

At Your Own Pace:

Looking at short and longer-term outcomes for young people in AOD treatment service.

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Introduction

Alcohol and other drugs (AOD) treatments aimed for young people population, can pose significant challenges, particularly with comorbidity mental health (MH) issues, necessitating effective treatment approaches. This study compares short-term and longer-term counselling treatments at Sydney Drug Education Counselling Centre (SDECC) to determine the effectiveness in addressing better outcome measures for young people in the Northern Sydney Region. This study aims to compare the effectiveness of short-term (up to 10 sessions) and longer-term (>10 sessions) counselling treatment for young people with co-occurring AOD and MH concerns.

Methods

Retrospective data were examined to measure outcomes that were conducted at intake and exit. The sample was drawn using NADabase Outcome Data and included Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS), The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) and measuring Quality of Life (WHOQOL-8). Mean scores were calculated for the SDS, K10 and WHOQOL-8 at intake and exit, and a caparison analysis was undertaken. 65 young people completed outcome measures in 2023 (from 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2023) for short-term interventions and 12 young people completed outcome measures for longer-term treatment.

Participants

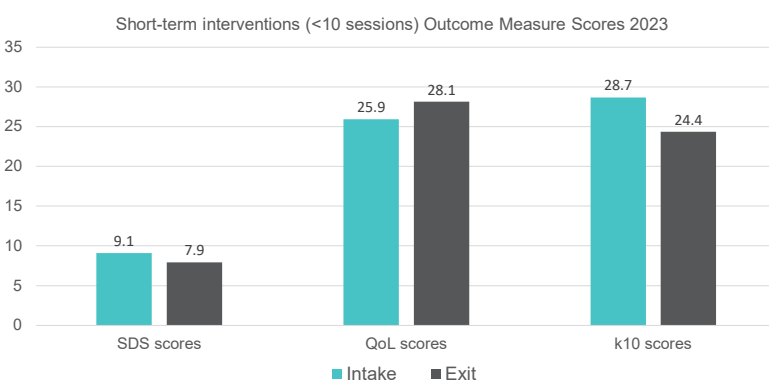
65 short-term
outcomes reviewed



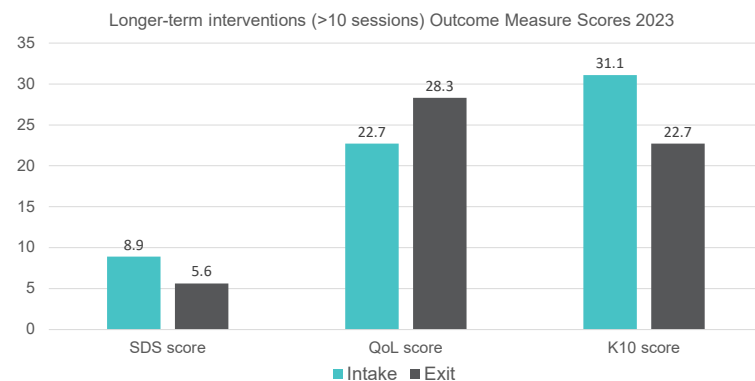
12 longer-term
outcomes reviewed



Short-term interventions Outcome Measures Results



Longer-term interventions Outcome Measures Results



Results & Discussion

Decrease in SDS scores revealed that the mean score at intake was 9.1, and at exit 7.9, for sessions of <10 sessions. For longer-term treatment (>10 sessions), results showed a further decrease with the SDS mean score at exit, decreasing to 5.6.

For K10 measurements, the scores showed that within 10 sessions, the mean score at intake was 28.7 and at exit 24.4, compared to longer-term mean scores, which showed exit score at 22.7.

For WHOQOL-8 scores, showing that within 10 sessions, the mean score at intake was 25.9 and at exit 28.1, whereas for longer-term sessions, intake mean score being at 22.7 and exit mean score was 28.3.

The study found that both short-term and longer-term counselling treatments led to improvements in outcomes. However, longer-term counselling showed a greater improvement in decreasing the severity of dependence on AOD use, improving psychological well-being and quality of life.

Implications for Practice

Young people who continue to engage in substance use, require treatment without time restriction and at their own pace.

Recognising where a young person is in relation to change creates a greater opportunity for matching treatment and maintaining client engagement.

Quotes

"I've been going here for about 2 years now and it's been the most helpful service I've been too. Everyone is amazing I've been helped with so much and I am so grateful for the service I don't know where I'd be without it"

"SDECC has helped me in so many ways from, helping me continue living day to day, to the constant support. I have found SDECC to be one of my top safe spaces and find comfort coming in weekly."

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