



Emerging Research Results

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

KEY WORDS: *post release outcomes, Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT)*

Why we are doing this study

One of the main goals of CSC's Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program (MMTP) is to assist opioid dependent offenders in reducing their drug use and related criminal activity, both while incarcerated, and following release from prison. This study will examine the impact of MMTP participation on post-release outcomes for opioid dependent offenders.

What we are doing

The research examines the post release outcomes of three groups of offenders: offenders who participated in CSC's MMTP while incarcerated, but who did not continue treatment upon release to the community¹ (terminating MMT group), offenders who participated in CSC's MMTP while incarcerated and continued treatment in the community (continuing MMT group), and offenders with a moderate to severe drug problem, who identified opioids as their most commonly used drug in the 12 months prior to arrest (for men), or whose case documents contained evidence of problematic opioid use (for women), and who did not participate in MMT while incarcerated or in the community (comparison group). Outcomes for men and women were examined separately at 6 and 12 months post release for all offenders who could be observed for the entire follow up period (i.e. there was at least 6 or 12 months between an offender's release date and the earliest of their warrant expiry date, or the end of the study period (January 9, 2012)). In addition, survival analysis was used to examine the risk of return to custody for the study groups over the duration of the follow-up period.

What we have found so far

Results indicate that, for both men and women, offenders who participate in MMT while incarcerated and continue treatment upon release are more successful while under supervision in the community compared with offenders who do not continue their MMT involvement in the community, and untreated offenders. Furthermore, a smaller proportion of offenders in the continuing MMT group were returned to custody due to committing a new offence (with the exception of the 6 month follow up period for women)

¹ Continuation of MMT in the community was determined using community urinalysis results. More detailed information regarding study inclusion criteria will be available in the final report.

(Table 1). While offenders who terminated MMT involvement had slightly worse outcomes than untreated offenders, the risk of return to custody for the two groups was not statistically different.

Table 1: Percentage of Offenders Returned to Custody, and Returned to Custody due to Committing a New Offence at 6 and 12 Months Post Release

Study Group	Returned to Custody % (n)		New Offence % (n)	
	6 Months	12 Months	6 Months	12 Months
Men				
	(N = 792)	(N = 482)	(N = 792)	(N = 482)
Comparison	22.4 (47)	45.5 (60)	3.3 (7)	11.4 (15)
Terminating	28.4 (122)	50.6 (124)	3.5 (15)	10.2 (25)
Continuing	13.2 (20)	34.3 (36)	0.0 (0)	4.8 (5)
Women				
	(N = 130)	(N = 94)	(N = 130)	(N = 94)
Comparison	13.3 (6)	31.4 (11)	4.4 (2)	14.3 (5)
Terminating	18.0 (11)	45.5 (20)	6.6 (4)	9.1 (4)
Continuing	8.3 (2)	0.0 (0)	8.3 (2)	0.0 (0)

What it means

These preliminary findings suggest that participation in CSC's MMTP, followed by continuation of treatment in the community following release, is associated with decreased criminal activity and likelihood of return to custody. These results highlight the importance of ensuring a continuum of care for offenders upon release from prison, as evidenced by the poor outcomes of offenders who terminate their MMT involvement, and consistent with research that consistently points to longer treatment retention as a crucial predictor of positive outcomes. A more detailed analysis is underway and will be available in an upcoming research report.

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