Factors Associated with Treatment Need and Receipt of Services Among Youth Entering the Illinois Juvenile Corrections System

This fact sheet presents an analysis of treatment need, based on substance abuse and dependence, and the receipt of treatment services among youth entering the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). The analysis also includes an assessment of racial/ethnic similarities and differences associated with treatment need and receipt of services. Given the general lack of evidence-based information regarding the treatment need and receipt of services among young offenders, the findings of this analysis can assist treatment providers, policymakers, and researchers/evaluators in identifying and treating high-risk youth in correctional settings. Juveniles in this analysis were more likely to be in need of treatment if they reported early initiation of substance use, parental drug use, peer substance use, or a greater number of prior arrests, compared to youth who did not report these characteristics. Factors associated with the receipt of treatment services included treatment need, depression, childhood neglect, substance use initiation at or after the age of 10, and parental drug use.

Background

This fact sheet presents an analysis of 401 youth between the ages of 13 and 18 entering the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) for the first time. The analysis, based on survey data collected through face-to-face interviews with juveniles entering IDOC between May 2000 and August 2000, examines the factors associated with current treatment need and the prior receipt of treatment services among the IDOC juvenile population. All of the interviews were completed at the two Illinois facilities that provide intake services to juveniles. The goal of the survey was to characterize the nature and extent of substance use and its consequences among serious juvenile offenders in Illinois.

Treatment need was defined by the number of substance abuse symptoms and the number of substance dependence symptoms. Youth who reported experiencing one or more symptoms of substance abuse or three or more symptoms of substance dependence during the 12 months prior to entering corrections custody were defined as being in need of treatment. (See Fact Sheet 152 for a more detailed explanation of the symptoms and patterns of substance abuse and dependence and the receipt of services.) In this analysis, youth were asked about treatment need and the receipt of services before entering the IDOC. As a result, this analysis did not examine the direct relationship between treatment need and the receipt of treatment services.

In addition to substance abuse and dependence, this analysis examines the relationship of the following personal and environmental characteristics to treatment need and receipt of services:

- Early initiation of substance use
- Depression
- Prior arrests
- Childhood neglect
- Parental drug use
- Peer substance use.

Regression techniques were used to identify direct and indirect factors that predict treatment need and receipt of treatment services.

This fact sheet is part of a series examining the juvenile population entering the IDOC. Fact Sheet 151 provides an overview of the demographic, personal and environmental characteristics of the youth entering the IDOC, and Fact Sheet 152 presents an analysis of the patterns of treatment need and receipt of services among the same group of youth.

Factors Associated with Treatment Need

In this analysis, more than two-thirds (68%) of all youth entering the juvenile corrections system in Illinois were found to need either alcohol or drug abuse treatment. Less than half of all youth (48%), however, reported receiving substance abuse treatment services in their lifetime.

Treatment need was influenced differently by each of the personal and environmental characteristics. Personal characteristics included early initiation of substance use, depression, and prior arrests, while environmental characteristics included childhood neglect, parental drug use, and peer substance use. A higher proportion of juveniles were in need of treatment if they reported early initiation of substance use, parental drug use, peer substance use, or a greater number of prior arrests, compared to youth who did not report these characteristics.

Some personal and environmental characteristics were also found to have an indirect effect on treatment need through their effect on other characteristics. Parental drug use and childhood neglect indirectly influenced treatment need by increasing the chances of juveniles becoming early substance users.

Factors Associated with Treatment Need by Race

The results of this analysis suggest that the factors associated with treatment need differ somewhat for black and white youth. Among white youth only, parental drug use was significantly associated with treatment need. Depression was also significantly associated with treatment need in opposite directions for black and white youth; for black youth, depression was associated with greater treatment need, while for white youth, depression was related to decreased treatment need.

Among black youth only, early initiation of substance use and prior arrests were found to have a direct effect on treatment need. In addition, peer substance use, parental drug use, and childhood neglect indirectly influenced treatment need by increasing the chances of black youth becoming early substance users.

Factors Associated with the Receipt of Treatment Services

This analysis also examined the effects of personal and environmental characteristics on the likelihood that incarcerated
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juveniles had previously received substance abuse treatment services. While treatment need was the strongest factor associated with the receipt of treatment services, other factors such as early initiation of substance use and depression also influenced the receipt of services:

- A higher proportion of youth who were depressed received treatment services than youth who were not depressed.
- A higher proportion of youth with a greater number of prior arrests received treatment services than youth with fewer prior arrests.
- A higher proportion of youth reporting childhood neglect received treatment services than youth who did not report childhood neglect.
- A smaller proportion of youth who initiated substance use before age 10 received treatment services than youth who initiated substance use at or after age 10.
- A smaller proportion of youth reporting parental drug use received treatment services than youth who did not report parental drug use.

Peer substance use did not have a significant effect on the receipt of treatment services among this population.

Factors Associated with Receipt of Services by Race

There were similarities and differences in the factors related to the receipt of treatment services among black and white youth. Early initiation of substance use and prior arrests influenced the receipt of treatment services similarly across groups:

- A higher proportion of both black and white youth who initiated substance use before age 10 received treatment services than black and white youth who initiated substance use at or after age 10.
- A higher proportion of both black and white youth who reported a greater number of prior arrests received treatment services than black and white youth with a fewer number of prior arrests.
- A smaller proportion of both black and white youth reporting parental drug use received treatment services than black and white youth who did not report parental drug use.

The influence of depression on the receipt of treatment services was different for black and white youth. A smaller proportion of depressed black youth received treatment services than depressed white youth.

Childhood neglect and peer substance use were also found to have different effects on the receipt of treatment services among black and white youth. A higher proportion of white youth who reported childhood neglect received treatment services than black youth who reported childhood neglect. In addition, a smaller proportion of white youth who reported peer substance use received treatment services than white youth who did not report peer substance use.

Summary

This analysis provides evidence-based information regarding the treatment need and past treatment experience of young offenders, a treatment population about which little is known. In this analysis, a higher proportion of juveniles were in need of treatment if they reported early initiation of substance use, parental drug use, peer substance use, or a greater number of prior arrests. These juveniles were also more likely to have received treatment services if they reported depression or childhood neglect.

Given that a high proportion of youth reported parental drug use, providers may want to screen for parental drug use and address the treatment needs of the entire family. In addition, future evaluation efforts focusing on more racially/ethnically diverse youth may provide information to adapt treatment services to the needs of specific populations.

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