



office of crime statistics and research

**ADDENDUM TO THE
EVALUATION OF THE
6-MONTH DRUG
TREATMENT PROGRAM
REPORT:**

**PARTICIPANT
OFFENDING ANALYSIS**

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Executive Summary

Background

This brief report forms an addendum to the main report 'Evaluation of the 6-Month Drug Treatment Program' (Ransom 2012). The 6-Month Drug Treatment Program (6DTP) commenced in January 2009, with the aims of reducing illicit drug use, reducing re-offending, improving the health and social functioning of participants and improving access to intervention services for Aboriginal people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The program offers a diversion to drug treatment for adult and young offenders as part of the court process. The program is available to offenders whose offending shows a clear link to drug use, who are suitable for release on bail and who are likely to benefit from a drug treatment intervention. The program features intensive case management, group therapy sessions, regular drug testing, the use of sanction and reward points and individual counselling where required.

The main evaluation report showed that staff and stakeholders interviewed valued and supported the program, that it appeared to be running efficiently, and that participants demonstrated a reduction in their level of drug use throughout their time on the program.

The aim of this component of the study is to examine whether program participants have shown a reduction in their levels of offending during and after participation in the 6-Month Drug Treatment Program.

Methods

The current study uses data from police apprehension reports to examine rates of apprehension before, after and during their involvement in the 6DTP. All participants who were no longer active on the program and had completed six months of time (free from custody) since leaving the program were included. This group of 91 clients included those who had completed the program (n=38) as well as non-completers (n=53), including those who withdrew or were terminated or transferred to another program.

The unit of measurement is apprehension events, defined as all charges resulting in an apprehension report, committed on one same day. Major charges for events are presented in broad groupings of JANCO code (the South Australian adaptation of the Australian National Classification of Offences).

The study involves comparing apprehension events occurring in the six months prior to commencing the program with those occurring in the six month period following the program.

Key findings

- Twenty-six clients (28.6%) included in the study did not record any apprehension events in the six months prior to commencing the program. The program manager reported that it is not unusual for the courts and program referral processes to take this amount of time, or even longer, for a case to progress through the system.
- Most participants recorded only one or two offences in the pre-program period, but some recorded up to ten.
- There was no difference between participants who subsequently completed the program and those who did not in their levels of pre-program offending.
- The most common type of major charge for events occurring in the pre-program period was *burglary*, followed by *offences against good order* and *driving offences*.
- During the program, 29 participants (31.9%) recorded one or more apprehension events. There was no significant difference between completers and non-completers, and most clients who recorded an event during this time only recorded one. Because clients spent

differing amounts of time on the program, the number of during-program offences cannot be directly compared to the pre-program number of events.

- The most common offence type for during-program events was *offences against good order* (50.0%).
- Over half of participants (50; 54.9%) did not record any apprehension events in the six-month period after leaving the 6DTP.
- The most common post-program offence type was *burglary*, followed by *offences against good order*.
- Program completers were significantly less likely than non-completers to record an event in the post-program period.
- For the participant group overall, the number of events recorded in the post-program period was significantly lower than that in the pre-program group.
- Program completers recorded a particularly strong (significant) decline in the number of apprehension events in the post-program period compared to the pre-program period, but non-completers did not show any difference in the number of events over the two periods.
- The strong decline in events in the post-program period was mostly attributable to a decline in *burglaries* across the two periods.

Conclusion

Despite some limitations, this study provides evidence that the 6-Month Drug Treatment Program is succeeding in its objective to reduce re-offending among program participants.

Introduction

This brief report forms an addendum to the main report of the evaluation of the Courts Administration Authority (CAA) 6-Month Drug Treatment Program (6DTP) (Ransom 2012). The main report was completed in August 2012 and featured a summary of program throughput and participant characteristics, semi-structured interviews with seven stakeholders including program manager, magistrates and clinicians, and an analysis of participant drug use during program participation, as measured by regular urinalysis results. The findings were largely very positive. They indicated that stakeholders were highly supportive of the program, which appeared to be running efficiently. Only relatively minor process issues were identified to be targeted for improvement. The drug use analysis indicated that although program participants initially presented with very high rates of moderate- or high-risk drug use, those remaining on the program made significant declines in their drug use, with many abstaining. This report presents an analysis of the offending patterns of participants in the program, both before and after participation in the program.

The program is outlined in more detail in the main report, but briefly, the 6DTP commenced in January 2009, with the aims of reducing illicit drug use, reducing re-offending, improving the health and social functioning of participants and improving access to intervention services for Aboriginal people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The program offers a diversion to drug treatment for adult and young offenders as part of the court process. The program is available to offenders whose offending shows a clear link to drug use, who are suitable for release on bail and who are likely to benefit from a drug treatment intervention. The program features intensive case management, group therapy sessions, regular drug testing, the use of sanction and reward points and individual counselling where required. The 6DTP is situated within the Interventions Programs Branch of the Courts Administration Authority (previously called Specialist Courts).

