

Butt-it-out! Structural changes to implement routine nicotine cessation screening and treatment in an AOD service

Authors: Abbey Diaz, Isabel Mudford, Raglan Maddox, Anna Olsen.
The Australian National University



Australian
National
University



Aim: To **evaluate** the **Butt-It-Out!** routine nicotine cessation screening & treatment program.

Background: Tobacco dependence is under-treated in AOD settings as other drugs of concern tend to be prioritised by both clinicians and clients. Butt-It-Out! is a routine smoking and nicotine cessation screening and treatment program offered to Directions Health Services clients in the ACT since 2022. As a structural program, new clinical assessment tools were established, and practitioners were trained to proactively assess and refer clients ready to quit into an organised program of counselling and free NRT.

Method: A **utilisation-focused evaluation model** was used to evaluate the Directions service using clinical data and qualitative interviews. In the clinical data, smoking assessments refers to those assessments in which the cigarette dependency (CDS5) 5-item score was administer and data on cessation support/treatment was captured through surveys. Interviews were conducted with people who entered the program and a focus group was conducted with staff.

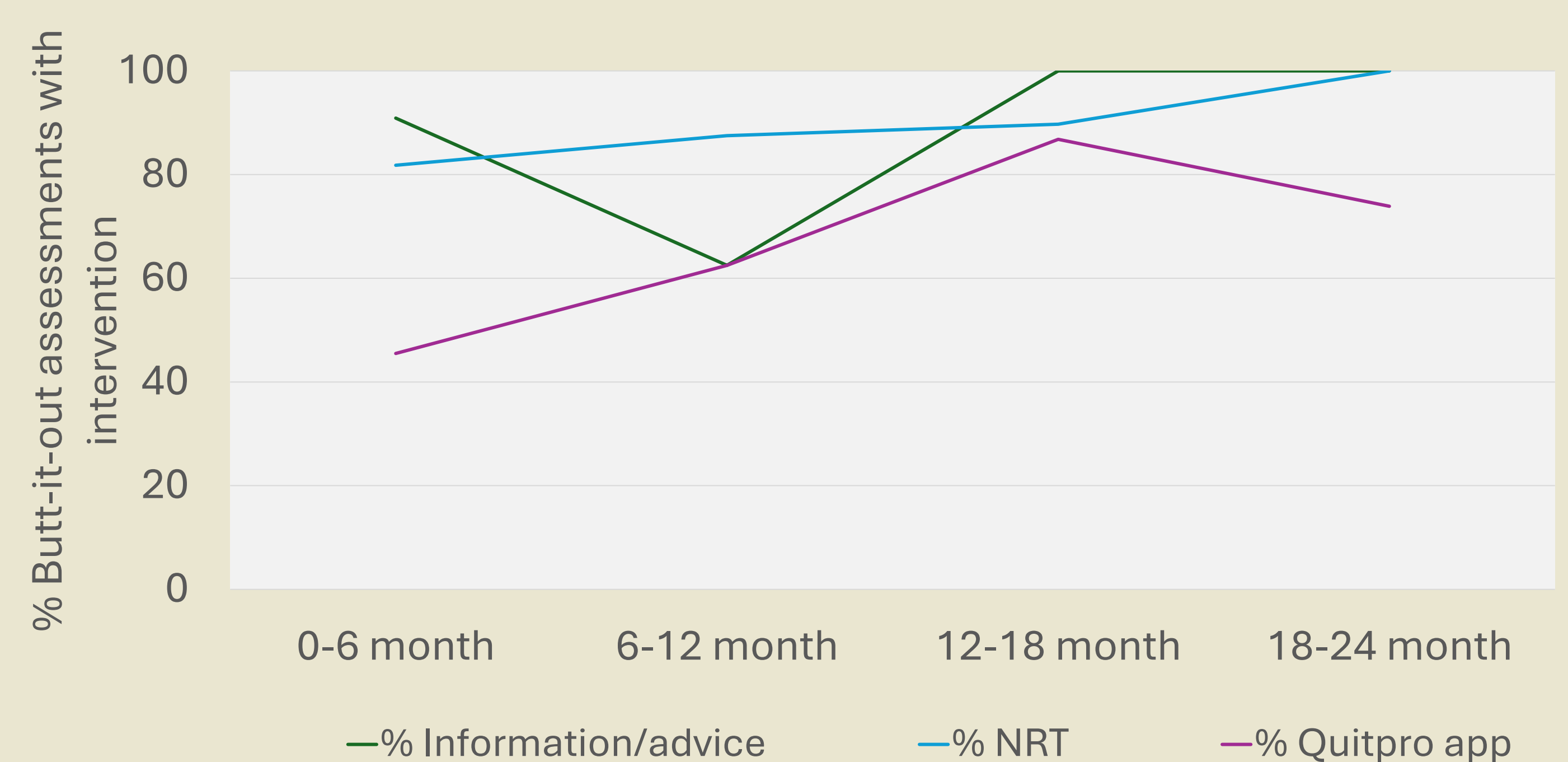
Smoking assessments increased

- Smoking assessments (CDS5) introduced in 2022: increased from 69% of AOD assessments in 2022 to 87% by May 2024.
- ~65% of those who completed smoking assessments in May 2024 were current smokers.
- Clinical data improved over time – 64%, 80% and 85% had both smoking status data and CDS5 data valid for in 2022, 2023, and 2024; a further 5%, 5% and 2% had valid CDS5 data only in these years.
- Clinical data could be improved by increasing the number of assessments that include a CDS5 screen to 100% and asking questions on smoking status and cessation support/treatment at all assessments.

Treatment uptake increased

Smoking cessation treatment also increased.

- Referral to Quitline increased by 220% from 2022 to 2023.
- The proportion of clients completing assessments that received information/advice, NRT, and Quitpro increased over 2022-2023.



Qualitative interviews with service staff and clients show acceptance of tobacco screening and treatment referrals with perceived program success in reducing smoking:

"I haven't had a single person object to being asked if they are thinking about [smoking] ... I find it makes people think, 'am I ready now to own that decision?'" (Staff)

"[The pharmacist] is always very, very supportive. We just chat and he encourages me which is more than I've ever had when I tried before to stop smoking" Client

Butt-it-out has:

- Increased routine screening for smoking in the service;
- Increased referral to Quitline, provision of information and advice, prescription of free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and referral to the Quitpro app;
- High perceived acceptability and success among staff and clients;
- The potential to expand with improved clinical assessment and continued treatment