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Correctional Service  
Canada

Service correctionnel  
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## RESEARCH REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS AND CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT

### An Assessment of the Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program at Drumheller Institution

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==== Research Report ====

**An Assessment of the Offender  
Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program  
at Drumheller Institution**

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**An Assessment of the Offender**  
**Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program**  
**At Drumheller Institution**

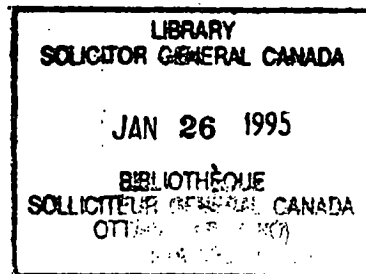
**Research Report No. 26**

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**Research and Statistics Branch**  
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**November, 1992**



## Executive Summary

The 'Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program' is a treatment program designed to address a variety of drug/alcohol problems experienced by offenders. The program involves 26 half-day sessions totalling approximately 85 hours of program instruction. The offenders are educated about the consequences of excessive substance abuse and how it impacts on important aspects of their lives.

A total of 30 offenders participated in the 'Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program' at Drumheller Institution. The offenders completed eight assessment instruments prior to program participation. The assessment measures indicated that the offenders had varying levels of substance abuse problems. The Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) and the Alcohol Dependence Scale (ADS) were also included to assess problems related to drug and alcohol use respectively. The majority of offenders scored in the "severe" level of the DAST and the "low" to "moderate" level of the ADS, indicating a large proportion of difficulties related to substance use.

Upon program completion, the offenders were given post-tests using the same assessments which were self-administered prior to program involvement. Results of the post-assessment measures showed that the offenders improved on all of the assessments after program participation. These findings indicate that the program was successful in educating offenders about drug/alcohol use.

Post-assessment results of offenders who scored in the "severe" levels of the DAST or the ADS were compared to offenders who did not have a score in either of the "severe" levels. The pre- to post-assessment scores were higher for the "less severe" group than for the "severe" group. These results were expected since the program targets offenders who are just beginning to experience drug/alcohol problems rather than for offenders who have a history of severe substance abuse.

A sub-sample of ten offenders were also compared to a control group of ten offenders who completed the pre- and post-assessments but did not participate in the program. Results showed that the post-assessments completed by the program participants were higher on five of the eight measures when compared to the control group scores. Although these findings must be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size, it is encouraging to see that the program is having some beneficial effects.

The offenders and instructor completed feedback forms about the content and procedures of the program. The offenders rated the majority of program aspects positively with the instructor receiving the highest rating and program length (i.e., too short) receiving the lowest. It is favourable to discover that the offenders would have actually preferred a longer 'Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program'.

The instructor indicated that the program goals and objectives were "very clear" for all of the sessions. The Group Leaders Guide was also rated as "effective" in stimulating pro-social discussions regarding substance use.

## Introduction

The 'Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program' is an alcohol and drug treatment program which targets offenders who experience serious psychological or physical dependency on alcohol/drugs prior to incarceration. The program was originally developed for the Education and Personal Development Division, Correctional Services Canada in 1987 as an initiative under the National Drug Strategy. The aim of the program is to educate offenders about alcohol and drug problems and encourage responsible decision-making regarding substance use. It has been proposed that the program is particularly appropriate for those who have just begun to experience serious problems related to their use of substances, rather than for those who have a long history and are severely dependent (Lightfoot & Barker, 1989).

The program was introduced in Drumheller Institution in 1990. A total of 30 participants have received the Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program at Drumheller. Ten offenders completed the program in October 1990, 10 participated in December 1990, and a further 10 offenders finished the program in July 1991.

The program consists of nine different sections: Introduction; Alcohol and Drug Education; Self-Management Skills Training; Problem-Solving Cognitive and Behavioural Skills Training; Social Skills Training; Jobs Skills Refresher Training; Leisure and Lifestyle Planning; Pre-Release Planning; and Graduation (Lightfoot, 1989). Three individual counselling sessions conducted at the beginning, middle and end of the program are also included. The program is designed to be completed in a group format consisting of 26 half-day sessions totalling approximately 85 hours of program involvement.

As part of the program implementation, the participants were asked to complete a number of test measures before and after the program. A structured interview assessing the nature and extent of alcohol and drug dependence and associated problems in the six months prior to incarceration was also completed.

This report examines the results of the assessments which were completed by the offenders. An analysis of the efficacy of the program is also presented from both the offenders' and instructor's point of view.

## Offender Pre-Assessments

The offenders completed eight measures as an initial assessment prior to program participation. The offenders were administered the same eight instruments after participation as a post-treatment assessment.

### Measures

The measures included the Consequences of Alcohol Use (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983) and the Consequences of Drug Use (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983) which evaluate the level of alcohol and drug knowledge exhibited by the offenders; the How Much do they Matter (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983) scale measures attitudes toward alcohol and drug use; the Communicating About Drinking (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983), Drinking and Assertiveness (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983), Using Alcohol Responsibly (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983), and Decision-Making (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983) scales assess the offenders' degree of communication, assertiveness, responsibility and problem-solving abilities; and the Employment Questionnaire (Barker, 1989) evaluates the offenders' perceptions toward potential employment opportunities.

