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AN EVALUATION OF A

METHADONE TREATMENT PROGRAMME

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Psychology
at Massey University

JAHNA CLARK

1987

DEDICATION

For my parents
Jean and Terry Clark
with love

ABSTRACT

The evaluation of a methadone treatment programme was the main focus of this study. A posttest-only design, with a nonequivalent comparison group was used to evaluate both summative and formative aspects of the programme. Participants were 21 opiate abusers (methadone group) and 22 alcohol and polydrug abusers (alcohol and polydrug group) who completed a questionnaire designed to assess demographic and treatment variables, alcohol and drug usage, employment, criminal activity, health, and interpersonal relationships, in the before, during, and after treatment periods. The outcome measures revealed that the methadone programme was effective in reducing opiate, nonopiate analgesic, tranquillizer and stimulant use; decreasing high alcohol consumption to a level considered nonabusive, and decreasing the number of marijuana related criminal convictions. Unanticipated findings were a deterioration in rating of health and no change in the number of days spent sick in bed, friendship satisfaction, or number of friends out of the drug scene. No predictors of treatment outcomes were established, and there were no major differences between the methadone group, and the alcohol and polydrug group in terms of treatment effects. Recommendations for the methadone programme included detailed and procedural steps of how to cope when withdrawing from methadone treatment; health and nutrition education; and social skills and assertiveness training. These are considered essential if the philosophy and goals of the programme are to be attained.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor Malcolm Johnson for his encouragement, advice, and understanding throughout this study. I would also like to express my gratitude to Graeme Beaumont whose valuable assistance and interest in the study was much appreciated. My thanks also go to John Spicer who helped solve several statistical problems.

A sincere thanks to all those who participated in this study, especially for your honesty and frankness.

I am grateful to the staff of the Palmerston North Alcohol and Drug Centre, who freely gave of their time and facilities, particularly Ann McKinnon for her competency and help in the initial stages of this project.

Finally, it is with deep appreciation that I acknowledge my very dear friends: Alison Somers and Carol Travers whose love and support carried me through many days and nights. Cat Wilde, Kay Duncan, Carole Sheehan, and Frances Caldwell with whom many long and good hours were spent. Also, my colleagues Helen Foster, Karen Wood, and Maureen Gibbs for the shared dinners and humourous exchanges. Not to be forgotten, my cat Tai for her affectionate smooches.

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