Following commencement in the Drug Court, the 6DTP was subsequently rolled out in the Nunga Court at Port Adelaide, and incorporated as the drug treatment component in the Treatment Intervention Program (TIP) at Christies Beach Magistrates Court, the Elizabeth Magistrates Court, the Youth Court and the Adelaide Magistrates Court. The TIP is outlined in more detail in the main report, but briefly it incorporates the 6DTP and previous Magistrates Court Diversion Program for defendants with a mental disability and/or mental health problem. The program enables streamlined assessment and concurrent treatment of both drug and mental health problems. The Nunga Court and Youth Court models are slightly different to the mainstream 6DTP model, and participants in these programs are not included in the analyses in this report.

The overall aims of the evaluation project are outlined in the main evaluation report. The report shows that staff and stakeholders interviewed valued and supported the program, that it appears to be running efficiently, and that participants demonstrated a reduction in their level of drug use throughout their time on the program.

The aim of the component of the study outlined in this addendum is to examine whether program participants have shown a reduction in their levels of offending during and after participation in the 6-Month Drug Treatment Program.

Methods

This analysis uses data about participants in the 6-Month Drug Treatment Program (6DTP) extracted from the Justice Information System (JIS) database. Initially CAA staff provided a police apprehension number for each participant from their court files, which was then used to match with JIS data and obtain a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for each individual. Data regarding police apprehensions were then extracted for each participant.

Use of police apprehensions data

This study uses data from police apprehensions rather than offences proven guilty, and the main reason for this is timing. There is a time lag between an individual being apprehended for an alleged offence and the offence being finalised in court, and this could potentially take up to six months or even longer. Using police apprehensions data means that data is accessible very soon after the apprehension occurs. Because the current study involves comparing the offending rate for each individual before and after their involvement in the 6DTP, it is beneficial to have as long a period after program participation as possible. Using recorded apprehensions over finalised offences maximises the number of participants about whom sufficient data is available to include them in the study.

One effect of using apprehension data is that because not all charges laid at the time of apprehension are subsequently proven guilty, this method over-estimates the rate of actual (detected) offences committed by an individual. It may also over-represent the gravity of the major charge, or other charges, because charges are at times downgraded as a case progresses through the courts system. Because the current study involves comparing pre-program and post-program offending for each individual, rather than aiming to describe their actual level of offending, this over-estimation is not expected to have any important effects on the applicability of the findings. However, it must be kept in mind when examining re-offending rates and types of charges that not all offences will subsequently be proven guilty.

Units of measurement

The main unit of measurement in this study is *apprehension events*. An apprehension event is described as all charges for which an apprehension report was recorded, that occurred on the same day. For example, if an individual is apprehended on one day for offences committed both on that day and the previous day, these offences would be counted in two apprehension events; those occurring on the previous day, and those occurring on the day of the apprehension. If an individual is apprehended three times in one day, for three separate incidents all occurring on the same day, these would be counted as one event.

Data regarding charges is also presented in some cases.

Comparison periods

Data regarding time spent in custody was obtained from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) for use in this analysis. This data was matched to apprehensions data, using JIS PIN, and used to calculate periods of time in which individual clients were free from custody and therefore able to commit an offence. Comparison periods were then calculated for each individual. Periods of six months of free time before commencing the 6DTP and six months of free time after leaving the 6DTP were compared to look for changes over time.

Offence type

Offences are described here using JANCO code. JANCO is the South Australian adaptation of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian National Classification of Offences (ANCO), and classifies offences into broad categories, then further levels of detail within each broad group. Offences are presented here in the broadest classification groups.

Major charges in this study are considered the most serious charge, based on maximum statutory penalty (MSP), for each apprehension event. Where more than one apprehension report was involved in the event and therefore two or more major charges were recorded, the most serious of those was considered the major charge for the purposes of this analysis. Where more than one major charge had the same MSP, the most serious of all charges was determined using the Australian Bureau of Statistics' National Offence Index. This index ranks all offence types contained in the Australian Standard Offence Classification (ASOC) system in order of seriousness.

Findings

This analysis is based on clients who at the time of analysis were no longer involved in the program, had left the program at least six months prior and had recorded at least six months of 'free time' (not in custody) since leaving the program. The group includes those who completed the program as well as those who were terminated, transferred or withdrew.

From an initial group of 93 cases who met the above criteria, two cases were removed because of data issues. One was removed because they were initially arrested for a Commonwealth matter and no offence data was available on the South Australian JIS system. The other was removed because analysis revealed them to be confused with another individual with the same name, but the project timeframe did not enable extraction and matching of data about the correct individual. This left a total of 91 participants.

The group included 53 individuals who did not complete the program and 38 who completed the program. Table 1 summarises the program outcomes and time spent on the program for the participants in this analysis.

