

**FEATURE ARTICLE**



## National Criminal Justice Drug Abuse Treatment Studies (CJ-DATS): Update and Progress

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*This article was shortened considerably for inclusion in this newsletter. For the full article, including tables and references, please go to <http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/forum/full-articles/cj-dats.pdf>.)*

In 2002, with support from several federal partners, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) launched the National Criminal Justice Drug Abuse Treatment Studies (CJ-DATS), a major research initiative. Under CJ-DATS, researchers from 10 academic research centers and NIDA are working together with federal, state, and local criminal justice partners to develop and test integrated approaches to the treatment of offenders with drug use disorders. At present, there are 11 major studies underway in CJ-DATS.

### Background

In 2003, about 6.9 million individuals were under some form of correctional control, with nearly 2.1 million in prison or jail and about 4.8 million under community supervision. Drug problems are prevalent among offenders. A 1997 Department of Justice survey of inmates in state and federal prisons estimated that 69% of state prisoners were drug- or alcohol-involved, and 56% reported using illicit drugs in the month prior to the offense. Only 32% of state and 21% of federal substance-involved prisoners had participated in treatment while under correctional supervision (excluding Alcoholics Anonymous, other peer support, and educational programs).

A large body of research shows the effectiveness of drug abuse treatment in reducing drug use and criminal behavior for individuals with drug problems who are involved with the criminal justice system. Given this body of research, there is reason to be optimistic about the effectiveness of treatment for offenders with drug use disorders. However,

there is much that is still unknown about effective treatment for the reentering offender.

### CJ-DATS Studies

Currently 11 major multisite studies are underway in CJ-DATS. These are described in more detail at [www.cjdat.org](http://www.cjdat.org). (See **CJ-DATS**, p. 6)

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**



## JRSA Launches Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Data Web Site

JRSA is pleased to announce that the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Data Resource Center is now online. The DVSA site contains summaries of domestic and sexual violence information being collected in the states and lists current projects and reports being produced. A bibliography of related publications and a library of data collection forms are also available, along with a list of contacts in each state. The site also

provides links to available data.

Information is being posted as soon as it becomes available, so be sure and check back regularly to find out what is going on in your state and the states around you. Once state information is collected, a national summary and an overview of trends across the states will be prepared and made available on the site.

Visit the DVSA Web site at: <http://www.jrsa.org/dvsa-drc/>

(CJ-DATS, from p. 1)

These studies are valuable in their ability to address important cross-cutting issues in criminal justice and drug abuse treatment when dealing with the drug-involved offender. Several of these underlying issues are highlighted below, along with the CJ-DATS efforts related to them.

### Assessing Offender Problems

Assessment is the first step in determining what interventions or services are needed. Offenders often have multiple problems, including drug use, criminal behavior, mental problems, and difficulty finding and keeping employment and housing. For offenders transitioning from incarceration back into the community, behavior that increases the risk of infectious disease, including HIV, hepatitis C, and other chronic illnesses, can adversely affect the community's public health and, for those who are reincarcerated, burden criminal justice health care resources as well.

The first step in dealing with these problems is to assess their nature and extent. Two CJ-DATS studies have focused on developing and testing assessment tools designed for use by criminal justice and drug abuse treatment providers with offender populations.

*Inmate Pre-Release Assessment (IPASS).* The IPASS, being developed under UCLA's leadership, will obtain input from both the counselor and the inmate to measure the type and severity of the offenders' problems, their participation and progress in treatment during incarceration, and the level of risk suggested by their criminal history.

*Co-Occurring Disorders Screening Instrument for Criminal Justice Populations (CJ-CODSI).* Co-occurring mental problems, which are prevalent among individuals with drug disorders, can complicate the treatment of substance use disorders, interfere with adherence to drug treatment, and contribute to relapse. NDRI-Colorado is taking the lead in developing the CJ-CODSI, a brief tool for use with offenders that is intended to help with treatment planning needs and provide criminal justice staff with information to determine whether a full psychiatric diagnosis is indicated.