The Consequences of Alcohol Use scale involves 20 true and false statements about the effects of alcohol. The highest possible score for this scale is 20 (i.e., 100% correct). The mean for the sample was 11.5 (sd = 1.83) or 57.5%.

The Consequences of Drug Use test contains 30 true and false statements about the consequences of using drugs. The highest possible score for this scale was 30 and the mean score for the participants was 20.7 (sd = 2.79) or 69.0%.

The How Much do they Matter questionnaire includes 20 Likert-type statements about how people might be effected by using drugs or alcohol. The offenders were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements. Out of a possible score of 100, the average was 80.9 (sd = 12.39) or 80.9% for the group of 30 participants.

The Drinking and Assertiveness measure presents descriptions of people who feel uncomfortable because others are drinking or offering them alcohol. The offenders were asked to choose the correct action from four options which describe an assertive response to the situation portrayed. Out of a possible score of 15, the mean was 9.4 (sd = 2.50) or 62.7%.



The Communicating About Drinking questionnaire involves descriptions of people who want to control or stop their drinking. The task of the offender was to choose the correct message about drinking that they want to communicate to other individuals. For each question, there were four possible options from which to choose. Out of 15 possible correct responses, the average score for the group of 30 participants was 8.2 (sd = 2.87) or 54.7%.

The Using Alcohol Responsibly test contains 15 descriptions of situations in which the offender was to choose the most appropriate behaviour to use alcohol responsibly. There were four different responses for each question. The average score was 7.3 (sd = 2.67) or 48.7%.

The Decision-Making questionnaire presented the offenders with fictional descriptions of people who are attempting to make decisions in a health-related context. Individuals were asked to select from among four options the next step to be followed using a systematic approach to decision-making. Out of 15 different decision-making exercises, the mean score was 5.8 (sd = 2.69) or 38.7%.

The final test employed as a pre-assessment measure was the Employment Questionnaire. This measure includes 47 Likert type statements about substance use, employment and relapse situations. The offender was to indicate his level of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The mean score for the group of 30 offenders was 184.6 (sd = 14.63) out of a possible score of 235.

Analyses of variance indicated that some scores for the three groups of offenders differed significantly on the Communicating About Drinking and Decision-Making scales<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The mean score for the first group of participants was significantly higher on the Communicating About Drinking measure than the mean score for the third group of offenders. On the Decision-Making scale, the mean score for the first group of participants was significantly higher than the mean scores for the second and third group of inmates.

## Interview Data

The offenders were administered a separate package of measures as part of the structured interview for the Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program. The measures included the ASIST-I (Lightfoot & Hodgins, 1988) which focuses on social, demographic and life area functioning; the Alcohol Dependence Scale (ADS) (Skinner & Horn, 1984) which determines level of alcohol dependence; the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) (Skinner, 1982) which assesses level of drug dependence; the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979) which provides an inventory of psychological distress factors; the Shipley Institute of Living (Shipley, 1940) which determines intellectual functioning; and the Trails A and B (Reitan, 1958) which focuses on neuro-psychological functioning.

### Education and Employment

The majority of offenders (66.7%) were involved in some secondary education while 26.7% had completed high school. When asked how satisfied they were with their present level of education, 43.3% indicated they were "somewhat to very dissatisfied" while 40% responded they were "somewhat to very satisfied".

Sixty percent were usually employed in an unskilled occupation while 30% could normally secure a position requiring skilled labour. Prior to arrest, 36.7% were unemployed while 20% were employed part-time and 40% were working full-time. When asked how satisfied they were with their employment, 30% indicated they were "somewhat to very dissatisfied" while 46.6% answered they were "somewhat to very satisfied". A sizeable 66.7% of the participants indicated that the overall effect of substance use on their school/employment situation was that it made it worse (46.7%) or much worse (20%). When asked how important it will be to receive help for school/employment problems after release, 46.6% indicated that it would be "moderately to extremely important".

### Financial Resources

The main source of income for 53.3% of the offenders in the six months prior to arrest was the result of illegal activities. Almost 47% of the offenders were experiencing some type of financial difficulties in this timeframe. When these individuals were asked about the effects of alcohol/drug use on their financial situation, 56.5% answered it had been made "worse". When asked how important it will be to receive help for financial problems after release, 43.4% indicated that it would be "moderately to extremely important".

## **Leisure Activities**

Approximately 57% of the offenders were involved in at least 5 or more leisure activities in the six month period before arrest. The activities included hobbies, sports, reading, listening to music, socializing etc. About 63% of the participants indicated that their leisure activities were made "worse" or "much worse" as a result of substance use.

## **Accommodation, Marital/Family Relationships**

A third of the offenders were either living in a single room or at no fixed address prior to being charged with their current offence. The remaining individuals were living with others such as their mate, with other family, or with friends. A sizeable 40% were currently married and 33.3% were single and had never been married.

