



UPDATE
Computerised Substance Abuse Surveillance System
July 2008 – December 2008
Nadine Harker Burnhams & Bronwyn Myers



Background

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research Unit of the Medical Research Council (MRC) was contracted by the Provincial Department of Social Development and Poverty Alleviation to conduct a study in the Western Cape. The substance abuse surveillance system (SASS) monitors substance-related cases in all 16 district social service offices in the Western Cape. Although SASS is in full swing, there are challenges which impede the regular dispatching of data. Some districts are diligently dispatching their data but we are working on getting all 16 districts on board.

This is the first *Update* for 2009. We would like to congratulate the **ATHLONE DISTRICT OFFICE** for winning the prize for the district that dispatched the most data over the April to June 2008 review period!

This update focuses on data collected by 6 of the 16 district offices. The data presented is for the period July 2008 to December 2008. The data does not provide a picture of the alcohol and drug situation in the province as a whole, but only as reported by those 6 districts. Thank you to **Beaufort West** and **Caledon** for coming on board and dispatching data!

Data captured per district

The **BEAUFORT WEST** district office provided data on 65 clients in the period under review. The Oudtshoorn district captured data on 50 clients (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Intake by district

Data collection forms per district			
Name of District	Nov-Mar 08	April-June 08	July - Dec 08
Athlone	1	130	-
Beaufort West	-	-	65
Bellville	10	-	-
Caledon	-	-	31
Cape Town	-	-	-
Eerste River	30	-	-
George	-	-	-
Gugulethu	24	-	-
Khayelitsha	-	-	-
Mitchell's Plain	-	-	-
Oudtshoorn	-	48	50
Paarl	22	-	-
Vredenburg	30	54	19
Vredendal	56	122	3
Worcester	3	18	2
Wynberg	43	7	-
TOTAL	219	380	170

Socio-demographic profile of clients seeking social work intervention

During this review period:

- The majority of clients seeking help from the 6 district offices were male (61%). This is different to the previous reporting period where most clients were female.
- Of the 170 clients, 85% were of Coloured descent and 15% of clients were Black/African. The majority of clients were unemployed (38%) and thirty per cent were learners.
- More than half (54%) of clients presenting at the district offices were under 20 years of age.

Presenting problems across the districts

Table 2 provides an indication of the type of presenting problems seen at the 6 participating district offices. For this review period, clients mostly presented with:

- Substance abuse problems (48%).
- Twenty-five percent presented with family problems and 23% statutory interventions.
- The category 'other' refers to persons presenting with behaviour problems (7%); relationship problems (1%) and child maintenance issues (1%).

Table 2. Problems presenting at district offices (%)

	Nov 2007 - March 2008		April 2008 - June 2008		July 2008 - Dec 2008	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Family	74	34	85	22	44	26
Work	8	4	4	1	3	2
Financial	30	14	40	10	9	5
Social security	17	8	43	11	2	1
Rape/sexual assault	6	3	4	1	1	0.6
Child abuse/neglect	37	17	50	13	15	9
AOD	46	21	67	18	82	48
Domestic violence	29	13	22	6	12	7
Statutory intervention	39	18	128	34	39	23
Custody issues	17	8	21	5	-	-
Destitute	17	8	15	4	-	-
Family member with AOD problem	26	12	33	8	6	4
Other	47	22	53	14	36	21

Proportion of clients with AOD problems at district level

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For any queries please contact
Nadine (021-938 0326)
Nuraan (021-938 0364) or
Siphokazi (021 – 938 0444)

Forty-eight percent of all clients who visited the district offices **presented** with AOD (alcohol and drug) related problems. Pertaining to **current use** of AODs, 67% of clients reported using AODs at the time of the intake session.

Table 3 below provides a breakdown of the number of clients reporting AOD use in each of the 6 districts.

