

Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug Services Achieve Outstanding Outcomes

2015 Service Users' Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey

The 2015 Service Users' Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (SUSOS) was implemented on a single day at nineteen sites at all ten specialist alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and support services in the ACT. A total of 469 people completed the Survey.

Specialist AOD services deliver high levels of satisfaction and positive outcomes

- Service users have high satisfaction levels with the specialist AOD services they are accessing.
 - Services scored an average of 26.9 on a satisfaction scale ranging from 8 to 32.
- Service users self-reported high levels of positive outcomes:
 - Reduced level of substance use (86%)
 - Reduced experience of AOD-related harm
 - reduced involvement in crime—91%
 - improved knowledge of prevention of blood borne virus transmission—85%
 - Improved health and wellbeing
 - improved general health—79%
 - improved mental health—78%
- 57% of tobacco smokers reported either quitting or reducing their smoking since accessing specialist AOD services.

Quality specialist AOD care is being delivered despite increased demand and complexity

- Over the past 3 years there has been a significant increase in demand for specialist AOD services:
 - Between 400–500 people access specialist AOD services on any single day.
 - There has been a 36% increase in the numbers of Survey respondents between 2012 and 2015.
 - 70% of service users attend non-residential services weekly or more often.
 - Service users have identified the need for non-residential AOD services to be provided outside of business hours (i.e. 9am–5pm).
- Specialist AOD services are working with a high needs socio-economically disadvantaged population that requires other types of support in addition to specialist AOD care. Of the Survey respondents:
 - 82% were smokers when they first started using the specialist AOD service
 - 74% were unemployed
 - 46% were homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - 25% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Conclusions

- › Specialist AOD services are currently maintaining high levels of service user satisfaction and positive outcomes despite higher demand, longer waiting times, increased complexity and poly drug use.
- › In addition to quality specialist AOD care, service users have additional needs that are not within services' primary remit (or funding) —e.g. legal and housing support, transport, childcare.
- › While ACT specialist AOD services and their service users are currently achieving some outstanding outcomes, the increased demand is not sustainable. This has implications for future resourcing and health service planning by the ACT and Australian Governments.

About the 2015 Service Users' Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (SUSOS)

The 2015 SUSOS was a collaboration between all ACT Health-funded and delivered specialist AOD treatment, policy and support services: Alcohol and Drug Services and AOD Policy Unit, ACT Health; Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT; Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy; CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn; Directions Health Service; Gudan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation; Karralika Programs; Ted Noffs Foundation; Canberra Recovery Services, The Salvation Army; Toora Women; and Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health Service.

The SUSOS provides an overall picture of the experiences, outcomes and satisfaction of service users accessing specialist AOD services in the ACT. The services include withdrawal, treatment and harm reduction services, offered in a range of settings: residential and non-residential; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream; and government and non-government. The Survey is conducted every 3 years and data from the 2015 Survey can be compared to the findings of earlier surveys conducted in 2009 and 2012.

The full report (as well as previous surveys) can be accessed at: atoda.org.au.