



Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Western Australia

*Findings from the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS)
2006–07*

Highlights

In Western Australia (WA) in 2006–07:

- ✦ 44 government-funded alcohol and other drug treatment agencies provided 17,802 closed treatment episodes.
- ✦ The median age of persons receiving treatment for their own drug use was 30 years. Of people seeking treatment in relation to someone else’s drug use, the median age was 46 years.
- ✦ Alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern in closed treatment episodes (40%), followed by amphetamines (26%), and cannabis (16%).
- ✦ Counselling was the most common form of main treatment provided (54% of episodes), followed by rehabilitation (15%), and assessment only (10%).

Contents

Highlights.....	1
Treatment agencies.....	3
Client profile.....	3
Drugs of concern.....	4
Treatment programs.....	8
How to find out more.....	11

About this bulletin

This bulletin summarises the main findings from the 2006–07 Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services (AODTS) NMDS data for Western Australia. More detailed information about the 2006–07 collection and its findings can be found in the publication *Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia 2006–07: report on the National Minimum Data Set* (AIHW 2008). This report, together with further publications and interactive data, can be accessed online at <www.aihw.gov.au/drugs>.

Scope of the AODTS–NMDS

The agencies and clients that were in scope for the 2006–07 AODTS–NMDS collection were:

- all publicly funded (at state, territory and/or Australian Government level) government and non-government agencies that provide one or more specialist alcohol and/or other drug treatment services
- all clients who had completed one or more treatment episodes at an alcohol and other drug treatment service that was in scope during the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007.

It is important to note that the AODTS–NMDS collection only includes pharmacotherapy clients when they receive both pharmacotherapy and another type of treatment (from the same treatment agency). Pharmacotherapy-only clients are reported under the National Opioid Pharmacotherapy Statistics Annual Data collection (NOPSAD).

For a complete list of clients and agencies excluded from the AODTS–NMDS, see Section 1.3 of the AODTS–NMDS 2006–07 annual report (AIHW 2008).

Collection count: closed treatment episodes

The unit of measurement in this bulletin is the 'closed treatment episode'. A closed treatment episode refers to a period of contact, with defined start and end dates, between a client and a treatment agency. It is possible that more than one treatment episode may be in progress for a client at any one time, therefore the number of closed treatment episodes captured in the AODTS–NMDS does not equate to the total number of persons in Australia receiving treatment for alcohol and other drugs.

Treatment agencies

- Throughout Australia, a total of 633 government-funded alcohol and other drug treatment agencies supplied data for 2006–07. Of these agencies, 44 were located in WA, of which 31 were non-government agencies.
- Treatment agencies in WA were most likely to be located in Major Cities (66%).

Client profile

- In WA, there were 17,802 closed treatment episodes in alcohol and other drug treatment services reported in the 2006–07 AODTS–NMDS collection.
- The vast majority (91%) of closed treatment episodes in WA involved clients seeking treatment for their own drug use. The remaining 9% involved clients seeking treatment in relation to another person's alcohol or other drug use.
- The overall proportions of male and female clients in WA (63% and 37% respectively) differed slightly from the national proportions (66% and 34% respectively). However, of those treatment episodes reported in relation to someone else's drug use in WA, female clients accounted for the majority (74%).
- In WA, the median age of persons receiving treatment for their own drug use was 30 years. Of people seeking treatment in relation to someone else's drug use, the median age was 46 years.
- One-third (33%) of all closed treatment episodes in WA were for clients aged 20–29 years, and more than one-quarter (28%) were for clients aged 30–39 years.
- The proportion of closed treatment episodes involving clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin was higher in WA compared with the national figure (14% and 10% respectively), and higher than the overall proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, aged 10 years and over, in the Australian population (2.5%) (ABS & AIHW 2008). These figures need to be interpreted with caution due to the fact that the majority of Australian Government-funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander substance use services or primary health care services are not included in the AODTS–NMDS collection.
- The majority (82%) of closed treatment episodes in WA were for clients born in Australia and 99% of treatment episodes were for clients whose preferred language was English.
- Self-referral was the most common source of referral to treatment services in WA (35% of episodes), followed by referrals from correctional services (15%) and court diversion programs (13%).

