



Research at a glance

Post-release Outcomes of Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program (MMTP) Participants: A Comparative Study

KEY WORDS: *methadone maintenance treatment (MMTP), opioid dependence, post release outcomes, recidivism*

What it means

This research indicates that both men and women participants of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) institutional Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program (MMTP) who are actively treated and retained in community-based methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) post-release have lower rates of return to custody than those who only receive MMT while incarcerated or those who are untreated. As such, the transition to community-based MMT following release can be considered an effective reintegration strategy for opioid dependent offenders. Future research is needed to better understand the reasons for termination or non-access of MMT in the community for both men and women and to explore how to enhance institution-to-community transition for MMT treatment.

What we found

Both men and women MMTP participants were more likely to be released on statutory release than offenders with an identified opioid use as a problem who were not participating in the MMTP.

Regarding post-release outcomes, men and women offenders who participated in MMTP during their incarceration and continued treatment while under supervision in the community were returned to custody at a lower rate and were also less likely to commit a new offence than offenders who terminated their MMT involvement upon release or were untreated.

Why we did this study

Ensuring that offenders have access to interventions that address their substance abuse issues allows the CSC to support the safe reintegration of offenders into society. Some of the treatment needs of offenders with opioid dependence are met through CSC's MMTP.

Although several studies from international jurisdictions have shown beneficial outcomes of MMT participation, such as a reduction in criminal offending and successful community reintegration, few studies

exist which examine the impact of prison-based MMTP participation in Canada. Studies examining the treatment outcomes for women offenders in particular, are limited.

What we did

The study included male federal offenders who were initiated into CSC's MMTP between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2008 and women offenders who were initiated into MMTP between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2008.

Men and women MMTP participants were each divided into two groups: those who continued MMT and those who discontinued MMT. Comparisons were also made with men and women offenders who had a moderate to severe rating on the Drug Abuse Screening Test and who indicated problematic opioid use but who did not participate in MMTP.¹

For more information

MacSwain, M., Farrell MacDonald, F., & Cheverie, M. (2014). *Post-release outcomes of Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program (MMTP) participants: A comparative study* (Research Report R-322). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service Canada.

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¹ Problematic opioid use was identified for non-MMTP men using the Computerized Assessment of Substance Abuse (CASA). As the Women's CASA (W-CASA) was not implemented until 2011, a systematic file review was used to confirm problematic opioid use for non-MMTP women.

