

A novel responsive telehealth intervention to address overdose risk for people recently released from prison – the ROADS (Released Offender Alcohol and Drug Support) project

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Background: Almost half the rate of mortality of ex-prisoners has been identified as being a result of drug related causes. Many of these deaths occur in the first 2-4 weeks of release. Non-fatal overdose is 20-30 times more common compared to the general population. Suicide accounts for 32% of deaths in males & 30% in females in the first year of release, peaking at 2 weeks post release in men. Alcohol and Drug Services are under pressure from growing service demand, are unable to provide services in a timely manner in this population.

Description of Model of Care/Intervention: ROADS is a telephone support model which aimed to provide appropriate and timely support to recently released prisoners residing in the MNHHS over the first 2-4 weeks post release offering up to 4 sessions over the first month of release providing psychoeducation, harm reduction, emotional regulation strategies and provision of direct links into treatment where step up care was required.

Effectiveness: A 7-month trial delivered to 69 clients over 190 sessions demonstrated 69% engagement with the PDOC identified as Methamphetamine (63%) followed by Buprenorphine (12%). Clients involved reporting they found the program helpful, relevant, non-invasive, motivating, it made attending treatment easy, and was stress free due to telephone delivery. Consistent themes found were of being treated without judgement and being treated as a human.

Conclusion and Next Steps: This program addresses the disconnect between Alcohol & Drug Services and Queensland Corrective Services, providing a cost-effective way to manage increasing demand. Recommendation is to consider statewide expansion with ongoing funding.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: Nil