Over 26% were unsatisfied with their living arrangements prior to incarceration. Slightly over 63% were living with people who either had, or have, a drinking/drug problem. A large percentage of these individuals (40%) were also involved in criminal activities and had been previously incarcerated. When asked what the overall effect of alcohol/drug use was on their relationships, 63.3% answered it had made their relationships "worse" and an additional 26.7% responded it had made their relationships "much worse". When asked how important it will be to have help after their release for relationship problems, only a surprising 16.6% indicated it would be "moderately to considerably important".

## **Alcohol Use**

Almost 54% of the 30 participants were 14 years of age or younger when they first started drinking alcohol regularly (i.e., once a week or more). In the 6 months prior to arrest, 43.3% of the offenders described themselves as moderate drinkers while 23.3% stated they were heavy drinkers and a further 6.7% responded they were alcoholics'.

A large percentage (83.3%) of the offenders' indicated that drinking had caused problems for them. Of these individuals, 60% had experienced family related problems, 80% had been involved in legal problems, and 36.7% had experienced school/employment difficulties as a result of drinking. Sixty percent of the offenders stated that these problems began at the age of 16 or younger.

Over 66% of the participants reported that they were argumentative (i.e.,

verbally abusive) when they had been drinking in the six months before arrest. The usual target of the verbal abuse was family (26.7%), friends (23.3%), or strangers (16.7%).

A sizeable 46.7% became physically aggressive when they had been drinking. The aim of the aggression was normally toward friends (13.3%) or strangers (13.3%).

The offenders' were asked, based on their previous experience, if they would have needed assistance if they were to have stopped drinking during the six months prior to arrest. Over 41% of the participants responded that they would have required some type of help. When asked what type of help they would have preferred, 10.3% indicated that they would have required detoxification, while an additional 20.7% responded that they would have needed counselling.

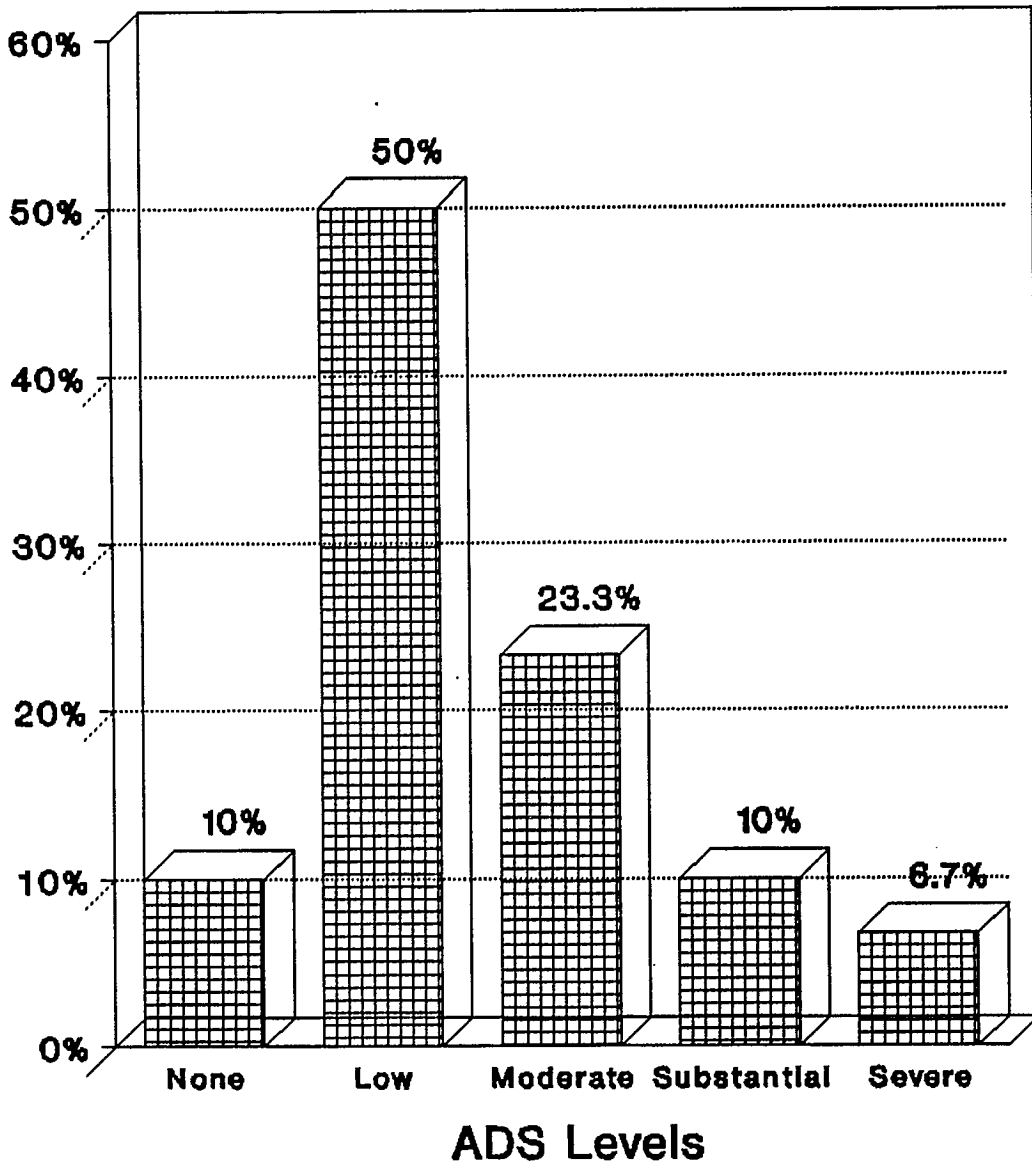
When asked what the overall effect of alcohol use was on their lifestyles, 24.1% responded it had been made "worse" while a sizeable 44.8% stated it had been made "much worse". Twenty percent indicated that it would be "moderately" or "considerably important" to receive help for their alcohol use after release, while an additional 16.7% responded it would be "extremely important".