Table 3. Proportion (%) of clients reporting current AOD use by district

District Office	AOD* Nov-March 08	AOD* April-June 08	AOD* July-December 08
Athlone	1	39	-
Beaufort West	-	-	59
Bellville	4	-	-
Caledon	-	-	22
Cape Town	-	-	-
Eerste River	17	-	-
George	-	-	-
Gugulethu	3	-	-
Khayelitsha	-	-	-
Mitchell's Plain	-	-	-
Oudtshoorn	-	15	19
Paarl	3	-	-
Vredenburg	8	13	3
Vredendal	16	39	8
Worcester	3	18	2
Wynberg	7	1	-
Total	62	126	113

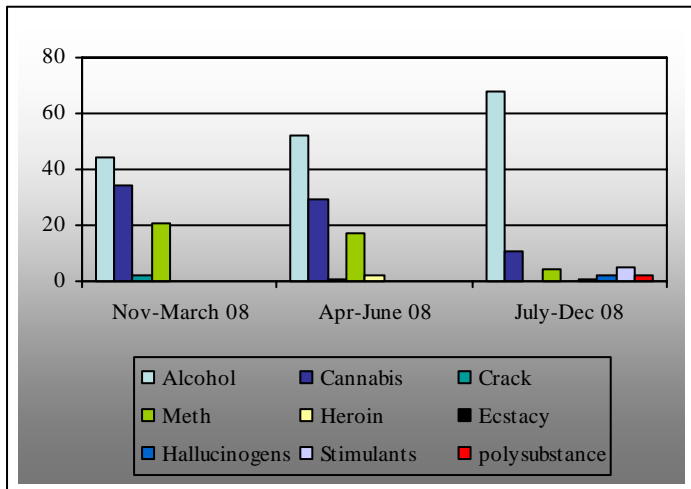
*AOD: Alcohol and Other Drugs

The majority of AOD cases were reported at the Beaufort West district office (59/65).

Primary substance of abuse (%)

Across districts the primary substance of abuse remains alcohol (68%). See figure 1 below.

Fig 1. Primary substance of abuse across districts (%)



- 11% of clients reported cannabis as their primary substance of abuse which is slightly lower than previous reporting periods.
- 5% of substance using clients reported “tik” as the primary substance of abuse.
- Two cases of polysubstance abuse were reported for this review period.
- In *Beaufort West* alcohol accounted for 83% of AOD cases.
- *Caledon* reported two cases of polysubstance abuse.
- In *Oudtshoorn* 9 out of 19 clients indicated that alcohol was their primary substance of abuse.
- In *Vredendal* 7 out of 8 cases were alcohol related.

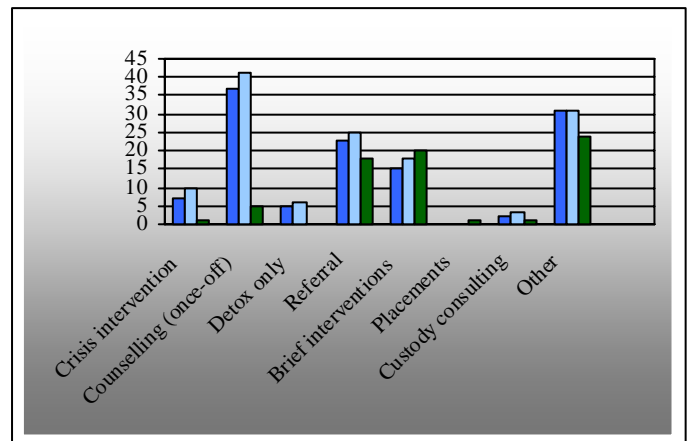
Problems associated with primary substance of abuse

Clients presenting at the district offices with substance abuse problems were more likely to have **family related problems** (41%). Sixty-one per cent of clients using AOD were in **trouble with the law**. Sixteen percent of clients cited **domestic violence** as a consequence of substance abuse.

Social work services rendered to substance using clients

Figure 2 below shows the type of services rendered to clients at the district offices.

Fig 2. Services rendered to substance abusing clients (%)



Conclusions & Next Steps: Once again, *thank you* to the districts that have been so diligent in capturing and sending their data - particularly the *Beaufort West* office! The next update will provide a summary of the feedback sessions held with district managers. **WE ENCOURAGE DISTRICTS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH US SHOULD THEY REQUIRE A BOOSTER SESSION.**