and director of the clinical trials unit at the University of Pennsylvania Center for Studies of Addictions in Philadelphia. Existing research on treatments for opioid-dependent youth is outdated and limited to uncontrolled trials evaluating méthadone. While méthadone is a very effective treatment for opioid dependence, it is of limited application for young people because it is available only through specialized clinics. Patients aged 16-18 years are eligible for this treatment option only after they have failed two prior treatments and formal distribution system originating in the family medicine cabinet, at grand- ma’s house, or in a teen’s own supply of pain medications leftover from a sports injury or dental work.

Users, she said, “Can fly under the radar,” hiding their use and obtaining more drugs through friends, often for quite a period of time before their problem comes to light. Eventually, though, the drugs may become more difficult to obtain, and expensive to buy.

Users may eventually switch to heroin, a cheaper opioid, which may send

There is “robust evidence” that buprenorphine combined with counseling is a viable treatment option for opioid dependence, Dr. Geetha Subramaniam says.