### **Alcohol Dependence Scale**

The Alcohol Dependence Scale (ADS) (Skinner & Horn, 1984) is a 25 item scale which assesses the severity of alcohol dependence. The offenders were asked about the level of alcohol dependence they experienced in the six month period prior to arrest. The majority of questions are presented in a yes/no binary format and a few are also displayed using Likert-type scales. ADS scores are divided into five alcohol dependency categories; none (score of 0), low (1-13), moderate (14-21), substantial (22-30), or severe (31-47).

The group of 30 offenders had an average score of 12.9 (sd = 9.43) indicating a low-moderate level of alcohol dependency. Figure 1 shows that the majority of offenders (60%) were in the low level while only two participants scored in the severe range of the ADS. The results indicate that the majority of offenders did not have high alcohol dependency in the six months prior to arrest.

**Figure 1  
ADS Levels**



## Drug Use

Table 1 shows the types of drugs consumed by the 30 program participants in the 6 months before arrest. It is interesting to note the high percentage (56.7%) who admitted to having consumed cocaine. Not surprisingly, a large percentage had used cannabis as well as legal drugs such as nicotine.

In the six months prior to arrest, 50% reported that they became argumentative (i.e., verbally abusive) when they consumed drugs. The normal target of the verbal abuse was family (16.7%) or friends (16.7%).

A sizeable 36.7% became physically aggressive when they used drugs. When asked who they usually became aggressive towards, 16.7% stated friends and 13.3% responded strangers.

The participants were also asked whether they would have needed help if they were to have stopped using drugs. A large (56.7%) number of the offenders indicated that they would have required assistance. When asked what type of help they would have needed, 10% responded hospital service, 13.3% indicated detoxification and 30% stated counselling would have been sufficient.

The offenders were asked to describe the effects of drug use on their lifestyles. Twenty-five percent responded it had been made "worse" while a considerable number (55%) indicated it had been made "much worse" as the result of using drugs. When asked whether it will be important to receive help for their drug use after release, 20% stated it will be "considerably important" while 25% responded "extremely important".

## Drug Abuse Screening Test

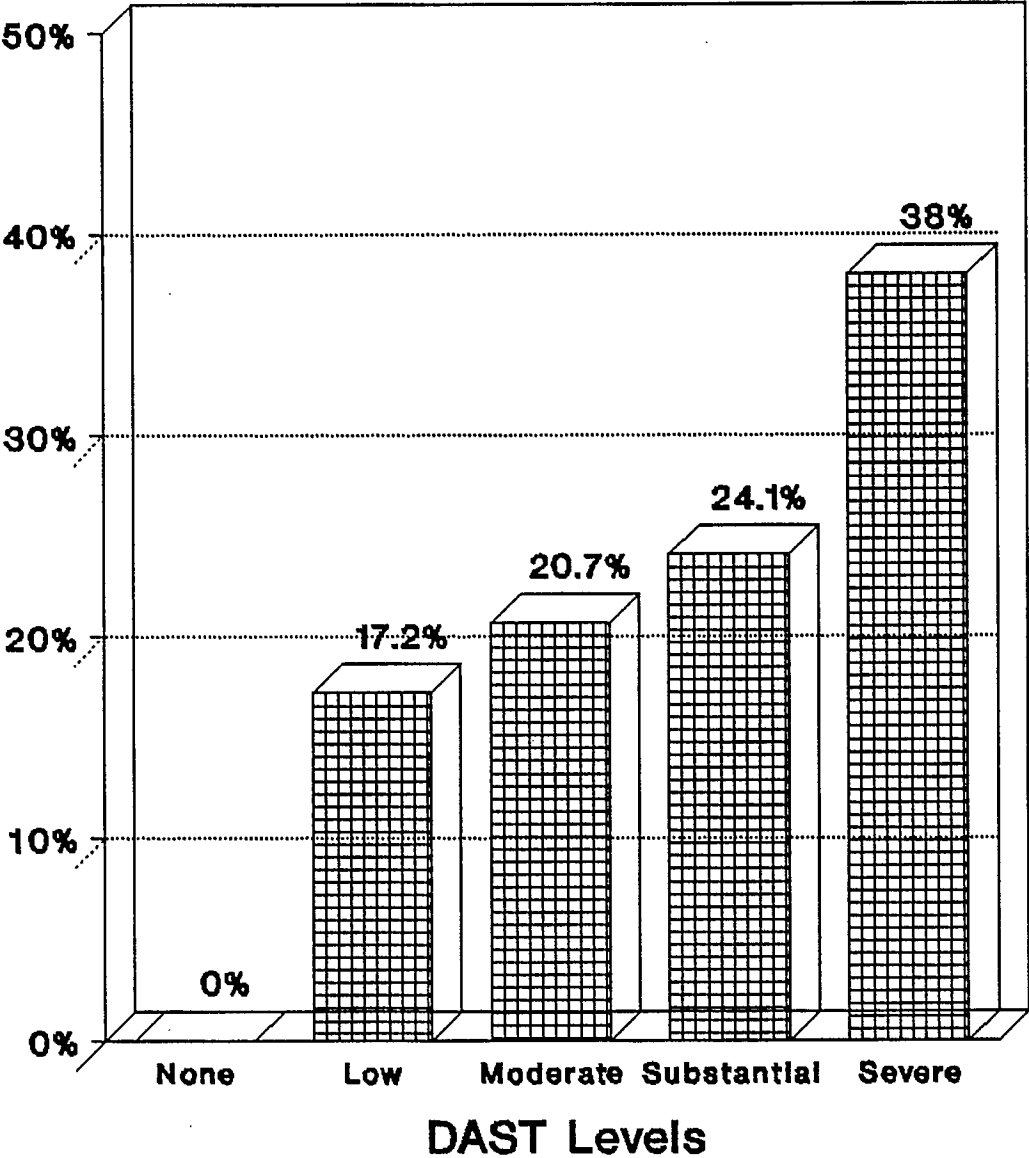
The Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) (Skinner, 1982) involves 20 items which measure the severity of problems related to an individual's drug use. The questions are presented to the offender in a yes/no binary format. The DAST scores are divided into five drug abuse categories; none (score of 0), low (1-5), moderate (6-10), substantial (11-15), or severe (16-20).

