



Research at a glance

Characteristics of Participants in the Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) Program

KEY WORDS: *methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) program, male offenders, profile, opioid dependence*

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. The treatment needs of offenders with opioid dependence are met through CSC's Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) Program.¹

Some of the objectives of CSC's MMT program include reducing relapse to opioid drug use and the incidence of drug-related criminal activity; improving the offender's general health and quality of life; and assisting and motivating offenders to gradually desist from all illicit drug use.

Understanding the characteristics of MMT participants will assist the Service in developing its MMT delivery to more effectively address the challenges of opioid addicted offenders, a group with high levels of criminogenic needs and long criminal histories.

What we did

The study included male federal offenders who were initiated into CSC's MMT program between January, 2003 and December, 2008 ($N = 2,065$). The comparison group consisted of the remaining male institutional population ($N = 36,073$).

Demographic characteristics, risk factors and criminal histories were compared across the MMT participants and the institutional population. In addition, drug use characteristics of the MMT participants were studied.

What we found

Results indicate that, compared to the institutional population, MMT participants had higher static (risk) and dynamic (need) factor ratings, and were more likely to be rated as 'very poor/poor' on the SIR-R1 scale. In addition, they had lower reintegration potential, and a longer criminal history. MMT participants were also approximately twice as likely to have committed current

offences related to the acquisition of money or personal belongings such as robbery, theft or break and enter.

The Atlantic, Prairie and Ontario regions reported a higher proportion of pharmaceutical opioid abuse compared to the Pacific and Quebec regions, where the use of heroin was higher.

A high incidence of polydrug abuse was observed among MMT participants. Specifically, over half reported non-opioid drug misuse, with those indicating a problematic use of cocaine, in particular, increasing over time. Non-opioid drug misuse was reported by a greater proportion of offenders in the Quebec region, followed by the Ontario, Prairie, Pacific and Atlantic regions.

Almost half of the MMT participants reported a history of receiving treatment for anxiety and/or depression. In comparison to the institutional population, MMT participants were more likely to have a mental health treatment history, as evidenced by prior assessment for personal/emotional issues and a current or past mental health diagnosis.

What it means

The current study indicates that MMT participants have long criminal histories and represent major challenges for reintegration. However, successful treatment of their addiction and other criminogenic factors can lead to reductions in criminal activity after release. In addition, this research highlights a need to focus on the abuse of other drugs and mental health issues for this group.

For more information

Johnson, S., Farrell M^{ac}Donald, S., & Cheverie, M. (2011). *Characteristics of participants in the Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) Program*. Research Report R253. Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, contact the following address: addictions.research@csc-scc.gc.ca

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¹ In 2008, CSC revised its former Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) Program to the Opiate Substitution Therapy (OST) Program in order to include both Methadone and Suboxone as treatment options. The former program is referenced in this document since only those initiated on Methadone were included in this study.