### Measuring Progress in Treatment and Recovery

Individuals who enter drug abuse treatment as a criminal justice requirement must be willing to engage in the therapeutic process if it is to be effective. Determinants of client treatment performance include measures of motivation and readiness, psychological and social attributes, and social functioning, as well as rapport with counselor and development of recovery support networks.

*Performance Indicators for Corrections (PIC).* Instruments to evaluate client motivation and treatment needs were developed and tested in the PIC study, carried out under the leadership of Texas Christian University (TCU). These instruments are the Client Evaluation of Self and Treatment for Criminal Justice (CJ-CEST) and the Client Assessment Inventory, which consists of scales corresponding to domains targeted for improvement in therapeutic community-based treatment. The CJ-CEST, developed at TCU, includes four scales measuring treatment needs and motivation, six scales measuring psychological and social functioning, and five scales measuring treatment process. The TCU Criminal Thinking Scales measure six criminal thinking domains and are also available as a stand-alone measure.

### Linking Criminal Justice and Drug Abuse Treatment

An important goal of CJ-DATS was to develop ways that drug abuse treatment can be better coordinated with criminal justice requirements or integrated into criminal justice settings. Three CJ-DATS studies are developing interventions that address the needs of both offenders and criminal justice staff. Each uses a randomized trial design comparing the CJ-DATS intervention to a condition approximating "business as usual" (for example, usual treatment or parole supervision). The two reentry studies will follow subjects at 3 and 9 months.

*Treatment Interventions for Corrections (TIC).* The TIC study, under TCU's leadership, involves developing and testing a series of brief (4-session), flexible, evidence-based treatment interventions targeting specific offender problems. The initial modules are currently being developed and tested in prison-based treatment settings. They include anger management, HIV risk reduction, and changing thinking errors.

*Transitional Case Management (TCM).* Often individuals with drug problems either do not enter treatment when they are released from prison or soon drop out. To address this, the TCM study, under UCLA's leadership, tests a parole reentry model based on strengths-based case management, which builds on the offender's accomplishments, prosocial abilities and goals, and supportive network. TCM starts as part of discharge planning within prison. After the offender is released, he or she receives 12 weeks of intensive strengths-based case management to support treatment participation and access to needed services, followed by another 12 weeks of less intensive contact with the case manager.

*Step'n Out.* The Step'n Out program is a "collaborative behavioral management" approach that involves biweekly sessions between parole officers, treatment counselors, and clients at the treatment site over a 12-week period. During these sessions, supervision and treatment requirements are monitored, client reentry goals are set, and specific target behaviors (e.g., remaining abstinent, attending supervision and counseling sessions, calling potential employers) are agreed to. Client progress on target behaviors and compliance with requirements count toward (mostly non-monetary) rewards, and lack of adherence brings graduated sanctions.

### Adolescent Interventions

Most of the research on drug abuse treatment with criminal justice-involved individuals has focused on adults. Two studies in CJ-DATS focus on the adolescent drug-involved offender. Both are testing intervention approaches using randomized clinical designs, with a 12- to 15-month follow-up.

*Three Reentry Strategies for Juvenile Offenders.* This study, under the leadership of NDRI-Midwest, compares usual aftercare services for juveniles with two very different treatment approaches: *Functional family therapy*, an intervention that focuses on the family to improve communication patterns, parenting practices, and family bonding; and *cognitive restructuring*, an intervention that targets the adolescent's distorted or negative thinking patterns. Cognitive restructuring has been studied in adult offenders, but this will be the first major study on its application with adolescents.

*Facilitating Adolescent Offenders' Reintegration from Juvenile Detention to Community Life (DTC).* The DTC study is led by the University of Miami. The intervention, which is based on the Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) model, begins as the adolescent enters the juvenile detention facility. The MDFT therapist intervenes with the youth in detention and with the parents in their homes. After the youth is discharged from detention, the therapy continues for 4 months in the community with youth and family together

### HIV/Hepatitis Risk Reduction

Adult offenders with drug problems are also at high risk for infectious disease. The period immediately following release from prison is an important time to intervene to reduce HIV risk behavior.