The participants had an average DAST score of 11.6 (sd=5.93) which indicated a substantial number of problems related to drug use. Figure 2 shows that only three individuals were in the low level of the DAST while 11 offenders scored in the severe range. The results suggest that a large number of offenders experienced multiple problems related to their drug use in the six months prior to arrest.

**Table 1: Types of Drugs Consumed in the 6 Months Before Arrest**

<b>Drug Types</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Illegal Drug Types</b>	
Cannabis	86.7%
Amphetamines	20.0%
Barbiturates	10.0%
Benzodiazepines	63.3%
Narcotic Analgesics	60.0%
Hallucinogens	53.3%
Cocaine	56.7%
Tranquilizers	3.3%
Antidepressants	3.3%
Volatile Nitrates	6.7%
Inhalants/Solvents	3.3%
<b>Legal Drug Types</b>	
Caffeine	86.7%
Nicotine	93.3%

**Figure 2  
DAST Levels**





## Legal Status

All of the offenders except one had at least one previous adult conviction. Two-thirds of the sample were currently incarcerated for two different offences while an additional 20% were involved in three or more crimes. The most frequently committed crime was robbery (53.3%), followed by break and enter (36.7%), assaults (13.3%) and weapon offences (13.3%). When the offenders' were asked about the level of violence that was involved in their major offence, 33.3% responded there was actual physical injury to the victim while 20% stated there was no contact with a victim.

A large percentage (90%) of the offenders consumed either drugs or alcohol on the day(s) they committed their crime(s). Specifically, 30% consumed alcohol, 20% used drugs, and 40% were under the influence of both substances.

The offenders were asked to indicate the amount of drugs and/or alcohol they had consumed. Interestingly, 40% stated they had used more than the usual amount. When questioned to what extent the drugs and/or alcohol affected their judgement on the day(s) of the crime(s), 20% indicated they were "mildly" to "moderately impaired" while 53.3% stated they were "seriously impaired". When asked what the overall effect of substance use has been on their legal status, all of the offenders responded it had been made "worse" or "much worse".

## Treatment

Over 93% of the participants had previously received some type of substance abuse treatment in the six months prior to arrest. The offenders were asked to indicate what type of treatment program they felt would be most beneficial for them while incarcerated. Table 2 shows the responses.

It is interesting to note that the least preferred type of treatment is the one most frequently offered in the institutions, Alcoholics' Anonymous. Other available treatment modalities were generally well-regarded by the offenders. When asked which treatment program would be most beneficial, 50% of the offenders answered individual therapy followed by 21.4% who indicated that a general group therapy (including attention to alcohol and drug problems) approach would be most propitious. In terms of their motivation for participating, a sizeable 96.6% responded that they would attend a program in order to receive assistance to quit their drug use. Fifty percent also indicated that they would like to learn how to control their use of alcohol. Finally, 66.7% stated they would attend a program to learn more about the effects of alcohol or drug use.