Table 1 Program outcome and time spent on program					
Program outcome	n	Time spent on program			
		Mean days (months)	Min. days (months)	Max. days (months)	Standard deviation
Completed program	38	206 (6.9)	154 (5.1)	322 (10.7)	34.4
Did not complete program	53	73 (2.4)	9 (0.3)	208 (6.9)	51.7
<i>Withdrew</i>	16	67 (2.2)	14 (0.5)	141 (4.7)	41.6
<i>Terminated</i>	31	67 (2.2)	9 (0.3)	208 (6.9)	47.6
<i>Transferred to other program</i>	6	124 (4.1)	14 (0.5)	203 (6.8)	73.8
Total	91	129 (4.3)	9 (0.3)	322 (10.7)	79.7

Pre-program offending

Number of offences

Twenty-six of the 91 clients in the group (28.6%) did not record any apprehension events in the six months prior to commencing the 6DTP. Although all participants must have committed an offence to enter the 6DTP program, some of them had committed the offence more than six months prior to commencing the program. The program manager reported that it was not uncommon for the court and program referral processes to take this long or even longer.

Figure 1 below shows that the most common number of apprehension events in the six months prior to commencing the 6DTP was one, but that one client recorded nine apprehension events, and one recorded ten.

Figure 1 Number of apprehension events per client in six months prior to commencing 6DTP

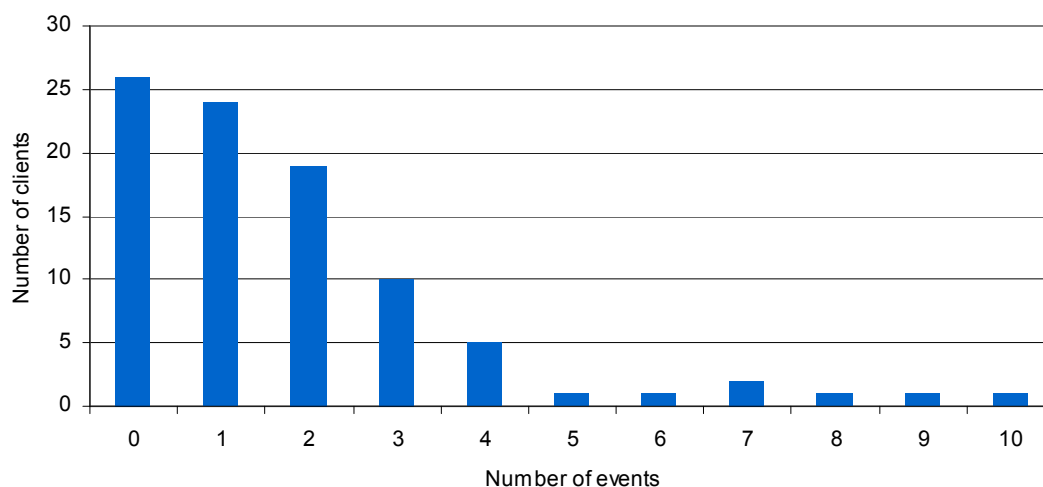


Table 2 shows the number of events in the six months prior to commencing the program for clients who subsequently completed the program and for those who did not. A chi-square test showed that there was no significant difference between these two groups in the number of pre-program apprehension events ($X^2=1.838$, $df=3$, $p=0.61$.)

Table 2 Number of events in pre-program period, completers and non-completers

Number of events	Completers		Non-completers	
	n	%	n	%
0	13	34.2	13	24.5
1	9	23.7	15	28.3
2	6	15.8	13	24.5
3+	10	26.3	12	22.6
Total	38	100.0	53	100.0

Figure 2 shows that number of charges included in the apprehension events occurring in the six months prior to commencing the 6DTP. The graph shows that some clients recorded a large number of charges during the period, with two recording 17 and one recording 19.

Figure 2 Number of charges per client for apprehension events occurring in six months prior to commencing 6DTP

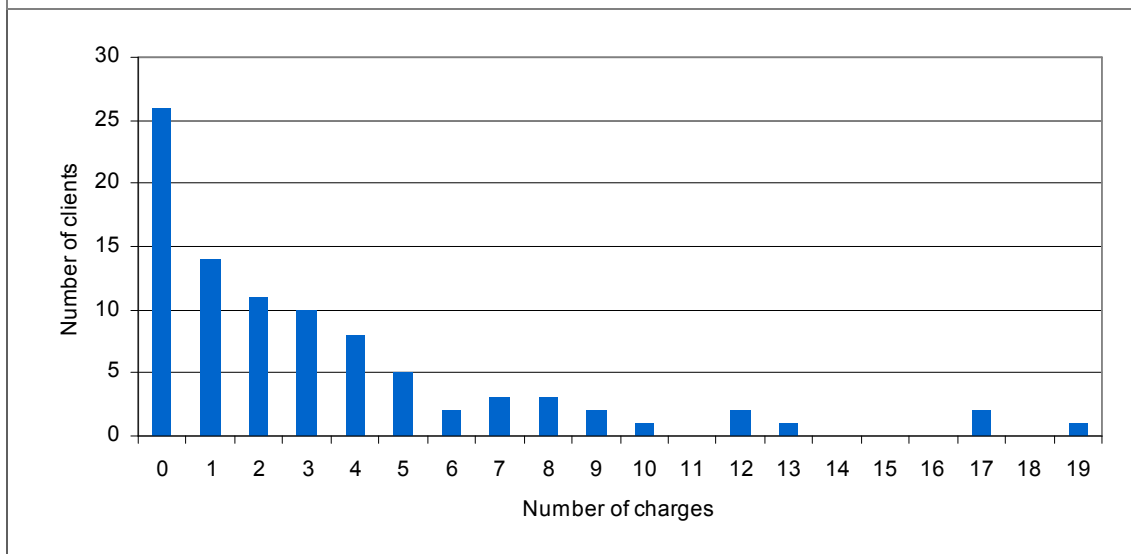


Table 3 shows the number of charges for events occurring in the six months prior to commencing the program, for completers and non-completers. A chi-square test showed that there was no significant difference between the groups ($X^2 = 2.49$, $df=4$, $p=0.65$.)

