

National Recovery Month

Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover

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Santa Clara County Department of Alcohol & Drug Services Addiction Medicine and Therapy Program

How Effective is the Treatment for Substance Use Disorders? A Summary of 2010 Outcomes Data

Introduction and Overview

Measures of treatment effectiveness typically include levels of criminal behavior, family and social functioning, employability, and medical condition. Overall, treatment of addiction is as successful as treatment of other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), drug treatment reduces drug use by 40 to 60% and decreases criminal activity during and after treatment by that amount as well. For example, a study of residential treatment for drug offenders demonstrated that arrests for violent and nonviolent criminal acts were reduced by 40% or more.

Research shows that drug addiction treatment reduces the risk of HIV infection and that interventions to prevent HIV are much less costly than treating HIV-related illnesses. Treatment can improve the prospects for employment, with gains of up to 40% after treatment.

Data from NIDA shows that drug abuse treatment has a significant effect on reducing drug use. NIDA tracked 10,000 drug abusers in 100 treatment programs around the U.S. from 2001 to 2003 and found that methadone treatment cut heroin use by 70%. Only 28% of patients in outpatient methadone treatment programs reported weekly or more frequent heroin use, down from 89.4% prior to admission.

The study also found that outpatient treatment resulted in a 50% reduction in weekly or more frequent cocaine use after one year of follow-up. Reductions were greatest for those patients in treatment for at least three months.

Substance Abuse Treatment Reduces Costs to Society

1. Research demonstrates that:
 - \$1 invested in substance abuse treatment saves taxpayers \$7 in future costs;
 - that \$1 invested in treatment could save \$11.54 in combined medical and social costs
 - for every \$1 spent on substance abuse treatment \$5.60 was returned in reduced welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, crime courts, and imprisonment.
2. A comparison study of drug use one year before admission to treatment and one year following discharge from substance abuse treatment shows that:
 - client's use of their primary drug decreased from 72.8% to 37.7%;
 - cocaine use decreased by more than one-half from 39.5% before treatment to 17.8% one year after treatment;
 - heroin use decreased from 23.6% to 12.6%.

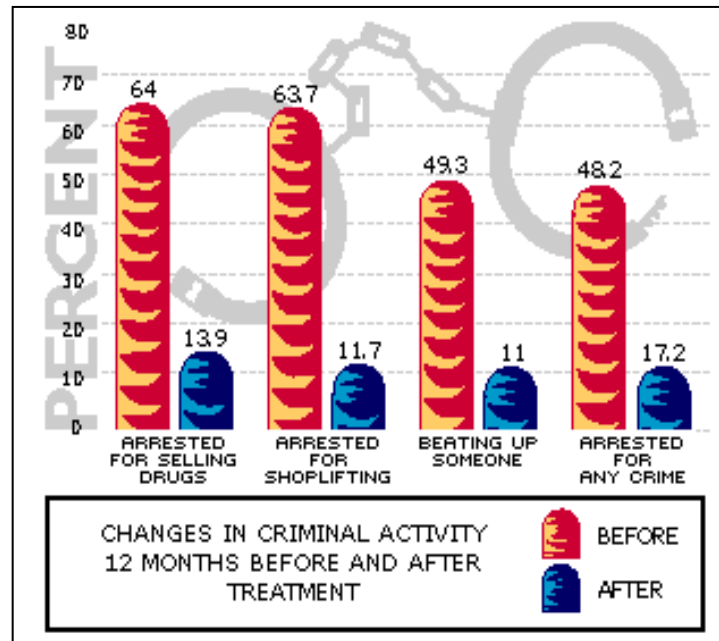
The before/after differences for all categories were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Substance Abuse Treatment Reduces Crime

1. 33% of all criminal justice costs are directly related to substance abuse.
2. Over 1.6 million adults (55%) in probation and parole programs need alcohol or drug treatment. Only 37% of the total population of inmates receive any kind of drug treatment.
3. Results of a treatment study report significant declines in criminal activity.
 - Reports of arrests of selling drugs decreased by 78.2%, from 64% to 13.9%.
 - Reports of arrests of shoplifting decreased by 81.6%, from 63.7% to 11.7%.
 - Reports of "beating someone up" decreased by 77.6%, from 49.3% to 11%.
 - Reports of arrests for any crimes decreased by 64.2%, from 48.2% to 17.2% in the comparison years.