**Table 2: Percentage of Offenders Indicating Preferred Type of Treatment**

<b>Treatment Modalities</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Group Therapy (Dealing only with alcohol and drug problems)	79.2%
Group Therapy (More general but including alcohol and drug problems)	78.5%
Alcohol and Drug Education Group	86.3%
A.A. Group	41.4%
Self-Help Group (Not A.A.)	69.0%
Life Skills (Focussing on substance use information)	89.3%
Individual Therapy	89.7%

**Interviewer Severity Ratings**

In the last section of the structured interview, the interviewer rated the participants needs in a variety of areas. Table 3 shows the problem areas as rated by the interviewers. It is interesting to note that the interviewer's assigned a low level of alcohol severity ratings for the offenders while high ratings were assigned to drug use. The results were consistent with the DAST and ADS results which suggested that the offenders had more serious problems with drug use rather than alcohol use.

**Table 3: Percentage of Interviewer's Severity Ratings**

<b>Problem Areas</b>	<b>Problem Levels</b>		
	<b>None</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
School/Employment	17.2%	69.0%	13.8%
Financial	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%
Leisure	25.0%	46.4%	28.6%
Marital/Family	35.8%	46.4%	17.9%
Alcohol	10.7%	53.5%	35.8%
Drug	14.3%	25.0%	60.7%

## Offender Post-Assessments

Upon program completion, the participants were given post-tests using the same eight instruments that were self-administered during the pre-assessment. The pre- and post-test scores of the offenders were compared to determine whether or not there was positive change during program participation. Table 4 compares the pre- and post-scores for the eight measures<sup>2</sup>.

Table 4 shows that the offenders significantly improved on the Consequences of Alcohol Use, How Much do they Matter, Communicating About Drinking, Using Alcohol Responsibly, and Employment Questionnaire measures. There were also noticeable differences between the pre- and post-scores for the Consequences of Drug Use, Drinking and Assertiveness, and Decision-Making scales. Although these differences failed to reach statistical significance, the changes were in the expected direction (i.e., improvement from pre- to post-test).

Analyses were also performed to test for significant differences between the 3 groups on the various measures of change (i.e., the differences between the pre- and post-assessment scores)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Repeated measures analyses of variance for within subjects effects were performed on each comparison to test for a significant change between pre-program and post-program scores.

<sup>3</sup> The change score for the second group of inmates was significantly higher than the first or third groups on the Communicating About Drinking scale. On the Drinking and Assertiveness scale, the change score for the first group was significantly higher than the second group of inmates. The second group of offenders had a significantly higher change score on the Using Alcohol Responsibly measure than did the first group.

**Table 4: Pre-Post Test Measures for the Program Participants**

Measure	Means		F
	Pre	Post	
Consequences of Alcohol Use (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983)	11.5 (sd = 1.83)	12.4 (1.33)	6.51**
Consequences of Drug Use (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983)	20.7 (2.79)	21.7 (3.30)	2.71
How Much do They Matter (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983)	80.9 (12.39)	88.4 (8.96)	24.19**
Communicating about Drinking (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983)	8.2 (2.87)	9.1 (2.92)	5.60*
Drinking and Assertiveness (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983)	9.4 (2.50)	9.7 (2.59)	0.36
Using Alcohol Responsibly (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983)	7.3 (2.67)	8.6 (2.53)	4.27*
Decision-Making (Gunn and Orenstein, 1983)	5.8 (2.69)	6.1 (2.32)	0.69
Employment Questionnaire (Lightfoot and Barker, 1989)	184.6 (14.63)	195.7 (16.59)	18.30**

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

## **Program Response of Offenders With Non-Severe vs. Severe DAST and ADS Scores**

An important consideration in determining the effectiveness of any correctional treatment program is the extent to which the program works for offenders experiencing different levels of severity of substance abuse problems. To explore differential treatment effects, 29 program participants were divided into two severity groups according to the DAST and ADS scales<sup>4</sup>.

The 'severe' group consisted of 12 individuals who had a severe score on either of the DAST or the ADS measures. The 'non-severe' group included 17 offenders who did not have a severe score on either of the DAST or ADS scales. The differences between the pre-test scores and the post-test scores (i.e., the change scores) on each of the eight different measures were compared to test for significant differences between the 'non-severe' and 'severe' groupings.

