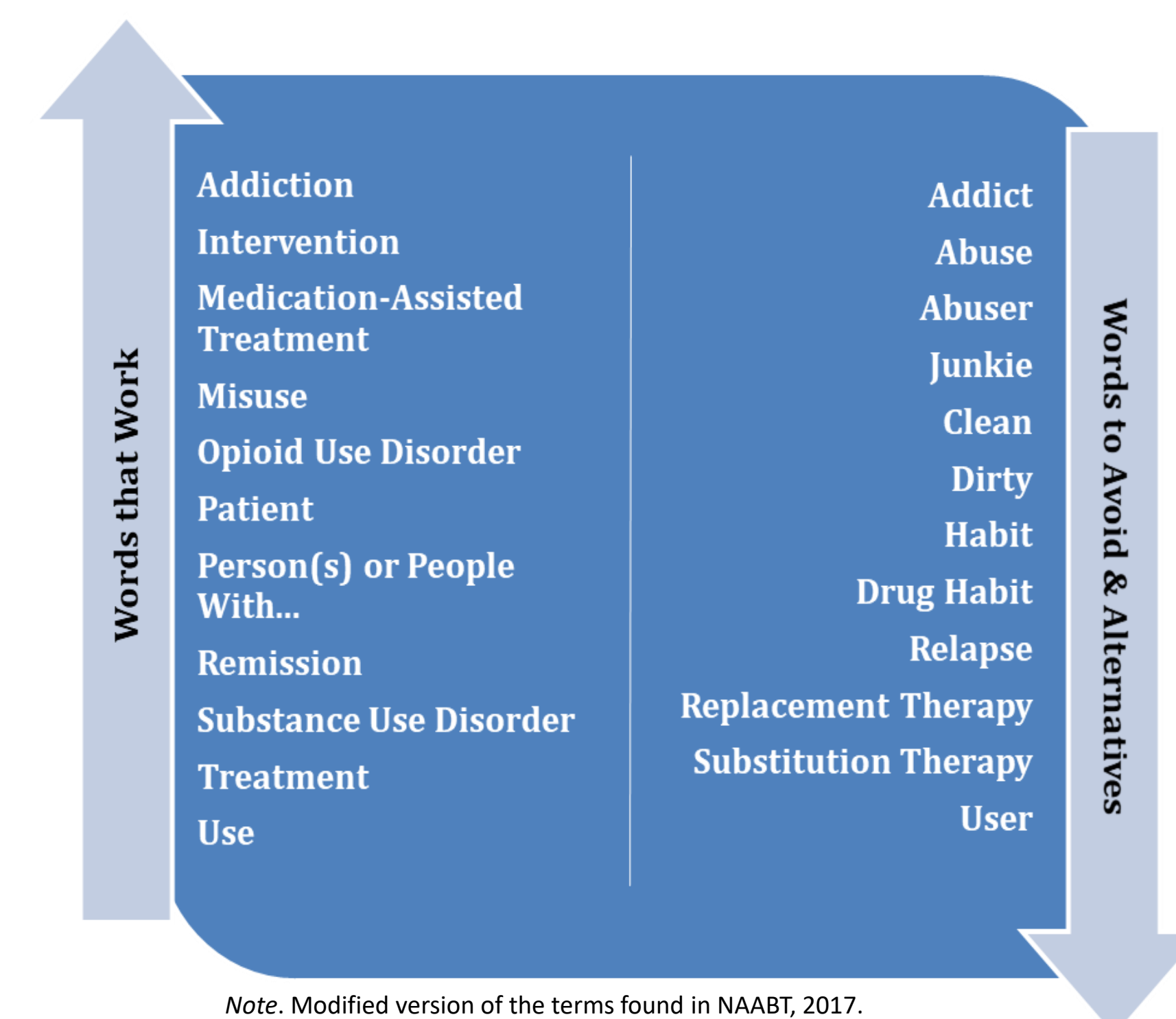


Figure 1 shows the various functions of pharmacotherapy options, from a full agonist to an antagonist, and the mechanism by which they influence the opioid receptor in the brain.²⁸



Note. Modified version of the terms found in NAABT, 2017.



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