



Research at a glance

Assessment of Women Offender Correctional Programming (WOCP) Outcomes

WOCP participation achieves intermediate objectives, but participation is not significantly related to community outcome.

Why we did this study

Beginning in 2010, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) implemented a comprehensive model of women offender correctional programming (WOCP). The overall goal was to provide a holistic, women-centred program model that enhanced accessibility and participation and facilitated treatment gains and offender reintegration.

The current study assessed if the program's intermediate objectives were met and also examined the impact of participation in components in the WOCP continuum, including the Engagement Program, the Moderate Intensity and High Intensity Programs, and the Self-Management Program on release outcomes.

What we did

The overall sample included 1,656 federally sentenced women offenders enrolled in one or more of the WOCP components between September 1, 2010 and July 31, 2014 ($n = 1,278$), as well as all women in CSC custody during the same time frame who did not participate in any component of WOCP ($n = 378$). Enrollments, attrition rates, treatment gain, release types, and rates of return to custody were assessed based on level of program participation.

What we found

Completion rates for all WOCP components were reasonably high (from a low of 64% in the community component to very high rate of 92% for the Engagement Program). Results examining treatment change based on self-report measures and facilitators' ratings indicated that WOCP was successful in improving participants' skills and attitudes as well as increasing their motivation and knowledge of program content.

Comparisons in types of release based on level of program participation (*full program completers*, *partial program completers*, *non-completers*, and *non-participants*) were conducted. Those who completed all of their required program enrollments were more

likely to receive discretionary, than statutory release while the majority of non-completers were more likely to receive statutory release. There were no differences in release types among partial program completers or non-participants.

Of those released with follow up ($n = 975$), 19% returned to custody; 4% returned with a new offence. Although the direction of the findings suggests that *partial program completers*, *non-completers*, and *non-participants* showed a higher likelihood of returning to custody in comparison to *full program completers*, group differences were not significant when time at risk, risk level, need level, and participation in additional programming were controlled.

What it means

Although the intermediate objectives of the WOCP were met, after controlling for group differences, women who completed the required elements of the program continuum did not have significantly better outcomes than those in the comparison groups. The results may reflect the rates of revocation in the time period the women were followed, or uncontrolled group differences. Additionally, the results could point to a need to re-examine aspects of the content of and the implementation of the WOCP - a procedure routinely conducted in CSC in the course of program development.

For more information

Harris, A., Thompson, J., & Derkzen, D. (2015). *Assessment of Women Offender Correctional Programming (WOCP) outcomes* (Research Report R-374). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

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