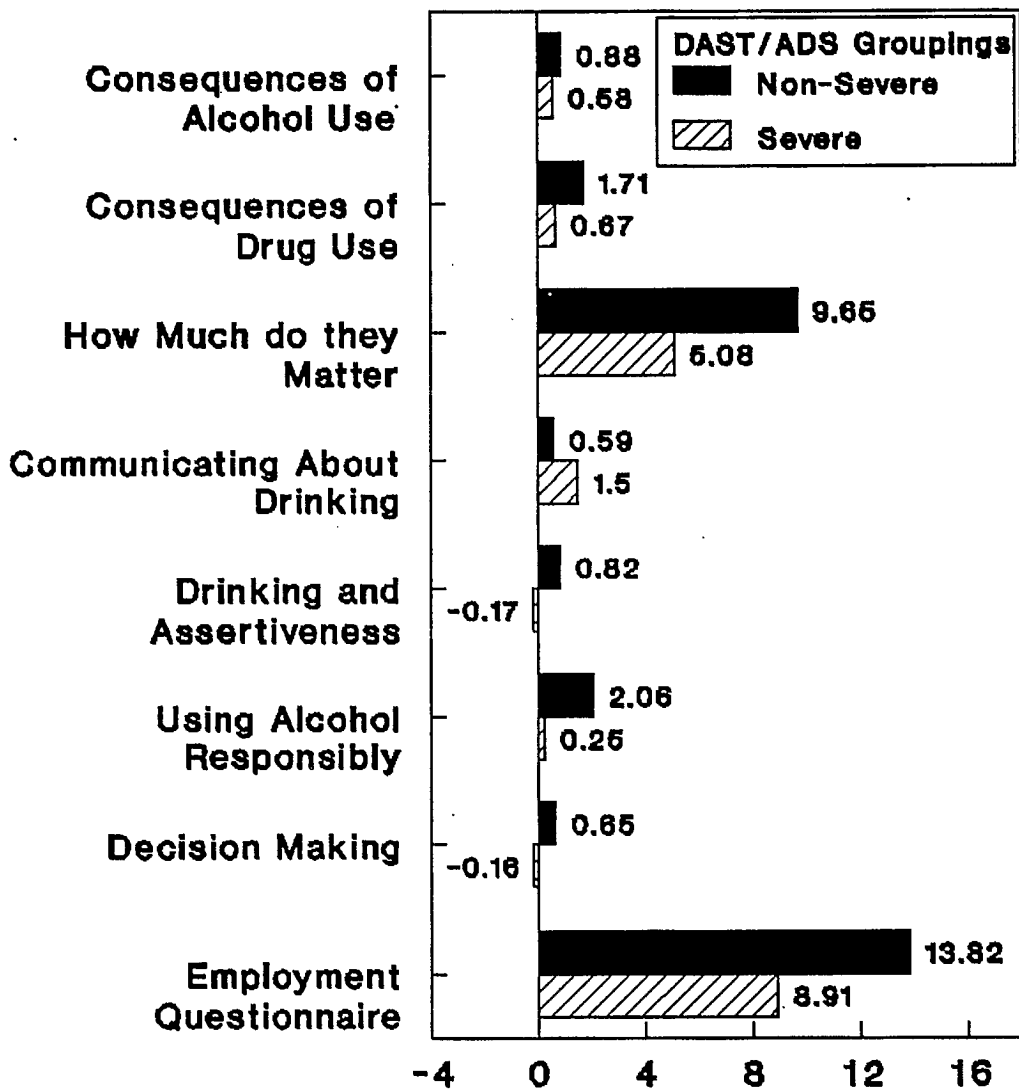
Figure 3 compares the change scores for the two groups on each of the eight measures. On all of the assessment scales except one (Communicating About Drinking), the 'non-severe' grouping of offenders showed more improvement in the pre- to post-assessment measures than did the 'severe' grouping of participants. Noticeable differences in positive change scores were noted on the Employment Questionnaire, How Much do they Matter and Using Alcohol Responsibly measures. It should be noted however, that none of the differences between the two groups were statistically significant.

The previous findings were not surprising since, as previously mentioned, the program is deemed more appropriate for individuals who are just beginning to experience significant problems rather than those who have a history of serious substance abuse. The 'non-severe' group correctly reflects participants who have yet, or are just beginning, to experience serious difficulties whereas the 'severe' group identifies individuals who display critical drug/alcohol use problems as measured by the DAST or ADS. These preliminary findings may be an indication that the program is delivering the most effective treatment to the target group in which it was intended.

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<sup>4</sup> One program participant did not complete the DAST assessment.

**Figure 3**  
**Change Scores By Severity of**  
**DAST and ADS Levels**



## Control Group vs. Program Group Assessment

The research design for the program also included an experimental and control group. The use of a control group was included to determine whether or not changes in the knowledge and attitudes of participants could be attributed to program participation. Random selection was used to assign participants to the experimental and control groups. The experimental group received the Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program while the control group had no exposure to the program.

Although the sample size was small because complete control group data was not available for all 3 groups, a preliminary comparison of the results for the experimental and control groups was conducted. A control group of offenders were administered the pre- and post-assessment test battery.

Pre-test and post-test comparison data were only available for the July 1991 group of offenders. Analyses of pre-test scores showed that the two groups initially differed on the Communicating About Drinking scale at a significant level. The control group had a significantly higher mean score than program participants. Noticeable differences were also observed on the Using Alcohol Responsibly and Decision-Making scales. Although not statistically significant, the control group also had higher mean averages on both these measures.

Comparison of pre-test and post-test changes on the measures were conducted after the pre-test differences between the two groups were statistically adjusted<sup>5</sup>. Results showed that the offenders who completed the program had significantly higher change scores on the How Much Do they Matter and Employment Questionnaire measures. Positive differences were also noted on the Drinking and Assertiveness, Using Alcohol Responsibly, and Decision-Making scales. Although the later three measures were not statistically significant, the differences in the change scores for the experimental group were higher than the differences observed in the control group. Surprisingly, the control group made more positive changes on the Consequences of Alcohol Use, Consequences of Drug Use, and Communicating About Drinking scales when compared to the program participants. However, subsequent analyses showed that these changes were not statistically significant.

Caution should be used in interpreting the above results because of the small sample size. However, the results of the comparisons between the experimental and control groups appear very promising.