Table 3 Number of charges for events in pre-program period, completers and non-completers

Number of charges	Completers		Non-completers	
	n	%	n	%
0	13	34.2	13	24.5
1	6	15.8	8	15.1
2 – 3	6	15.8	15	28.3
4 – 5	5	13.2	8	15.1
6+	8	21.1	9	17.0
Total	38	100.0	53	100.0

Type of offence

Table 4 shows the offence type for major charges for all events occurring in the six months prior to commencing the 6DTP. *Offences against good order* include breaches of bail, parole, bonds and orders. *Driving offences* include driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and dangerous, reckless or negligent driving. The *non-offence matters* category includes matters such as the issuing or altering of restraining orders.

The table shows distributions for all participants, for events involving clients who subsequently completed the program and for those who did not. Some cell sizes are too small to enable significance testing, but an examination of the distributions indicates that the completer and non-completer groups are not substantially different from one another.

The most common type of offence in the pre-program period was *burglary*, followed by *offences against good order*, and *driving offences*.

Offence type	Completers		Non-completers		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Offences against the person	-	-	7	6.9	7	4.3
Robbery and extortion	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burglary, break and enter, fraud, forgery, false pretences and larceny	37	59.7	41	40.2	78	47.6
Damage property	3	4.8	6	5.9	9	5.5
Offences against good order	13	21.0	27	26.5	40	24.4
Drug offences	1	1.6	3	2.9	4	2.4
Driving offences	6	9.7	14	13.7	20	12.2
Other offences	1	1.6	2	2.0	3	1.8
Non-offence matters	1	1.6	2	2.0	3	1.8
Total	62	100.0	102	100.0	164	100.0

Offending during program

Number of offences

Of all participants, 29 (31.9%) recorded at least one apprehension event during their time on the program. Table 5 shows that, although no program completers recorded more than three events while non-completers recorded up to six, overall the proportion of completers and non-completers recording an event while on the program was similar. A chi square test confirmed that there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of whether or not they recorded at least one event during the program period ($X^2=0.003$, $df=1$, $p=0.96$).

Table 5 Number of events during program period, completers and non-completers				
Number of events	Completers		Non-completers	
	n	%	n	%
0	26	68.4	36	67.9
1	9	23.7	10	18.9
2	2	6.7	2	3.8
3	1	2.6	2	3.8
4	0	-	2	3.8
5	0	-	0	-
6	0	-	1	1.9
Total	38	100.0	53	100.0

Because the length of time spent on the program varied widely for different participants, the number of events recorded during the program period is not directly comparable to the number of events recorded in the pre-program period. However, this information indicates that only a minority of participants recorded an event during the program period, and that for those who did record an event, most recorded only one during the period.

Type of offences

Table 6 shows the offence types of major charges for all events occurring during the program period. Unlike the pre-program period, the most common offence type is *offences against good order*. The second-most common offence type is *burglary*.

Table 6 Offence type (JANCO) of major charge per event during program period, all participants, completers and non-completers						
Offence type	Completers		Non-completers		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Offences against the person	0	-	2	5.9	2	4.0
Robbery and extortion	1	6.3	0	-	1	2.0
Burglary, break and enter, fraud, forgery, false pretences and larceny	6	37.5	12	35.3	18	36.0
Damage property	0	-	1	2.9	1	2.0
Offences against good order	7	43.8	18	52.9	25	50.0
Drug offences	0	-	1	2.9	1	2.0
Driving offences	2	12.5	0	-	2	4.0
Other offences	0	-	0	-	0	-
Non-offence matters	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total	16	100.0	34	100.0	50	100.0

Post-program offending

Figure 3 shows the number of apprehension events recorded by clients in the six months following their participation in the 6DTP. This includes both completers and non-completers combined. Differences in post-program offending between these groups are examined in the following section.

More than half of all participants (50; 54.9%) did not record any offending events in the post-program period. Fifteen clients (16.5%) recorded only one event, 15 clients (16.5%) recorded either two or three events, and only small numbers of clients recorded four or more events.