Drugs of concern

This section reports only on the 16,110 closed treatment episodes where clients were seeking treatment for their own alcohol or other drug use in WA.

Principal drug of concern

The 'principal drug of concern' refers to the main substance that the client states led them to seek treatment from the alcohol and other drug treatment agency.

- In WA in 2006–07, alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern in closed treatment episodes (40%), followed by amphetamines (26%) and cannabis (16%) (Table 1). Nationally, alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern (42% of treatment episodes), followed by cannabis (22%), opioids (15%, with heroin accounting for 11%) and amphetamines (12%).
- The proportion of treatment episodes related to alcohol in WA increased between 2005–06 and 2006–07 (from 37 to 40%), but remained smaller than the national proportion of alcohol-related episodes (42%). Amphetamine-related episodes have consistently made up 25–26% of treatment provided in WA over time, as compared with around 11–12% nationally. WA had a smaller proportion of episodes for cannabis (16%) than was reported nationally (23%).

Table 1: Closed treatment episodes^(a) by principal drug of concern, Western Australia and Australia, 2001–02 to 2006–07 (per cent)

Principal drug of concern	Western Australia						Total (Australia) 2006–07	
	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	Per cent	Number
Alcohol	33.6	32.7	32.6	32.5	36.5	39.9	42.3	59,480
Amphetamines	26.0	26.2	25.6	26.3	24.6	25.9	12.3	17,292
Benzodiazepines	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.6	2,298
Cannabis	21.8	24.5	22.0	19.1	18.8	15.7	22.8	31,980
Cocaine	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	448
Ecstasy	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.7	1,010
Nicotine	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.7	2,450
Opioids								
Heroin	8.9	8.6	9.9	12.0	10.2	7.9	10.6	14,870
Methadone	0.9	0.6	1.6	2.3	2.1	2.1	1.6	2,268
Morphine	—	—	—	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.9	1,299
Total opioids	9.8	9.3	11.7	14.7	12.9	10.4	14.4	20,196
All other drugs ^(b)	4.9	4.1	5.3	5.1	5.0	5.9	3.8	5,321
Not stated	1.5	0.6	0.4	—	—	—	—	—
Total (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	..
Total (number)	13,303	12,142	12,479	14,235	14,251	16,110	..	140,475

(a) Excludes treatment episodes for clients seeking treatment for the drug use of others.

(b) Includes balance of principal drugs of concern coded according to the Australian Standard Classification of Drugs of Concern.

- The principal drug of concern varied by age in WA. For clients aged 10–19 years, cannabis was the most common principal drug of concern (40% of episodes), while for clients aged 20–29 years amphetamines (35%) and alcohol (29%) were the most common principal drugs. For clients aged 30 years and above, alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern—highest for clients aged 60 years and over (89% of episodes).
- In 2006–07, treatment episodes involving clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in WA were most likely to involve alcohol as the principal drug of concern (53%), followed by amphetamines (19%) and cannabis (18%).
- Alcohol and cannabis were more likely to be nominated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients (53% and 18% respectively) compared with other Australians (38% and 15%).

All drugs of concern

‘All drugs of concern’ refers to all drugs reported by clients, including the principal drug of concern and all other drugs of concern (clients can report up to five other drugs of concern).

- One half (49%) of all treatment episodes in WA involved at least one other drug of concern (in addition to the principal drug of concern). From these episodes, 14,291 instances of other drugs of concern were recorded.
- A breakdown of all drugs of concern by drug type is presented below (Figure 1). For example, nicotine was reported as the principal drug of concern in less than 1% of episodes, but was reported as a drug of concern (either ‘principal’ or ‘other’) in 12% of treatment episodes.