*HIV/Hepatitis Prevention for Re-entering Offenders.* Under the leadership of the University of Delaware, this study will test the effectiveness of an HIV/HCV prevention intervention based on an interactive DVD and workbook tailored to specific gender and ethnic groups and risk behaviors. The new DVD intervention will be compared to the "NIDA standard" HIV intervention in a sample of community corrections clients.

*Restructuring Risky Relationships to Reduce HIV Risk (RRR-HIV).* Rates of HIV infection are higher among female inmates than among male inmates and higher than in the general population. "Thinking errors" in the context of intimate partner relationships can increase a woman's risk for engaging in unsafe behaviors, including risky sex, drug use, and criminality. The Restructuring Risky Relationships (RRR-HIV) study, under the leadership of the University of Kentucky, will develop and test an intervention that helps incarcerated women about to reenter the community recognize and change relationship thinking errors in order to reduce their HIV risk behaviors. It is designed to be delivered in prison in five one-hour sessions over a five-week period. After the woman returns to the community, two follow-up sessions are scheduled, one in the first week and the other in the third month after release from prison.

### Understanding Systems

Criminal justice and drug treatment agencies have implemented many approaches in and across multiple set-

tings to address the problems of drug-involved offenders. There is a need to better understand how treatment services are structured and delivered to drug-involved offenders in criminal justice and community settings in order to ensure that research is relevant to criminal justice needs. The individual research projects in CJ-DATS include organization and systems measures to help provide the organizational context needed to disseminate its research findings and products. It is also critical to obtain basic information in areas such as the level of access, availability, and utilization of correctional and drug treatment as well as the types of treatment in the criminal justice system. Thus, a key study in the CJ-DATS is a comprehensive study of services provided to offenders with drug problems.

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*National Criminal Justice Treatment Practices (NCJTP) Survey.* A multilevel survey of criminal justice and drug abuse treatment organizations that work with substance abusing offenders is being undertaken. For both adult and juvenile agencies, the survey encompasses four levels: (1) State-level directors of corrections and community corrections agencies and state directors of drug and alcohol services; (2) regional directors and administrators of correctional agencies and of correctional facility drug and alcohol services; (3) samples of administrators of correctional institutions, probation/parole administrators, and directors of outpatient drug treatment programs serving criminal justice-involved clients; and (4) samples of

correctional and treatment staff working in respondent institutions or agencies.

The goals of the NCJTP are to identify the types of drug abuse treatment services available to drug abusers under criminal or juvenile justice control and to provide national data on organizational factors such as mission, workplace climate, staff development, resources, and inter- and intra-agency coordination activities that are expected to influence the availability and quality of treatment for drug-involved offenders.

*eCourt.* The eCourt study will examine how an integrated Web-based information system can facilitate monitoring offender progress in the drug court. The study, being undertaken with support from the Office of Justice Programs, has three components: the development and pilot testing of the Web-based performance monitoring system; an examination of the organizational factors in adopting this new technology; and a national survey of structural and process factors in drug courts related to the use of Web-based information technology to monitor offender progress and improve outcomes.

### Comment

At the outset, CJ-DATS investigators identified eight broad priority areas of research, including screening and referral, modifying treatment programs and interventions for reentering offenders, improving engagement and retention, linking services in the community, improving coordination with criminal justice reentry processes, addressing the needs of special populations, understanding the general organizational and contextual factors in treating offenders, and understanding current treatment practices for the drug-involved offender. In the studies described above, the work has begun in all of these priority areas.

CJ-DATS has created an important research infrastructure with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes for offenders with substance use disorders by developing and testing approaches to better integrate drug abuse treatment with public safety and public health systems. The success of CJ-DATS will depend upon whether the assessment tools and interventions being studied improve the chances that the drug-involved offender will successfully return to the community. ❧