The before/after differences for all categories were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

5. A study in California shows that criminal behavior decreased after one year in treatment:
 - Drug sales dropped by 68%;
 - Breaking and entering dropped by 61%;
 - Selling sex dropped by 54%;
 - Use of weapons or physical force dropped by 75%.
6. The national average of rate of recidivism and repeat arrests without substance abuse treatment is 47%. After one year of treatment:
 - Arrests in Ohio dropped by 90%;
 - Arrests in Texas dropped by 80%;
 - Arrests in California dropped by 60%;
 - Arrests in Iowa dropped by 50%.
7. Treatment follow-up studies find that criminal activity declines by 66% following treatment, and the longer the individual remains in treatment, the greater the reduction in criminal activities.



Source: SAMHSA Treatment Improvement evaluation Study (TIES) 2006.

Substance Abuse Treatment Reduces Health Care Costs

1. More than 70 conditions requiring hospitalization (including cancer, heart disease, liver disease, and HIV/AIDS) have risk factors associated with substance abuse; and \$1 of every \$5 Medicaid spends on hospital care is attributable to substance abuse or a related condition.
2. On the average, untreated alcoholics generally incur general health care costs that are at least 100% higher than those of the non-alcoholic. In the 12 months before treatment, the alcoholic's costs are close to 300% higher.
3. Substance abuse treatment reduces overall hospital admission rates by at least 38%. Hospital admissions for drug overdose decreased by 58% among those who had been treated.
4. Studies in various states showed that:
 - Hospital admissions in Ohio decreased by 66% and emergency room use dropped by 41% within one year after treatment.
 - A Minnesota study found that by providing drug treatment services, the number of hospitalizations decreased by 5% in the first six months following treatment, producing \$22 million in annual health care savings for 18,000 clients.
 - Among those treated for alcohol and illicit drug abuse problems in California, there was a 36% decrease in hospitalizations for physical health problems; 58% decrease in hospitalizations for drug overdoses; 44% decrease in hospitalization for mental health problems; and 25% cut in the total number of hospital days.
5. Massachusetts implemented a comprehensive managed care program for delivering substance abuse and mental health services to Medicaid recipients. In the first year, use of substance abuse treatment services increased 10%, while the cost of these services declined 45% (from \$28

million to \$15.8 million). Savings were achieved primarily through reduced use of hospitals and increased use of detoxification centers.

6. Blue Cross/Blue Shield found that families' health care costs dropped by 50% after treatment, showing a reduction from \$100 a month in the two years prior to treatment to \$13.34 per month in the fifth year after treatment.
7. Aetna Federal Employees Health Plan showed overall health care costs of alcoholics rose from \$130 to \$1,370 per month prior to treatment; three years after treatment health care costs were \$190 per month.
8. After treatment, alcohol and drug related medical visits fell from 24.7% to 11.5% and inpatient mental health visits decreased from 6.5% to 4.7%. Both of these findings indicate the potential for significant health care cost savings.
9. Kaiser Permanente of Northern California conducted a large study that showed that for patients with substance use disorders entering treatment, there was a substantial decline in inappropriate utilization and cost (hospital and ER) in the post treatment period. Their study showed that patients demonstrated a significant decrease in inpatient rates while average medical costs decreased from \$470.30 to \$226.86 per member per month.

Substance Abuse Treatment and Women, Mothers and Infants

1. Over 60% of all pediatric AIDS cases are related to maternal exposure to HIV through drug use or sex with a drug user.
2. In a CSAT funded program, 95% of women reported uncomplicated, drug-free births after one year of treatment; and \$45,000 to \$150,000 can be saved for each pregnancy and delivery uncomplicated by alcohol or substance abuse.
3. Injecting drug use is the primary mode of transmission of HIV among women and is responsible for over 70% of AIDS cases among women.
4. Of women in treatment for substance abuse:
 - 95% reported uncomplicated, drug-free births;
 - 81% had no new criminal charges following treatment;
 - 75% who successfully completed treatment remained drug-free;
 - 46% obtained employment following treatment;
 - 40% eliminated or reduced their dependence on welfare.

Sources:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration – Centre for Substance Abuse Treatment

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Justice Policy Institute

United States Department of Labor – Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)