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<sup>5</sup> Analysis of covariance was performed.

## Offender Sessional Feedback Forms

The offenders were asked to complete sessional feedback forms in order to evaluate the content and process of the sessions. Questions concerning what the offender's preferences, his perceptions about, and what could be done to improve the sessions were solicited. The participants also completed a short questionnaire after every session.

Generally, the offenders indicated that they enjoyed and appreciated the material and resulting discussions. As well, some movies were noted as interesting and informative.

The offenders rarely responded to what could be done to improve the sessions. When comments were offered, the majority focused on a particular movie being either 'boring' or 'too dry'.

Table 5 shows a summary of the rating scores of questions obtained from the sessional feedback forms. The responses were chosen from a Likert scale of seven possible responses. A low or high rating indicated a certain degree of dissatisfaction for all the questions except the last one. For example, regarding level of discussion, a rating of low would indicate "too little discussion" while a rating of high would indicate "too much discussion". A rating of normal would indicate an optimal level of discussion.

The last question concerned level of interest with a low score indicating a "boring" session and a high score indicating an "interesting" session. It appears as though the participants were satisfied with the sessions on these factors. However, only 52.0% of the offenders indicated a "high" level of interest.

At the end of the program, the participants were asked to complete an evaluation form designed to elicit responses on a variety of program topics. The answers were chosen from a scale of three possible responses (i.e., too much, just right, too little). Table 6 shows a summary of the results.

It appears that the majority of the program aspects were rated positively. Instructors were rated highest in level of satisfaction, whereas program length was rated lowest. These results suggest that a longer program with a similar amount of material is desired.



**Table 5: Rating Scores of the Offender Sessional Feedback Forms**

	<b>Low</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>High</b>
Level of Information	3.8%	91.1%	5.1%
Number of Audio-Visual Aids	3.7%	80.2%	16.1%
Ideas Presented Clearly	32.1%	60.7%	7.2%
Level of Discussion	6.6%	87.9%	5.5%
Level of Understanding	4.7%	93.4%	1.9%
	Low	————— >	High
Level of Interest	5.1%		52.0%

Note: 'Low' indicated not enough of a certain aspect of the program was provided or that a certain aspect was confusing.

'Normal' indicated that the program aspects were presented well and generally well received.

'High' indicated too much of a certain aspect of the program was provided or that a certain aspect was confusing.

**Table 6: Summary of Offender Program Evaluations**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Too Much</b>	<b>Just Right</b>	<b>Too Little</b>
Length of Program	30.0%	56.7%	13.3%
Alcohol/Drug Information	6.6%	76.7%	16.7%
Problem Solving Skills Training	3.4%	83.3%	13.3%
Assertion Skills Training	3.3%	76.7%	20.0%
Self Control Training (ABC) Model	0.0%	83.3%	16.7%
Relapse Prevention	0.0%	76.7%	23.3%
Goal Setting	3.3%	90.0%	6.7%
Pre-release Planning	0.0%	73.3%	26.7%
Individual Interviews	0.0%	76.7%	23.3%
Instructors	0.0%	93.3%	6.7%
Handouts	6.6%	76.7%	16.7%

## **Instructor Sessional Feedback Forms**

Instructor Sessional Feedback Forms were completed by the instructor for all sessions. The instructor was asked to rate a variety of program aspects on a continuum scale of level of clearness, adequacy or effectiveness.

The clearness and procedure of the sessional goals and objectives were rated as "very clear" for all of the sessions. The content of the manual and discussion material as well as the adequacy of the materials provided were generally rated as "very clear" and "very adequate" respectively. In a few sessions the ratings were lower indicating fluctuation in the evaluations between sessions.

The effectiveness of the Group Leaders Guide in stimulating discussions was rated from "fairly effective" to "very effective". The earlier sessions were scored as less effective than the later ones. This trend may be the result of normal hesitation experienced by offenders as well as the instructor in the earlier stages of the program.

The instructors were also asked to indicate strengths, weaknesses and recommendations regarding each session of the program. A recurring comment on the strength of sessions concerned the discussions that evolved from the content material. Weaknesses were not often the subject of comments, although the poor quality of the videos were sometimes noted. Recommendations, although few, referred to administrative matters such as improper equipment, absence of required material etc.

## Conclusion

This report describes the results of the test measurements which were completed by a group of offenders participating in a pre-release substance abuse program. An assessment of the program from both the participants and instructors point of view was also provided.

Results showed that the offenders attained better scores on all measures after program participation. Although not all the post-scores showed statistically significant improvements, the differences in the scores from pre- to post-testing were all positive. Analysis of post-scores between severe and non-severe drug/alcohol users indicated that the program is having a positive effect on the offenders in which is was intended. Evaluation of the program and control groups scores showed that the program participants scored better on the majority of the test measures compared to the control group. These preliminary results suggest that the program was successful in promoting positive change on attitudes and knowledge regarding substance abuse.

The offender and instructor evaluations of the program were also generally positive. On several measures of satisfaction, the program participants indicated a very high degree of satisfaction with both the process and the content of the program. The instructors also noted a high level of satisfaction with the procedures program manual.

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