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Breakthrough for addicts

**Clinton Moodley and
Carissa Govender**

A groundbreaking treatment designed to curb alcohol and drug addiction has been introduced in South Africa. Vivitrol, a breakthrough drug, was administered for the first time in Africa and experts claim this could be the beginning of the end for the drug crisis which has plagued communities.

Pharmacologist and president of the Assisted Recovery Centres of America (ARCA), Percy Menzies, visited South Africa to launch the first treatment that will curb excessive cravings and reduce withdrawal symptoms.

Together with counselling three times a week with the ARCA psychologists as well as family support, the treatment is said to provide complete recovery for addicts. "If you take away the cravings, then there will be no distraction during counselling and so it will be more effective, in turn making the success rate higher," explained Menzies.

Menzies, in partnership with Dr Prakash Naidoo, has established a treatment centre in Durban North, with the aim of tackling the serious drug problem that the Durban community faces. "Alcoholism and drug addiction is a family disease affecting loved ones sometimes even more than the patient themselves," said Menzies. With the escalating number of people being harmed by substance abuse, a solution is desperately needed. This is where ARCA comes in. The institution helps gives addicts a safe haven where they can get treated and begin a fresh start.

Speaking at a press conference on July 5, Menzies explained that like cancer and diabetes, addiction is a disease that needs to be addressed by the medical community. "You cannot condemn these people. No one says 'when I grow up I want to be a drug addict'. Consider addiction a disease as serious as cancer," said Menzies. He added, "We need the treatment community to get involved, general practitioners, social workers, NGOs, government and those in the medical field."

The medication is produced outside of South Africa and imported in specifically for the patients. "It is in the process of being registered in South Africa, which will be ready by the end of this year and result in a drop in the price," said Menzies. For future information contact Dr Rowea / Elaine Pillay on 031-563 0061 or 031-563 0988.



The first injection of Vivitrol was administered in Africa. President of ARCA, Percy Menzies addressed the media as well as drug counsellors at a press briefing at their treatment centre on Tuesday. Seen are Dr Prakash Naidoo, Percy Menzies, Judy Menzies and Felicia Pillay at the launch of the Vivitrol treatment.

Dr Percy Menzies and Prakash Naidoo.



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