



# Research at a glance

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

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

### What it means

The findings suggest that the National Substance Abuse Program – Moderate Intensity (NSAP-M) reduced the risks associated with substance use and criminality. The offenders with partial exposure to the program showed the poorest outcomes with respect to return to custody. The results also demonstrate the value of participating in community maintenance even with limited exposure to NSAP-M. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of offenders participated in community aftercare.

### What we found

The occurrence of institutional misconduct was not significantly reduced by NSAP-M participation. Offenders who fully completed NSAP-M were as likely to engage in serious institutional misconduct as offenders who failed to complete all sessions of the program or offenders who had been assigned to NSAP-M but who had not enrolled in the program.

Offenders who completed NSAP-M were less likely to be readmitted to prison during the 24-month follow-up period. In fact, offenders who partially completed were 25% more likely to return to prison compared to those who completed NSAP-M. The Not Enrolled group did not differ from program completers in likelihood of returning to custody.

At the end of the 2 year follow-up period, 52% of both the Complete and Not Enrolled groups remained in the community, compared to 39% of the Incomplete group.

When participation in the National Maintenance Substance Abuse Program delivered in the community and release type were considered, the association between NSAP-M 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 41% 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 53% 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 (CSC). 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-M 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-M on institutional misconduct and return to custody. The study sample consisted of 8,121 male offenders who had accessed NSAP-M between June 2004 and December 2009.

### For more information

Ternes, M., Doherty, S., & Matheson, F.I. (2014) *An Examination of the Effectiveness of the National Substance Abuse Program Moderate Intensity (NSAP-M) on Institutional Adjustment and Post-Release Outcomes* (Research Report R-291). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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