Figure 3 Number of apprehension events per client in six months following 6DTP participation

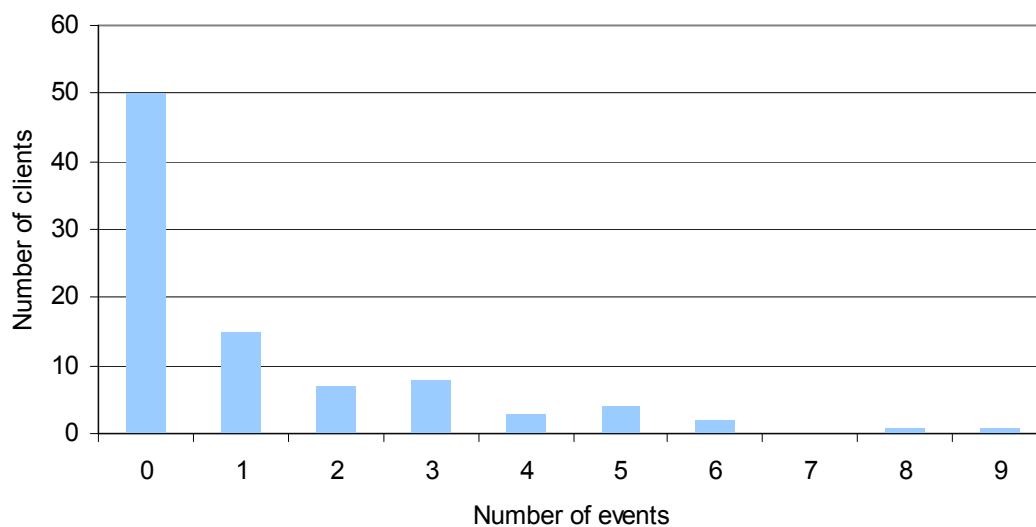


Figure 4 shows the number of charges for events in the post-program period. Ten clients (11.0%) recorded only one charge in the period, 14 clients (15.4%) recorded two or three charges, and very few clients recorded four or more charges in the period.

Figure 4 Number of charges per client for apprehension events in six months following 6DTP participation

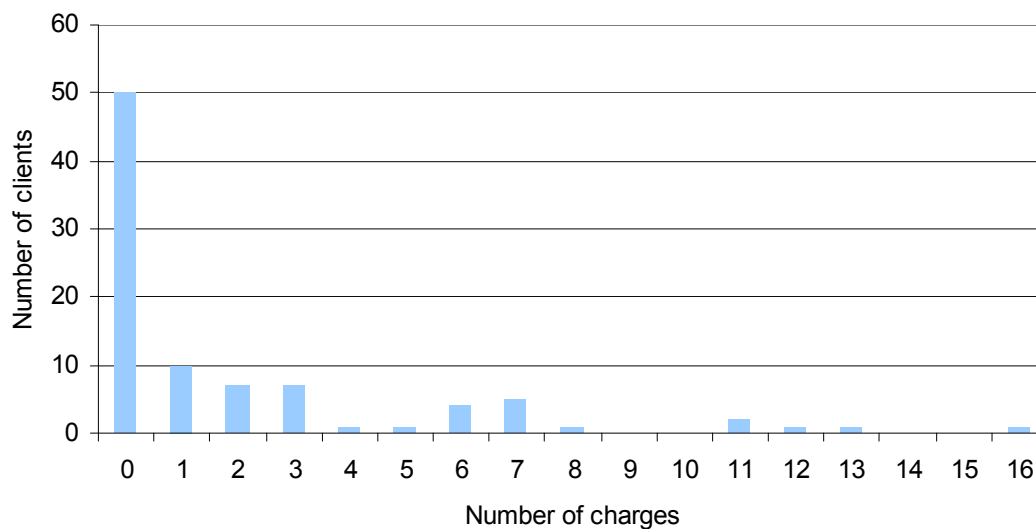


Table 7 shows the offence type of major charges for events recorded in the post-program period. As in the pre-program period, the most common offence type was *burglary*, followed by *offences against good order*. Although program completers recorded a smaller number of events overall, they appeared to be somewhat more likely than non-completers to record *offences against the person* and less likely to record *offences against good order*. However, cell sizes were too small to enable significance testing.

Table 7 Offence type (JANCO) of major charge per event in post-program period, all participants, completers and non-completers

Offence type	Completers		Non-completers		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Offences against the person	4	18.2	7	7.6	11	9.6
Robbery and extortion	2	9.1	-	-	2	1.8
Burglary, break and enter, fraud, forgery, false pretences and larceny	10	45.5	34	37.0	44	38.6
Damage property	1	4.5	3	3.3	4	3.5
Offences against good order	4	18.2	35	38.0	39	34.2
Drug offences	-	-	5	5.4	5	4.4
Driving offences	1	4.5	8	8.7	9	7.9
Other offences	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-offence matters	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	22	100.0	92	100.0	114	100.0

Comparison of post-program offending for completers and non-completers

Figure 5 shows the number of events recorded in the post-program period for program completers and non-completers. The figure shows that program completers were far less likely than non-completers to record an event in the six months following leaving the program.

