



Title	The Effectiveness of Compulsory, Residential Treatment of Chronic Alcohol or Drug Addiction in Non-Offenders
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Aim

To critically appraise the evidence pertaining to the effectiveness of compulsory detention for residential treatment in people with chronic alcoholism and/or drug addiction.

Conclusions and results

The evidence base identified in this review yields minimal evidence on the effectiveness of compulsory residential treatment of non-offenders alone. However, some weak evidence suggests that at least some people benefit from compulsory treatment. Many studies on compulsory treatment in populations that include offenders appear to report comparatively positive outcomes, and others less so.

Reviewers have concluded that:

- Compulsory treatment has generally demonstrated better outcomes in terms of treatment process (ie, uptake of treatment following referral).
- The offender literature shows longer treatment to be a consistent predictor of positive therapeutic outcomes.
- Some treatment retention studies report lower drop-out rates for clients receiving compulsory treatment versus voluntary treatment.
- The generalizability of these findings to compulsory residential treatment in New Zealand's non-offender population is not known.
- Due to insufficient clinical evidence, it is not possible to assess the cost effectiveness of compulsory residential treatment of alcohol/drug dependence.
- At present, the evidence remains incomplete.

Methods

The literature was searched using the following bibliographic databases: MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, CSA social services abstracts, CSA sociological abstracts, various databases within the Cochrane

Library, and the National Guideline Clearing House database. Also, bibliographies of included papers were examined for relevant studies. Searches were undertaken in September 2007 and were limited to English-language material. The search strategy identified 1121 citations. After consideration of titles and abstracts using the study selection criteria, 192 full papers were retrieved and scrutinized in detail for possible inclusion in the review. As a result, 4 review publications were eligible for inclusion in the review and were critically appraised.

Further research/reviews required

There is a need for evaluation studies, using well operationalized baseline and outcome variables, which investigate the complex interplay between client and treatment characteristics within the New Zealand civil context.