

Preentry Substance Abuse Services

The Heterogeneity of Offender Experiences

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doi: 10.1177/0011128710362055

Crime & Delinquency March 2014 vol. 60 no. 2 193-215

<http://cad.sagepub.com/content/60/2/193.abstract>

Abstract

Surprisingly little is known about the types of substance abuse services offenders receive prior to incarceration and the differences in demographics, criminality and drug involvement between those who received services and those who did not. This study provides estimates of these substance abuse services—treatment, self-help, and psycho education—received by federal offenders before their commitment to the Bureau of Prisons. Estimates indicate that among newly committed offenders, nearly one third (30%) received substance abuse services. Offense category, prior records and histories of violence each predicted service receipt. Also, offenders involved with drugs before incarceration were more likely to have received services as well, but those who used both drugs and alcohol prior to their most recent arrest were much more likely to have received services. Interestingly, gender was only significant when predicting inpatient substance abuse treatment services. Recommendations for training, research, and practice are made.