Figure 5 Number of events per client (%) in six months following 6DTP participation, by completion status

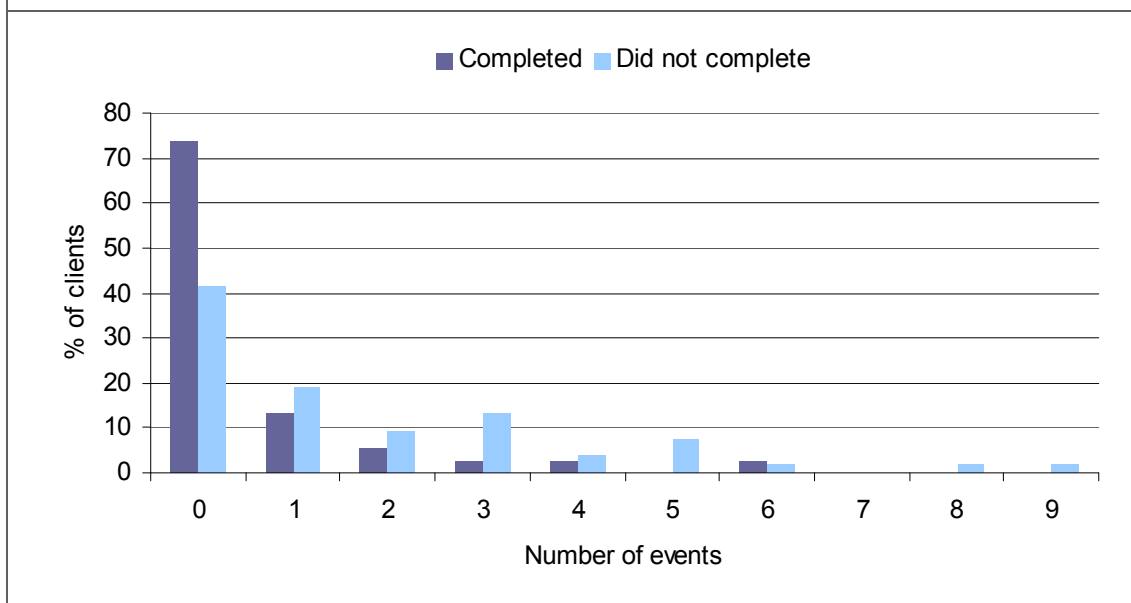


Table 8 shows the number of apprehension events in the six months following participation in the 6DTP for program completers and non-completers. The table shows that program completers were considerably less likely than non-completers to record an event in the six months after leaving the program. This difference is highly statistically significant ($X^2=10.03$, $df=2$, $p=0.007$).

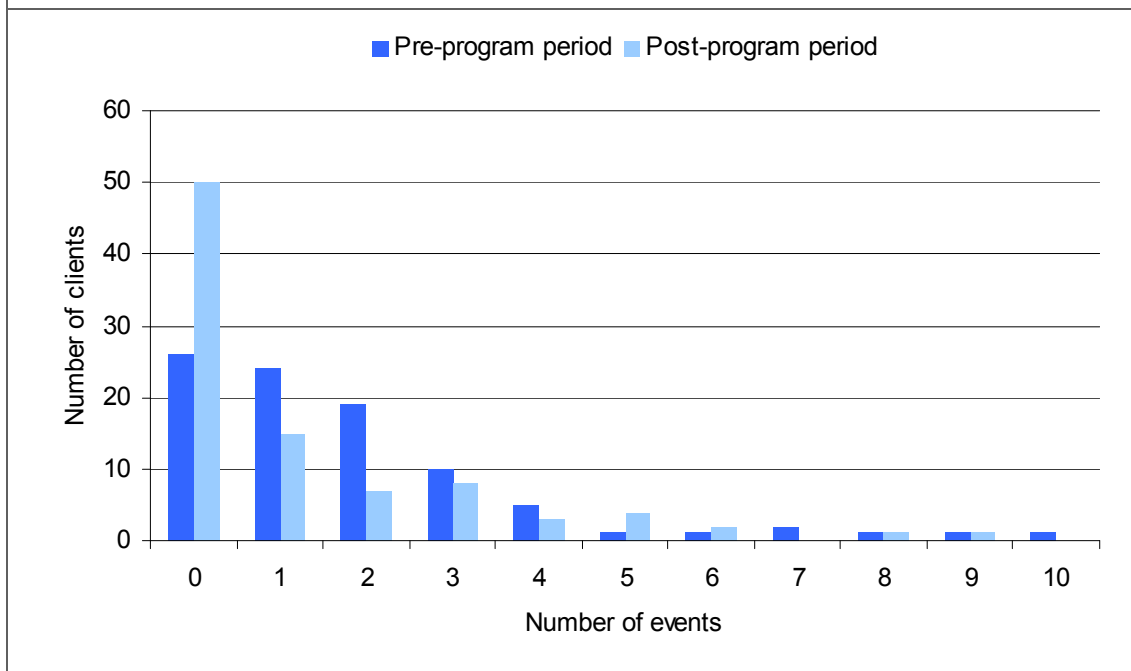
Table 8 Number of apprehension events in post-program period for program completers and non-completers

Number of events	Completers		Non-completers	
	n	%	n	%
0	28	73.7	22	41.5
1	5	13.2	10	18.9
2+	5	13.2	21	39.6
Total	38	100.0	53	100.0

Comparison of pre- and post-program offending

Figure 6 shows the distributions for number of apprehension events in the pre- and post-program periods, for all program participants. The graph shows that although most clients recorded at least one event in the pre-program period, only a minority recorded an event in the post-program period.