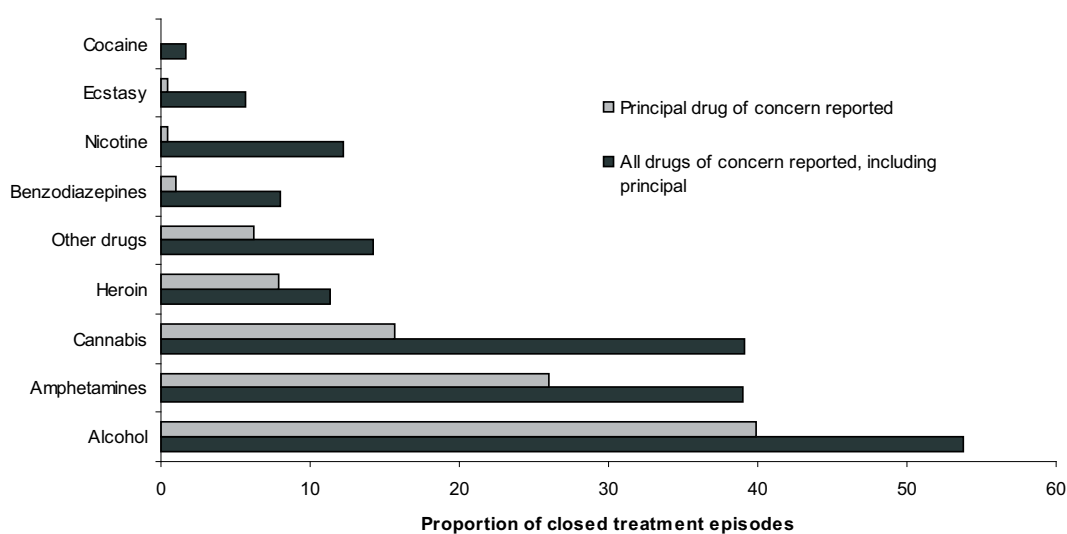


Figure 1: Closed treatment episodes by principal drug of concern and all drugs of concern, Western Australia, 2006–07

Alcohol

In WA, alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern for which treatment was sought, accounting for 40% of closed treatment episodes in 2006–07. When all drugs of concern are considered (that is, the principal drug of concern and all other drugs of concern nominated by the client), 54% of episodes included alcohol.

Of the 6,435 episodes where alcohol was the principal drug of concern in 2006–07:

Client profile

- The majority (69%) of episodes were for male clients.
- The median age of clients receiving treatment was 35 years (males 33 years; females 38 years).
- About 20% of episodes involved clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (for 1% of episodes Indigenous status was not stated).
- Self-referral was the most common source of referral (32% of episodes), followed by referrals from correctional services (18%).

Drug profile

- 38% of episodes included at least one other drug of concern. From these episodes, 3,867 instances of other drugs of concern were recorded—38% were for cannabis, 22% for amphetamines and 17% for nicotine.
- The majority (72%) of episodes involved clients who reported never having injected drugs. Another 8% of episodes involved clients who reported being current injectors, while 15% involved clients who reported they had injected drugs in the past.

Treatment profile

- Counselling was the most common main treatment type received (55% of episodes), followed by rehabilitation (18%) and assessment only (11%).
- Treatment was most likely to take place in a non-residential treatment facility (74% of episodes), followed by a residential treatment facility (15%).
- The median number of days for a treatment episode was 15.

Amphetamines

In WA, amphetamines were the second most common principal drug of concern for which treatment was sought, accounting for 26% of closed treatment episodes in 2006–07. Amphetamines were reported in 39% of all episodes (as either the principal or other drug of concern).

Of the 4,180 episodes where amphetamines were the principal drug of concern in 2006–07:

Client profile

- The majority (65%) episodes were for male clients.
- The median age of clients receiving treatment was 28 years (28 years for both males and females).
- Around 11% of episodes involved clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (for 1% of episodes, Indigenous status was not stated).
- Self-referral was the most common source of referral (35% of episodes), followed by referrals from correctional services (18%).

Drug profile

- Injecting was the most common usual method of use (73%), followed by smoking (17%) and ingestion (8%).
- 57% included at least one other drug of concern. From these episodes, 4,705 instances of other drugs of concern were recorded—33% were for cannabis and 22% for alcohol.
- The majority (58%) of episodes involved clients who reported being current injectors, while 20% involved clients who reported they had injected drugs in the past (11% between 3 and 12 months ago and 9% 12 or more months ago). The remaining 18% of episodes involved clients who reported never having injected drugs.

