



# Research at a glance

## Institutional Adjustment of Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program Participants

**KEY WORDS:** *methadone maintenance treatment program (MMTP), opioid dependence, institutional adjustment, offender behaviour*

### What it means

This study provides information about a group of offenders - those dependent on opioids and initiated on methadone while incarcerated - that have not been extensively examined within a Canadian context. The results indicated that MMTP participation had a positive impact on institutional behaviour, including decreased use of drugs (including opioids) during incarceration, increased participation in and completion of correctional programs, and a reduction in serious disciplinary charges and admissions to segregation. Research is also underway to examine the impact of MMTP participation on outcomes following release from prison.

### What we found

Positive changes over time in institutional behavior were observed among MMTP initiates. Specifically, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of offenders with a positive urinalysis test result, or who refused to provide a urinalysis sample. In the two year prior to MMTP initiation, 13% of all completed random urinalysis tests in the study sample were positive for opioids, compared to only 4% of tests in the two years following MMTP initiation. MMTP participants spent significantly more time in education and employment programs in the period following MMTP initiation, compared to the period prior. For MMTP initiates who participated in substance abuse or other core correctional programs in both the pre- and post-MMTP time periods, a greater proportion of program attempts were completed in the time following MMTP initiation compared to the time prior. In addition, significantly fewer offenders received serious disciplinary charges, or were admitted to voluntary or involuntary segregation following MMTP initiation.

### Why we did this study

Ensuring that offenders have access to interventions that address their substance abuse issues allows the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to support the

safe reintegration of offenders into society. Many of the key treatment needs of offenders with opioid dependence are met through CSC's MMTP. Based on limited previous research, it was anticipated that MMTP participation would lead to a reduction in opioid and other drug use, as well as institutional incidents and disciplinary sanctions during incarceration. It was also anticipated that MMTP participation would facilitate participation in other correctional programs.

### What we did

The study included male federal offenders who were initiated into CSC's MMTP between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2008 ( $n = 1,508$ ).<sup>1</sup> The demographic characteristics, criminogenic risk and need ratings and criminal histories of MMTP participants were examined. Changes over time in measures of institutional adjustment including random urinalysis program results, correctional program participation, serious and minor disciplinary charges, and admissions to voluntary and involuntary segregation were observed for the periods prior to and following MMTP initiation, to determine the impact that MMTP participation has on institutional behaviour.

### For more information

Cheverie, M., MacSwain, M., Farrell MacDonald, S., & Johnson, S. (2014). *Institutional Adjustment of Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program (MMTP) Participants* (Research Report R-323). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Offenders continuing treatment from the community were not included in the study as they commenced MMTP immediately or shortly following incarceration, therefore no pre treatment data were available.

