

PRISON BASED TREATMENT FOR ALCOHOL AND RELATED OTHER DRUG USE AMONG INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS MEN

Doyle M¹, Butler T¹, Guthrie J², Shakeshaft A³,

¹ Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, ² Australian National University, ³ National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Australia.

Introduction / Issues: Research has consistently shown a history of alcohol and other drug (AoD) use is widespread among prison inmates. Prison based AoD behavioral treatment is available in Australia prisons, but to date research into the delivery and effectiveness is sparse. This presentation will report on the findings of a PhD study that has examined the experiences of inmates undertaking the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) in NSW. IDATP, a six month program, was established in 2013 and uses group and individual therapy approaches. In the context of Indigenous overrepresentation in prison, this research has a particular focus on treatment delivery to Indigenous Australians.

Method / Approach: This study used a qualitative approach, 31 participants were interviewed in-depth (14 Indigenous). Both pre- and post-intervention interviews were conducted.

Key Findings: Participants reported that trust in fellow program group participants and the facilitators was critical for a successful group program. Defining trust was, however, somewhat different for Indigenous inmates than others inmates, with most Indigenous inmates stating they felt more comfortable discussing personal issues only with other Indigenous inmates.

Discussions and Conclusions: The findings have implications for AoD treatment within the prison context. Prison based programs have the greatest impact when program participants trust the facilitators. Indigenous men in prison may be more willing to discuss AoD use problems within Indigenous-only treatment groups where they feel more comfortable disclosing personally sensitive information.

Implications for Practice or Policy ; Findings from this research could be used to inform and improve AoD treatment in prisons across Australia.

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