Treatment profile

- Counselling was the most common main treatment type received (53% of episodes), followed by rehabilitation (22%).
- Treatment was most likely to take place in a non-residential treatment facility (70% of episodes), followed by a residential treatment facility (14%).
- The median number of days for a treatment episode was 15.

Cannabis

In WA, cannabis was the third most common principal drug of concern for which treatment was sought, accounting for 16% of closed treatment episodes in 2006–07.

When all drugs of concern are considered (i.e. the principal drug of concern and all other drugs of concern nominated by the client), 38% of episodes included cannabis.

Of the 2,531 episodes where cannabis was the principal drug of concern in 2006–07:

Client profile

- The majority (75%) of episodes were for male clients.
- The median age of clients receiving treatment was 23 years (males 23 years; females 25 years).
- Around 18% of episodes involved clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (for 1% of episodes, Indigenous status was not stated).

- Referrals from court diversion and self-referral were the most common (both 21% of episodes), followed by correctional services (19%).

Drug profile

- Smoking was the most common usual method of use (99% of episodes).
- 49% included at least one other drug of concern. Alcohol constituted 38%, amphetamines 26% and nicotine 15%.
- The majority (68%) of episodes involved clients who reported never having injected drugs. Another 9% of episodes involved clients who reported being current injectors, while 18% involved clients who reported they had injected drugs in the past.

Treatment profile

- Counselling was the most common main treatment type received (62% of episodes), followed by rehabilitation (13%) and information and education only (11%).
- Treatment was most likely to take place in a non-residential treatment facility (83% of episodes).
- The median number of days for a treatment episode was 9.

Treatment programs

'Main treatment type' is the principal activity that the treatment provider considers necessary for the client to complete their treatment plan for the principal drug of concern. Data presented in this section relate to clients seeking treatment for their own or someone else's alcohol or other drug use, except for the sub-sections relating to principal drug of concern and treatment programs (which only include episodes for people seeking treatment for themselves).

Of all closed treatment episodes in WA, counselling was the most common form of main treatment provided (54% of episodes), followed by rehabilitation (15%) and assessment only (11%) (Table 2). The treatment types provided in WA have remained reasonably stable over time. In 2006–07, assessment increased to 10% of treatment episodes (from 5% the previous year).

WA provided more counselling and rehabilitation as a proportion of all treatments than was provided nationally in 2006–07. On the other hand, WA provided proportionately less withdrawal management, support and case management, information and education and assessment.

Table 2: Closed treatment episodes by main treatment type, Western Australia and Australia, 2001–02 to 2006–07 (per cent)

Main treatment type	Western Australia						Total (Australia) 2006–07	
	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	Per cent	Number
Withdrawal management (detoxification)	11.8	9.7	6.6	9.1	9.4	8.2	16.6	24,467
Counselling	61.4	58.0	50.2	54.8	57.1	54.0	38.7	57,017
Rehabilitation	8.5	6.1	16.4	12.2	14.1	15.0	7.4	10,950
Support & case management only	0.3	0.7	1.1	2.8	1.4	2.3	8.3	12,290
Information and education only	6.6	13.8	9.7	6.8	5.8	4.3	9.3	13,723
Assessment only	6.5	9.5	9.8	7.4	5.2	10.4	15.1	22,295
Other ^(a)	4.9	2.1	6.1	6.8	6.9	5.7	4.5	6,583
Total (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	..
Total (number)	15,232	14,122	14,256	16,092	16,342	17,802	..	147,325

(a) 'Other' includes treatment episodes where the main treatment type was reported as pharmacotherapy.

Counselling

Counselling was the most common main treatment type reported in WA in 2006–07, accounting for 54% of closed treatment episodes. Of the 9,616 episodes where counselling was nominated as the main treatment type received:

Client profile

- The majority (84%) of episodes were for clients seeking treatment for their own drug use.
- Over half (63%) of episodes were for male clients.
- The median age of persons receiving treatment was 31 years (males 29 years; females 34 years).
- Around 19% of episodes involved clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (in less than 1% of episodes, Indigenous status was not stated).
- Self-referral was the most common source of referral (30% of episodes), followed by referrals from correctional services (20%).

