

Workforce Characteristics, Capacity and Wellbeing

A Profile of the Specialist Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Workforce in the ACT

In 2017, the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) conducted a profile of the specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) workforce in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This profile monitors and demonstrates outcomes relating to workforce capacity and wellbeing, and identifies areas for further development and investment.

About the survey

The ACT ATOD Workforce Qualification and Remuneration Profile was administered at nine government and non-government specialist AOD services in the ACT: one survey for ATOD workers; and one for the organisations to complete. This is the fifth three-yearly Workforce Profile conducted since 2006.

This poster reports on data from 171 Workers' Surveys (response rate, over 50%).

Workforce retention and qualifications

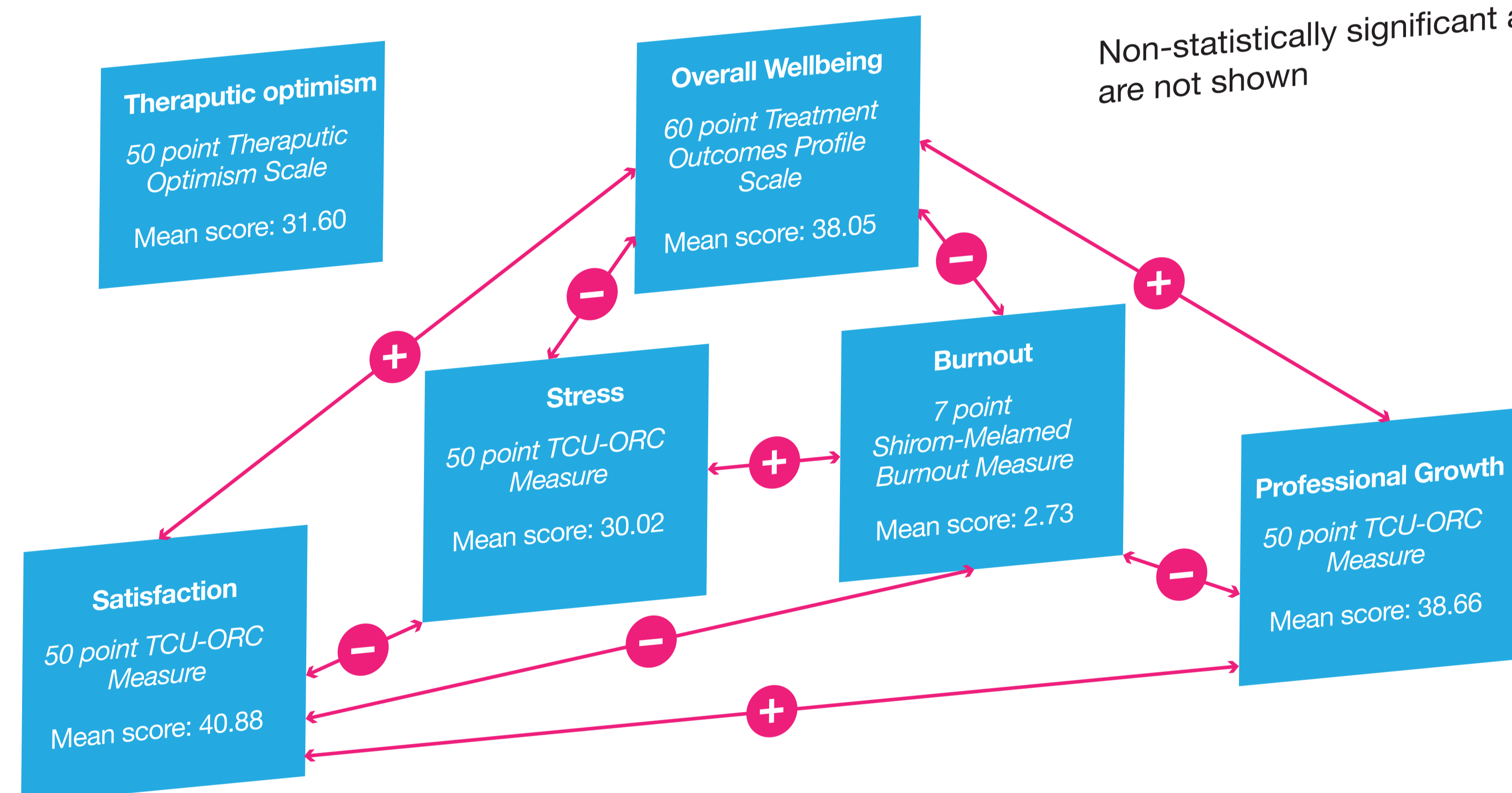
As shown in Table 1, there are high levels of workforce retention within the ATOD sector in the ACT, and the ACT ATOD workforce is highly qualified with:

- » the majority reaching (or working towards) the minimum qualifications for the ACT ATOD sector
- » around half having attained ATOD-specific qualifications
- » around half having attained a Bachelor degree or higher

Table 1: Workforce retention and qualifications

Retention in workforce	
Average time within ATOD sector	7 years
Average time within current organisation	4.8 years
Average time in current position	2.7 years
ACT ATOD Qualification Strategy (QS) requirements	
Meet the ACT ATOD QS requirements	57.3%
Undertaking units towards the ACT ATOD QS requirements	8.2%
Plan to commence units towards the ACT ATOD QS in next 12 months	15.8%
Qualifications and professional development	
Have attained ATOD-specific qualifications (other than QS)	49.7%
Have attained qualifications at Bachelor Degree or higher (any discipline)	50.3%
Participated in professional development opportunities in last 12 months	62.6%

Figure 1: Workforce wellbeing and key variables of interest – mean scores and statistically significant correlations



+ indicates a positive correlation between variables (statistically significant)
 - indicates an inverse relationship between variables (statistically significant)
 Non-statistically significant associations are not shown

Workforce wellbeing – correlated variables

The Workers' Survey included validated scales to assess: wellbeing (psychological health, physical health, quality of life); opportunities for professional growth; stress; burnout; satisfaction; and therapeutic optimism. Pearson's correlation was used to explore relationships among these variables. Figure 1 shows the mean scores for these variables and statistically significant correlations among them.

Figure 1 shows that ACT ATOD workers report: moderate wellbeing; good to high satisfaction with their present job; moderate stress levels; low to moderate levels of burnout; moderate opportunities for professional growth; and moderately high mean scores for therapeutic optimism.

The correlations observed are consistent with other similar surveys,¹ showing for instance, that higher overall wellbeing in the workforce is associated with higher job satisfaction and opportunities for professional growth, and with lower levels of stress and overall burnout. There was no significant correlation between therapeutic optimism and the other variables.

Implications of the findings

The findings indicate that supporting the wellbeing of the ATOD workforce should include continuing to build opportunities for professional development, including promoting educational attainment and QS participation. It is also important to promote mechanisms for workers to look after their health and wellbeing, and reduce stress and burnout (e.g. by providing access to practice supervision).

Further data analysis of this survey is currently being undertaken to examine in greater depth the interrelationship between wellbeing and other workforce issues.

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¹ For example: D Best, M Savic, P Daley, 'The Well-Being of Alcohol and Other Drug Counsellors in Australia: Strengths, Risks, and Implications' Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly, vol.34, (2), pp.223-232, 2016.