**Abstract**

Durham Drug Treatment and Mental Health Court Research Project

Julia Bakker, Recipient of the UOIT Student Training Assistantship in Research (Star) Award

Dr. Hannah Scott, Professor, Ph.D., Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

**What makes drug treatment courts successful?**

Theoretical Principle

Therapeutic Jurisprudence

Described as “the use of social science to study the extent to which legal rule or practice promotes the psychological and physical well-being of the people it affects” (Mackin & Higgins, 2008).

Does not “punish relapse” but recognizes and actively addresses relapse when it occurs in the addiction treatment and recovery process (CADTCP, 2012).

As opposed to more traditional forms of justice, therapeutic jurisprudence improves health and reintegration of the offender along with public safety by addressing root causes of crime (Brown, 2010).

**Key Components**

- Alcohol and drug treatment and rehabilitation services are present for participants
- A non-adversarial approach and an ongoing judicial interaction with participants
- Rewarding or sanction according to participants
- Monitoring and evaluation of program goals during multiple court hearings.

“Drug treatment court policy in Canada follows the principles for court directed treatment outlined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime which stipulates an integrated non-adversarial approach that offers a broad continuum of treatment and rehabilitation services, ongoing interaction between the DTC teams with local and specialized service providers” (UNODC, 2008; Somers, Currie, Moniruzzaman, Elboff & Patterson, 2012).

**Findings**

- In Canada, 79% of the federal offender population has an identifiable substance use problem (Brady & Wong, 2007).
- In addition, those with a serious problem report that about 60% of their criminal activity is related to substance use in some way (Brady & Wong, 2007).
- A recent national survey found that between 1994 and 2004, the proportion of Canadians who reported having used an illicit drug in their lifetime rose from 28% to 45% (Brady & Wong, 2007).
- The Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse notes that substance abuse represents a significant drain on Canada economy in terms of both its direct and indirect impact (CCA, 2002).
- Despite the success of DTC’s, Canada still only operates with six federally funded courts. The Durham Drug Treatment and Mental Health Court (DTRMTC) in Durham Region, Ontario, is currently operating a court that is un-funded. The purpose of this project is to conduct a research that can be developed.
- This current research is guided by the additional assumption that drug treatment courts can save money by also reducing health care service utilization from the DTRMTC client population. Numerous studies reported savings from health care service utilization with drug courts have been reported in savings of approximately $400 per drug court participant.
- Denton (1958) estimated savings of between twenty-seven dollars for every one-dollar invested. Results prior that (DTRMTC) account for at least a ten percent reduction in expenditure and a cost effective alternative to traditional court positions.

**The Cost Savings of Drug Treatment Courts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Benefit-cost ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Durham No</td>
<td>$1.74:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bottom Line...**

**Drug Treatment Courts Are Cost Effective!!**

**Next Steps**

Social Science and Humanities student and faculty will continue research on the DTRMTC as final approval on the project has been granted by UOIT’s Research Ethics Committee. Data will be collected in order to answer the following question:

“Does client partition of the Durham Drug Treatment and Mental Health Court predict emergency department service utilization and reduce recidivism?”

**Evaluation and Reports Completed of Drug Treatment Courts Currently Operating in Canada**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Findings/Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not published</td>
<td>Multiple Methods/ logic model Applicants: Accepted/Rejected Court records accessed through crown counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Evaluation/ Published</td>
<td>Longitudinal cohort design 2 year prior (intervention group) IMRI (B. C. Inter-Ministry Research Initiative) which provides outcomes of drug court participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Evaluation/ Report TISCO Methodology (measures cost and quality Graduated and Discharged clients at: Qualitative interviews-series of semi-structured interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection**

- Create original draft of known demographics and collect population
- Collaborate with partner organizations in production of variable list
- Find out what data you can or cannot collect
- Sensitive data is harder to gain access to and for good reasons
- Find ways to ensure data is unidentifiable and collected using the least intrusive measures
- Protecting peoples rights to privacy is paramount for every community organization

**Data Analysis**

- Once data has been collected the fun part begins! Analyzing the data
- Graduate student will complete thesis and graduate!
- Final goal is to produce a publishable thesis
- Prove to the academic community that your research adds value to existing information regarding drug court practices in Canada
- Possibly even gain future funding based on needs of drug court operating costs

**Design a Study:**


**Collect the Data:**

- Creation of data set in order to capture statistics of drug court client population

**Analyze the Data:**

- Interpret findings
- Draw conclusions

- Focus Project or Area of Interest within a Theme
- Collect the Data:
  - Choose a Topic:
    - Durham Drug Treatment and Mental Health Court
  - Design a Study:
  - Collect the Data:
    - Create original draft of known demographics of client population
    - Collaborate with partner organizations in production of variable list
    - Find out what data you can or cannot collect
    - Sensitive data is harder to gain access to and for good reasons
    - Find ways to ensure data is unidentifiable and collected using the least intrusive measures
    - Protecting peoples rights to privacy is paramount for every community organization
  - Analyze the Data:
    - Interpret findings
    - Draw conclusions

**References**
