

How Effective Is Inpatient Treatment?

A Three-Year Follow-Up Study of Inpatient Addiction Treatment

Conducted by

Gateway Rehabilitation Center and
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under a Buhl Foundation Grant at

Gateway Rehabilitation Center
Aliquippa, Pennsylvania
(1988-1992)



GatewayRehabSM

Restoring Lives and Communities

Introduction

How successful is treatment of alcohol and other drug problems in adults? Gateway Rehabilitation Center, Aliquippa, PA, conducted a three-year follow-up study, funded by the Buhl Foundation of Pittsburgh, PA, to determine the effectiveness of its inpatient treatment program.

Most of the outcome studies in the field are of questionable value because they fail to maintain an extended follow-up with a substantial portion of their patients and they fail to adequately verify the abstinence reports of the patients.

Two key features distinguish this follow-up study from major research efforts conducted by other large addiction treatment systems: 1) Gateway achieved contact with a remarkably high **74% of the subjects over the three-year follow-up**; 2) Patient self-reports were validated by **interviews with 50% of "significant others,"** those whom the patients gave permission to be contacted to report on their progress.

Michael Crabtree, Ph.D., a psychologist and researcher at Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, PA, designed the study.

The Study

The study was initiated in the fall of 1988 and concluded in the spring of 1992 at Gateway. A sample of 249 inpatients was randomly selected for the study. Patients gave written permission to contact them and significant others after they completed inpatient rehabilitation.

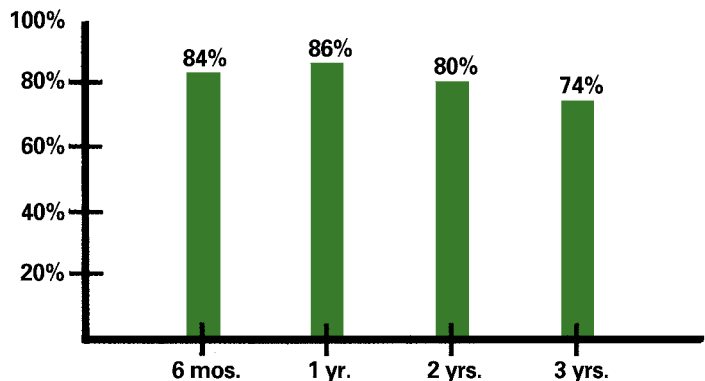
Gateway's follow-up coordinators contacted each subject at two weeks, two months, six months, one year, two years and three years after discharge. The coordinators worked a flex schedule to make calls when patients were most available. Verification interviews with significant others were utilized to check the reliability of patient information.

Correlations between the self-reports of the subjects and the reports of the significant others indicated that self-reports gave reliable information.

The Sample

The sample consisted of 181 men and 68 women who entered and completed Gateway's inpatient rehabilitation program in 1988 and 1989. A total of 87 variables was scored for each subject including drug of choice, frequency of use, occupation, race, age, income, marital status, etc. The flex time and persistence of the staff resulted in a very high rate of contact compared to most similar studies.

Graph 1 - Attrition





The Missing Subjects

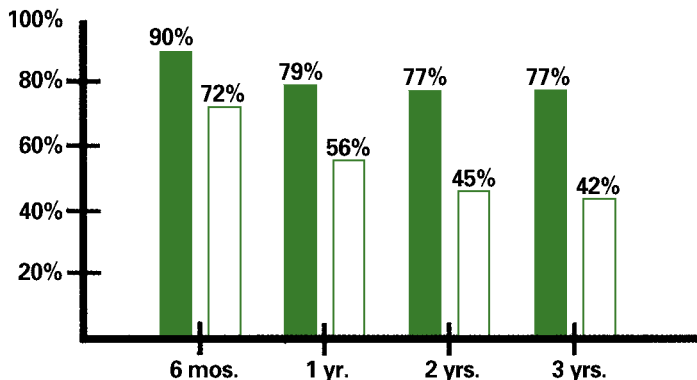
Subjects not contacted at each time interval exhibited much the same behavior as those who were contacted at each time period. For example, 88% of those contacted at six months were abstaining at one year, while 85% of those not located at six months were abstaining at one year. This suggests that there is no bias between those that were contacted at a time period and those that were not.

The Results

The important outcome of the study is the rate of abstinence from alcohol or other drug use. Three years after treatment 77% of subjects reported not currently using alcohol or other drugs. Forty-two percent had been continuously abstinent for three years.

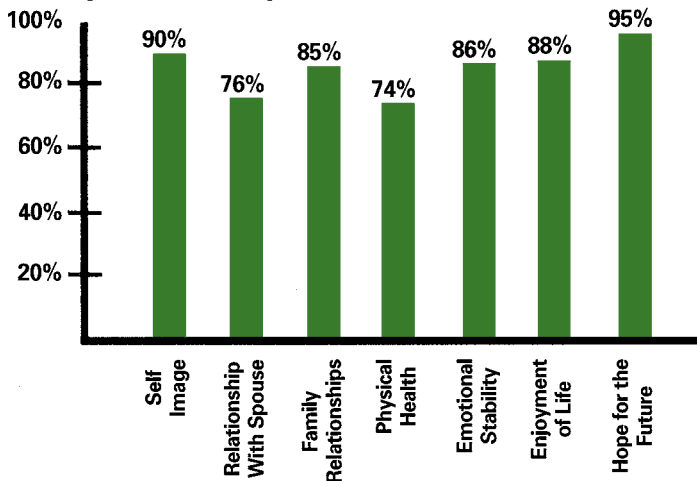
Graph 2 - Abstinence

Currently Not Using 
Total Abstinence 



Most patients described the quality of their lives also improved as shown in Graph 3. Patients reported improvement in their physical and emotional health, personal and family relationships, self-image, etc.

Graph 3 - Quality of Life



Many other statistical analyses were performed on the data to search for factors contributing to abstinence. Those found to have a statistically significant relationship to ongoing abstinence included **race, gender, drug of choice** and **occupation**. The correlations between these and other variables are described in detail in the full report of the study.

The Conclusions

The study showed substantial improvements in patients' lives which were sustained over time, and high levels of abstinence from chronic addiction. Program modifications have been implemented to improve outcomes for special groups, such as cocaine addicts, which the research showed to be less successful at abstinence after treatment as those with other drugs of choice.

Approximately 75% of Gateway patients are emotionally and physically healthier three years after treatment than they were prior to treatment. Compared to the success of physical medicine in treatment of other chronic illnesses, inpatient addiction treatment is clearly a cost and clinically effective treatment procedure.

New and more current research is needed to address the issues raised by the trend toward "managed care" that appear contrary to the implications of this inpatient treatment study. Fewer payers are willing to fund conventional inpatient treatment. The treatment field needs to better understand how to properly administer treatment and to provide services along a broad spectrum of treatment levels.

Gateway plans to undertake a second outcome study in the near future to compare treatment results of those patients appropriately placed in treatment vs those not appropriately placed, adequately treated or not treated. This research will enable the field to better understand proper patient placement.

Gateway gratefully acknowledges the
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Copies of the full 60-page study are available
at a cost of \$5 per copy. Please remit order
and payment to the address listed below.



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