Treatment profile

- Treatment was most likely to occur in a non-residential treatment facility (86% of episodes).
- About 39% of episodes ended because the treatment was completed. The next most common reason for episodes to end was that the client ceased to participate without notifying the service provider (30% of episodes ended this way).
- The median number of days for a treatment episode was 18.

Principal drug profile

- Alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern reported (44% of episodes) by people who received counselling for their own drug use, followed by amphetamines (27%) and cannabis (20%).

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation was the second most common main treatment type reported in WA in 2006–07, accounting for 15% of closed treatment episodes. Of the 2,677 episodes where rehabilitation was nominated as the main treatment received in 2006–07:

Client profile

- All episodes were for clients seeking treatment for their own drug use.
- The majority (68%) of episodes were for male clients.
- The median age of persons receiving treatment was 30 years (males 30 years; females 31 years).
- About 10% of episodes involved clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin (in less than 1% of episodes, Indigenous status was not stated).
- Self-referral was the most common source of referral (40% of episodes), followed by referrals from correctional services (23%).

Treatment profile

- Treatment was most likely to occur in a non-residential treatment facility (45% of episodes), followed by a residential treatment facility (43%).
- Around one-third (32%) of episodes ended because the treatment was completed. The next most common reason for ending a treatment episode was that the client ceased to participate without notifying the service provider (27% of episodes ended this way).
- The median number of days for a treatment episode was 24.

Principal drug profile

- Alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern reported (44% of episodes), followed by amphetamines (34%) and cannabis (12%).

Assessment only

The third most common main treatment type in WA in 2006–07 was assessment only, accounting for 10% of closed treatment episodes. Of the 1,858 episodes where assessment was nominated as the main treatment type received in 2006–07:

Client profile

- Most (99%) of episodes were for clients seeking treatment for their own drug use.
- The majority (67%) of episodes were for male clients.
- The median age of persons receiving treatment was 31 years (males 31 years; females 32 years).

- Around 9% of episodes involved clients who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (in 4% of episodes, Indigenous status was not stated).
- Self-referral was the most common source of referral (58%) of episodes, followed by referrals from court diversion (9%).

Treatment profile

- Treatment was most likely to occur in a non-residential treatment facility (80% of episodes), followed by a residential treatment facility (16%).
- Around 74% of episodes ended because the treatment episode was completed. The next most common reason for ending a treatment episode was ceasing to participate without notice (15% of episodes ended this way).
- The median number of days for a treatment episode was 2.

Principal drug profile

- Alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern reported (38%) by people who received assessment only as their main treatment type for their own drug use, followed by amphetamines (32%) and cannabis (11%).

How to find out more

If you would like more detailed data about WA's alcohol and other treatment services please contact the AIHW to discuss your needs. The document *Alcohol and other drug treatment services NMDS Specifications 2008–09* outlines the process to be followed for unpublished data requests. This document is available from the AIHW website at <www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10575>.

Acknowledgments

The AIHW would like to acknowledge the input of data providers and the IGCD AODTS–NMDS Working Group, as well as the funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing for this project.

References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) & AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2008. *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. ABS cat. no. 4704.0. AIHW cat. no. IHW 21. Canberra: ABS & AIHW.
- AIHW 2008. *Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia 2006–07: report on the National Minimum Data Set. Drug treatment series no. 8. Cat. no. HSE 59*. Canberra: AIHW.

© Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced without prior written permission from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to the Head, Media and Communications Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601.

A complete list of the Institute's publications is available from the Institute's website <www.aihw.gov.au>.

Cat. no. HSE 65

ISBN 978 1 74024 846 4

Acknowledgment

The AIHW would like to acknowledge the input of data providers and the IGCD AODTS–NMDS Working Group, as well as the funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing for this project.

Suggested citation

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2008. Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Western Australia 2006–07: findings from the National Minimum Data Set. Cat. no. HSE 65. Canberra: AIHW.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Board Chair
Hon. Peter Collins, AM, QC

Director
Penny Allbon

Any enquiries or comments on this publication should be directed to:

Ms Amber Summerill
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
GPO Box 570
Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6244 1000
Email: amber.summerill@aihw.gov.au

Published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Printed by Union Offset Printers