



keep your body hea

HOME | ABOUT NIDA | NEWS & EVENTS | FUNDING | PUBLICATIONS

RESEARCHERS & HEALTH  
PROFESSIONALS

PARENTS &  
TEACHERS

STUDENTS &  
YOUNG ADULTS

EN  
ESPAÑOL

SELECT A TC

# NIDA NOTES

Treat

Vol  
Septen

## Treatment Histories: The Long View of Addiction

Drug Abuse Treatment Outcome Study (DATOS) researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles are studying the treatment histories of addicts in treatment to learn more about the life cycle of addiction and how that affects treatment outcomes. For example, when did patients first enter treatment, and how many times had they entered treatment?

Overall, DATOS patients reported that they first entered drug abuse treatment about 7 years after they began using their primary drug. In outpatient methadone programs, patients reported having used heroin for an average of 11 years and having undergone various episodes of treatment for about 7 years. In the three other treatment types - outpatient, long-term residential, and short-term inpatient - patients had been abusing an average of 11 years before entering some kind of treatment, often not continuously, for 2 to 3 years.

About one-half of the patients had received treatment prior to entering their current treatment episode, and about one-half had received some prior treatment within the previous year. Patients who reported having had prior treatment also had more severe drug dependence and were more involved in criminal activity compared with those who had no prior drug abuse treatment.

Despite having more severe histories of drug dependence, patients with prior treatment history who received support services in addition to basic drug abuse treatment - such as help with medical, financial, employment, psychological, and family problems - were more likely to be abstinent at one-year follow-up than those who did not receive fewer support services. Similarly, treatment-experienced patients who spent more time in the current treatment episode had better outcomes than those who spent less time in treatment.

These findings suggest that despite repeated treatment attempts and the multiple problems typically associated with a history of severe drug abuse, patients can be successfully treated with a comprehensive treatment approach. In the future, the researchers say. The scientists are currently comparing treatment histories of men and women to see how they differ and to explore the implications of those differences for effective treatment. The researchers c

treatment providers can improve treatment of drug abuse by:

- engaging addicts in treatment as soon as possible;
- offering support services to address the multiple problems of drug abuse patients; and
- coordinating treatment episodes.

### Source

Anglin, M.D.; Hser, Y.; and Grella, C.E. Drug addiction and treatment careers among clients in DATOS *Addictive Behavior*, in press.

### NIDA NOTES - September/October 1997

---

[\[NIDA Home Page\]](#)[\[NIDA NOTES Index\]](#)[\[1997 Archive Index\]](#)[\[Index of this Issue\]](#)

---

[NIDA Home](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Search](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Help](#) | [Privacy](#) | [FOIA \(NIH\)](#) | [Employment](#) |

---



The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is part of the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#), a component of the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). Questions? See our [Contact Information](#). *Last updated on Monday, February 7, 2005.*

