



Research at a glance

An Examination of the Effectiveness of the National Substance Abuse Program - High Intensity (NSAP-H) on Institutional Adjustment and Post-Release Outcomes

KEY WORDS: *substance abuse treatment, correctional programs, treatment outcomes*

What it means

The study found that participation in the National Substance Abuse Program-High Intensity (NSAP-H) reduced the risks associated with substance use and criminality. Offenders with partial exposure to the program showed the poorest outcomes with respect to institutional misconduct and return to custody. The results also demonstrate the value of participating in community maintenance even with limited exposure to NSAP-H. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of offenders participated in community aftercare.

What we found

Institutional misconduct was reduced by NSAP-H participation. Those who did not complete NSAP-H were more than two times as likely to be involved in serious institutional misconduct relative to offenders who completed NSAP-H. Offenders who had been assigned to NSAP-H but who had not enrolled in the program were 49% more likely than offenders who completed the program to commit serious institutional misconduct.

Offenders who completed NSAP-H were less likely to be readmitted to prison during the 24-month follow-up period. In fact, offenders who partially completed were 34% more likely to return to prison compared to those who successfully completed NSAP-H. Offenders who had not enrolled in the program were 13% more likely to be readmitted to prison than offenders who completed NSAP-H.

At the end of the 2 year follow-up period, 39% of the Complete group remained in the community followed by 32% of both the Incomplete and Not Enrolled groups.

When participation in the National Substance Abuse Maintenance Program delivered in the community and release type were considered, the association between NSAP-H and return to custody was no longer significant suggesting that release type and community aftercare may be key variables in the pathway between program exposure and returning to custody.

Overall, offenders who did not participate in community aftercare were 45% more likely to return

to custody than those who had some exposure to the program; offenders who were released on a non-discretionary basis were 45% more likely to return to custody.

Why we did this study

Ensuring the safety and security of staff and offenders within the institution environment and the safe reintegration offenders into the community are key priorities of Correctional Service Canada. Correctional interventions can help address offender behavior associated with criminal activity. Given that 80% of the federal offender population has a substance use problem, it is imperative that effective substance abuse interventions are available to these offenders. The current study examined the effectiveness of NSAP-H in addressing the needs of federally incarcerated male offenders who have an identified substance abuse problem.

What we did

The study examined the effect of NSAP-H on institutional misconduct and return to custody. The study sample consisted of 2,382 male offenders who had accessed NSAP-H between August 2004 and January 2009.

For more information

Doherty, S., Ternes, M., & Matheson, F.I. (2014). *An Examination of the Effectiveness of the National Substance Abuse Program High Intensity (NSAP-H) on Institutional Adjustment and Post-Release Outcomes*. Research Report R-290. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

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