

## Study of treated probationers finds promising outcomes

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IBR's evaluation effort focusing on corrections-based substance abuse treatment programs continues to find encouraging outcomes for treated probationers. A recent independent study headed by **Dr. Kevin Knight** and **Dr. Matthew Hiller** looked at 1-year follow-up outcomes for 492 clients of the Dallas County Judicial Treatment Center (DCJTC), a 300 bed residential, community-based substance abuse treatment facility for criminal offenders with identified alcohol and drug problems. Graduates of DCJTC had much lower arrest rates than did probationers who

were expelled or transferred out of the program (see Figure 1). Overall, arrest rates also were much lower than what is found typically for corrections-based treatment graduates. This measure of reduced criminal activity was especially strong for graduates who also completed a 3-month residential aftercare component of the DCJTC program.

Evidence for the effectiveness of corrections-based treatment programs is consistent with previous findings from IBR's Prison-Based Treatment Assessment (PTA) project. A 1995 evaluation

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## TCU drug problems screen adopted by TDCJ

*Easy-to-administer form is highly reliable and accurate.*

The need for well-designed, reliable, and cost-effective assessment tools for substance abuse treatment programs in criminal justice settings has prompted the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to adopt the TCU Drug Dependence Screen (DDS) for use in its state level assessments of prisoners remanded to treatment. The DDS, developed by **Drs. Dwayne Simpson, Kevin Knight, and Kirk Broome**, focuses on the occurrence of drug-related problems in daily functioning as well as reports of

drug use frequency. Items in this screening tool represent key clinical and diagnostic criteria for "substance dependency" as they appear in the DSM-IV and the NIMH Diagnostic Interview Schedule. The form has been adapted to criminal justice settings by the rewording of clinical language and a design that allows reliable self-administration. The 15-question screening tool has good test-retest reliability and has demonstrated its flexibility for either interview administration or self-administration.

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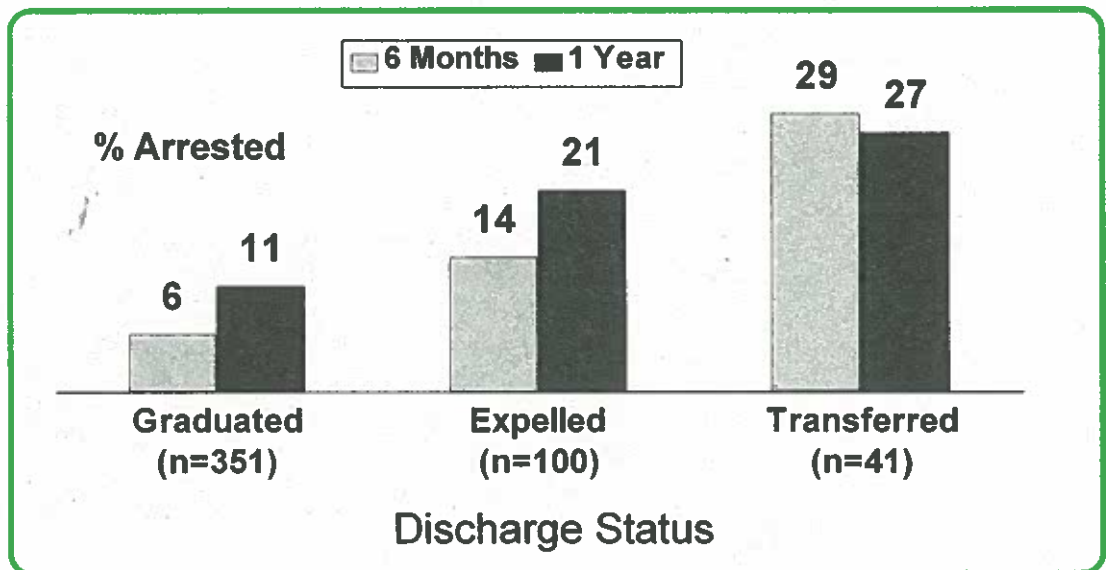
### Probationers, continued from front page.

of a therapeutic community treatment center in Kyle, Texas funded by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the National Institute of Justice found that parolees who completed both the residential aftercare and outpatient aftercare components of the program did much better in terms of decreased drug use, lower arrest rates, and higher employment when compared to those completing the in-prison component only. Following the same trend, those completing the in-prison program only had better outcomes than did an untreated comparison group.

