Claims:

1) A depot precursor formulation comprising:
a) a controlled-release polymer matrix;
b) at least oxygen containing organic solvent comprising a sulfoxide and/or an amide;
c) at least 12% by weight of at least one active agent selected from buprenorphine and salts thereof, calculated as buprenorphine free base.

2) The depot precursor formulation of claim 1 wherein the polymer release matrix comprises at least one biodegradable polymer.

3) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein the polymer matrix comprises homopolymers, copolymers, or mixtures of homopolymers and copolymers.

4) The depot precursor formulation of claim 2 wherein the biodegradable polymer comprises a polyester and/or polyamide, such as at least one of polylactate, polyglycolate, and/or polylactate/glycolate copolymers.

5) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein the polymer is in the form of a molecular solution.

6) The depot precursor formulation of any of claims 1 to 4 wherein the polymer is in the form of microspheres in suspension.

7) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein the controlled release matrix comprises PLGA microspheres.

8) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein the at least one active agent selected from buprenorphine and salts thereof is present at a level of greater than 30% by weight buprenorphine (calculated as buprenorphine free base).

9) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein the at least one active agent selected from buprenorphine and salts thereof is present at a level of 31 to 45% by weight buprenorphine (calculated as buprenorphine free base).

10) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein component b) comprises a sulfoxide.

11) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein component b) comprises or consists of dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO).

12) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim wherein component b) comprises or consists of N-methyl pyrrolidone (NMP).

13) The depot precursor formulation of claim 10 or claim 11 wherein component b) further comprises an amide.

14) The depot precursor formulation of claim 10 or claim 11 wherein component b) further comprises NMP.

15) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim comprising 40 to 70% by weight component b).

16) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim for once-monthly administration.

17) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim having a dose in the range 10 to 200 mg buprenorphine (calculated as free base).

18) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim having a dose is in the range 20 to 200 mg buprenorphine (calculated as free base).

19) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim having a dose is in the range 40 to 140 mg buprenorphine (calculated as free base).

20) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim containing greater than 15% by weight buprenorphine (calculated as buprenorphine free base).

21) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim containing 21% or greater by weight buprenorphine (calculated as buprenorphine free base).

22) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim containing 25% or greater by weight buprenorphine (calculated as buprenorphine free base).

23) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim containing greater than 30% by weight buprenorphine (calculated as buprenorphine free base).

24) The depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim in ready-to-administer form.

25) A depot composition formed by administration to a human subject of a depot precursor formulation of any preceding claim, said depot composition comprising:

a) a controlled-release polymer matrix;
b) optionally at least oxygen containing organic solvent comprising a sulfoxide and/or an amide;
c) at least one active agent selected from buprenorphine and salts thereof; and
d) at least one aqueous fluid.

26) A method of treatment or prophylaxis of a human or non-human animal subject comprising administration of a precursor formulation of any of claims 1 to 24.

27) A method of claim 26 for the treatment of pain, for opioid maintenance therapy or for the treatment of opioid dependence by detoxification and/or maintenance or for the treatment or prophylaxis of the symptoms of opioid withdrawal and/or cocaine withdrawal.

28) A method of transitioning of a subject from daily sublingual buprenorphine to a sustained buprenorphine formulation, comprising administering to said subject a monthly buprenorphine depot precursor formulation as claimed in any of claims 1 to 24, comprising 0.5 to 3 times his previous daily buprenorphine dose.

29) The use of a depot precursor formulation as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 24 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prophylaxis of pain, opioid maintenance therapy or for the treatment of opioid dependence by detoxification and/or maintenance or the symptoms of opioid withdrawal and/or cocaine withdrawal.