Figure 6 Number of events per client in six months prior to and following 6DTP participation



The overall participant group recorded a mean of 1.80 (SD=2.05) apprehension events in the six months prior to participating in the program and a mean of 1.25 events (SD=1.94) in the six months following program participation. A paired samples t-test revealed that this was a statistically significant difference ($t(90)=2.104$, $p=0.038$).

This effect was considerably stronger for program completers. In the pre-program period they recorded a mean of 1.63 events (SD=1.85) and in the post-program period they recorded a mean of 0.58 events (SD=1.29) (paired samples t-test; $t(37)=3.182$, $p=0.003$).

When only participants who did not complete the program were considered, they showed a slight decline in the mean number of events from the pre-program period (mean=1.92, SD=2.19) to the post-program period (mean=1.74, SD=2.18), but this difference was not significant (paired samples t-test; $t(52)=0.503$, $p=0.62$).

On an individual basis, 26 clients participating in the program (28.6%) showed no change in the number of events recorded over the pre and post periods (19 of whom did not record any offences in either period), 45 (49.5%) recorded less events in the post-program period than the pre-program period, and 20 (22.0%) recorded more offences in the post-program period.

For the group of program completers, 12 of the 38 (31.6%) showed no change in their level of offending (11 of whom did not record any offences in either period), 21 (55.3%) recorded less events in the post-program period than the pre-program period, and only five (13.2%) recorded more events in the post-program period.

Changes in offence type

Figure 7 shows the distributions for offence type (major charge) for events recorded in the pre- and post-program periods, for all program participants. The figure shows there was a strong decline in the number of *burglaries* and a decline in the number of *driving offences* in the post-program period.

Figure 7 Type of offence (major charge) for events in six months prior to and following 6DTP participation, for all program participants

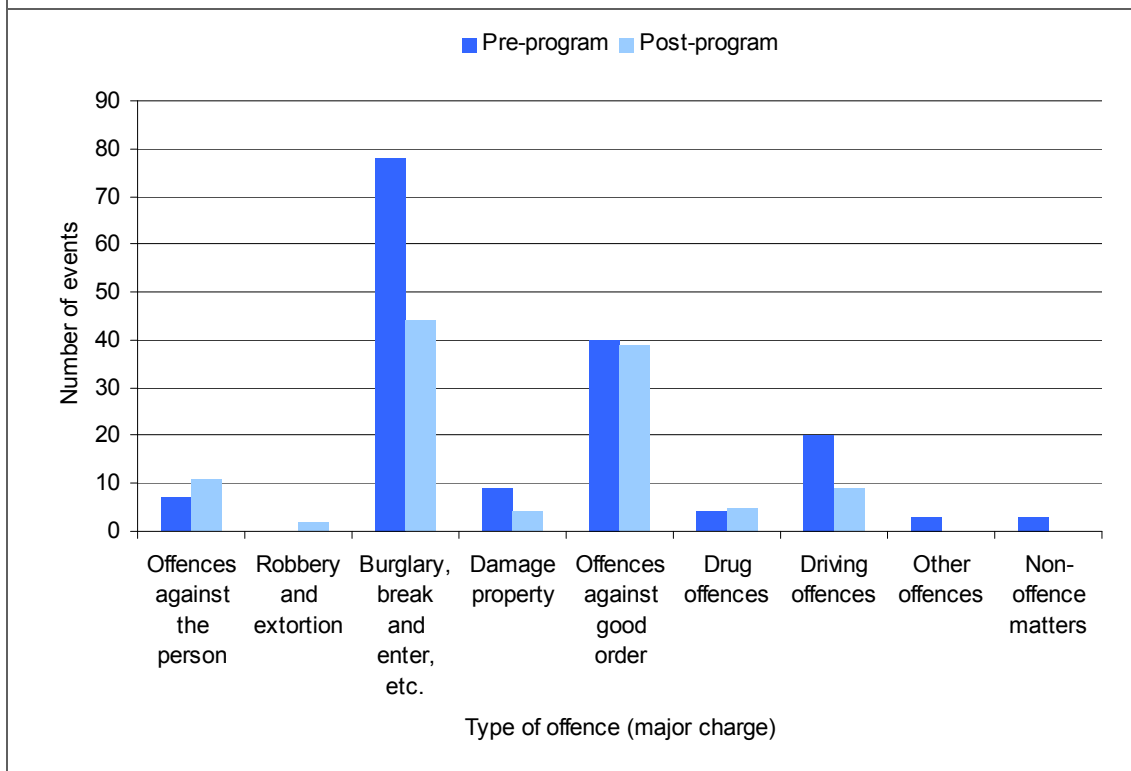
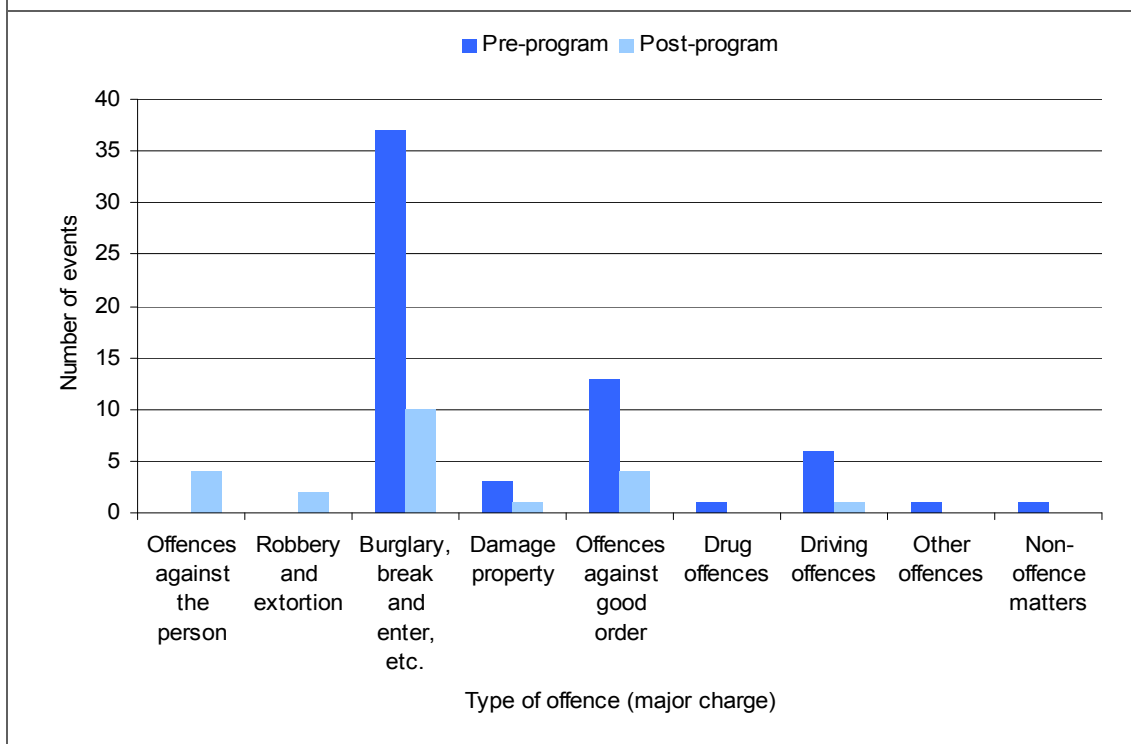