These encouraging results, along with those found in the DCJTC study, are examples of

why treatment has become an increasingly popular alternative to incarcerating criminal offenders with substance abuse problems. However, cautions Dr. Knight, future studies must continue to show the benefits of treatment. "Now, more than ever, it is essential that community-based treatment programs demonstrate they do more than provide an alternative to prison. They also must demonstrate that their program graduates are staying out of jail, staying off drugs, and attempting to become productive members of society." Future studies will investigate how client factors such as motivation and readiness for treatment and program factors such as treatment process are related to outcomes. ■

**Figure 1.**  
Post-treatment  
arrests rates  
by treatment  
discharge  
status



### Drug Screen, continued from front page.

**Christopher Carter**, Director of Screening and Assessment for the Substance Abuse Department of TDCJ, says the DDS compared favorably with the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) in terms of accuracy, based on an independent review. In addition, the DDS will provide a cost savings for the state because TCU/Criminal Justice forms are made available to users free of charge. Carter says that use of

the DDS will begin this summer at TDCJ Intake Centers and state jail facilities and he anticipates they will process about 2,500 forms a month when criminal justice facilities are at peak capacity.

All TCU data collection forms are made available for use in research projects free of charge with the sole request that IBR be informed about applications and results. For more information, contact IBR's criminal justice project at 817-921-7226 or e-mail at [ibr@tcu.edu](mailto:ibr@tcu.edu). ■

## First Choice Program meeting needs

Researchers with IBR's Women and Children Project, which is investigating the effectiveness of a residential treatment facility for substance-abusing women and their children, have found that families entering the program are provided with and utilize a variety of services and community linkages. A preliminary report on service provision during the first year of treatment prepared by Project Manager **Dr. Danica Knight** and graduate assistant **Sarah Logan** found that the Salvation Army's First Choice Program offers a relatively intensive treatment program, including group and individual counseling, family counseling, life skills education, and ancillary services such

as medical, vocational, educational, and legal assistance. The report also notes that many components of the program are tailored to meet the specific needs of each client. Because admission data suggest that both women and children entering First Choice have severe problems and are in need of services that address criminality, parenting, and psychological functioning, the level of service provision in the program seems on target. As during treatment and follow-up data become available, future studies will address how service provision and pretreatment factors relate to treatment participation and outcomes. ■

*Intensive program offers counseling, education, and ancillary services.*

## Research Highlights

### Motivational board game studied

**Drs. Mike Czuchry** and **Tiffany Sia** with IBR's CETOP Project (Cognitive Enhancements for Treatment of Probationers) have found that a motivational board game they developed appears useful in helping people focus on the downfalls of substance abuse. The game, **The Downward Spiral**, uses a "Monopoly-like" board with gains and losses and realistic drug and alcohol abuse situations to guide the action, so that the longer the player ("user") stays in the game, the tougher "life" becomes. A recent study based on college students who either played the game or watched an educational video found the game was highly rated, and that those playing the game (versus the comparison group) were more likely to say the experience increased their intentions to alter their drinking behavior. The game also is being used with substance abusing probationers who are in a mandated treatment program to see if playing it improves their motivation, focus, and participation.

### Conference presentations

IBR researchers and graduate students presented papers at the Southwestern Psychological Association annual meeting in Fort Worth in April. **Dr. Danica Knight** presented "Evaluating the effectiveness of a residential program for women and children;" **Sarah Logan** discussed "Personality characteristics and therapy modality preference;" **Dr. Kirk Broome** presented "Assessing the substance abuser in treatment;" and **Dr. Matthew Hiller** presented two papers, "Correlates of passive-aggressive personality among probationers in a corrections-based treatment program" and "One year outcome evaluation of substance-abusing probationers mandated to residential treatment." **Dr. Urvashi Pitre** chaired a symposium entitled "Node-link maps in the treatment of probationers," featuring papers by **Jason Blankenship** and **Drs. Mike Czuchry** and **Dianna Newbern**, and **Dr. Jamie Forst** presented a paper on "Job insecurity and TQM (Total Quality Management)."

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### Research Highlights, continued from page 3.

At other scholarly meetings of note, **Drs. Kevin Knight and Sandra Dees** took part in a symposium on "Corrections-based treatment programs in Texas" at the Texas Probation Association Annual Conference in March in Austin, and **Drs. Wayne Lehman and Joel Bennett** will present a poster entitled "A team approach for substance abuse training in the workplace" at the Society for Prevention Research annual meeting in Baltimore in May.

**Dr. Lois Chatham**, IBR Associate Director, presented a plenary session "Is Drug Abuse Treatment Effective?" in Dallas at a special Town Meeting hosted by NIDA Director **Dr. Alan Leshner** in March. The meeting, "Understanding Drug Abuse and Addiction" was the fourth in a series of NIDA-sponsored events in selected cities across the US designed to educate civic leaders about the latest scientific research on drug abuse and addiction. ■

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