Figure 8 shows offence type (major charge) for events in the pre- and post-program periods, for program completers only. The figure shows more variation because of the smaller number of clients in this analysis. Overall, there was a very strong decrease in *burglaries*, and a decrease in *offences against good order*. There were small increases in *offences against the person* and *robberies*, but small decreases in all other offence types. Differences in offence types amongst this group should be interpreted with caution because of the small number of cases.

Figure 8 Type of offence (major charge) for events in six months prior to and following 6DTP participation, for program completers



Discussion

Results from this analysis suggest that participation in the 6-Month Drug Treatment Program is associated with a subsequent reduction in offending. Examination of the six-month post-program period revealed a statistically significant decline in the number of police apprehension events when compared to the six-month pre-program period for the participant group overall. This difference was particularly pronounced for the group of clients who completed the program, as opposed to those who did not. Accordingly, program completers recorded significantly less apprehension events in the post-program period than program non-completers. Participants who were terminated or withdrew from the program did not show a statistically significant decrease in apprehension events in the post-program period compared to the pre-program period, but they did show a slight decline.

The decline in offending in the post-program period is largely attributable to a strong decline in the number of *burglary* offences. This type of offending is commonly associated with drug use because it can generate cash and goods to sell in order to provide funds to purchase drugs. Although this study did not investigate the reasons for offending, it is possible that this reduction is associated, at least in part, with a decline in drug use. Trends in client drug use over the long-term have not been investigated as part of this evaluation, but an analysis of urine tests provided while participating in the program demonstrated a decline in drug use over the time participants were involved in the 6DTP (see main evaluation report).

With regard to offending during the program period, only a minority of participants (31.9%) recorded one or more apprehension events. This proportion did not differ for completers and non-completers. Most participants who recorded an event recorded only one, and the most common offence category was *offences against good order*, which includes breaches of bail, parole and bonds.

Limitations of the study

This study has certain limitations which must be kept in mind when interpreting and applying the results. Firstly, the pre- and post-program offending periods were only six months. Longer periods would provide a more representative picture of changes to offending rates over time, especially in the longer-term. However, due to the timeframe for this study and the need to maintain a reasonable sample size, a longer period was not possible in this instance.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, the use of police apprehensions as a measure of offending may slightly over-estimate offences, because not all offences charged will subsequently be proven guilty. However, in the circumstances, this was considered the best measure for the analysis. One other consideration is that, as with all offending analyses that make use of police operational data, the data only includes offences which come to the attention of police and does not count any offences which go undetected. However, there is no way to remedy this problem.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides evidence that the CAA 6-Month Drug Treatment Program is meeting its objective of reducing re-offending amongst program participants, at least in the short-term. A longer-term study would be able to investigate whether this decline is sustained over time.

References

Ransom S (2012). Evaluation of the 6-Month Drug Treatment Program. Adelaide: Office of Crime Statistics and Research.